

**Foreword by Jerry A. Madden**

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# **How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011**



Forewords by

**Frank Graham**, Founder and President, Chapel of Hope

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Chair, Texas House Committee on Corrections 2011-12

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Harris County District Attorney, 1966-79

**Keith Bellamy**, Minister, Woodville Church of Christ

*A Resource for the Chaplaincy Profession and Its Defense  
with Staff Chaplain Survival Guide and Audit History*

Michael G. Maness

TDCJ Senior Clinical Chaplain 20 Years

[www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved)





When someone does their duty,  
We call them honorable.

When someone does their duty in the face of danger,  
We call them heroes.

When someone goes beyond the call of duty,  
We call them ... Volunteers.

Michael G. Maness, 2005  
*see Appendix 6*<sup>6</sup>

I *pray* this book will help Prison Chaplaincy survive and aid in excellence regarding its solemn and exquisite task in that noblest enterprise of Care for the Soul as staff Chaplains facilitate super-achiever Volunteers in facilitating the greatest source for change in human history—religion.

Michael G. Maness, 2015



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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 6 and [www.PreciousHeart.net/poems/Volunteer-Poem-2005.jpg](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/poems/Volunteer-Poem-2005.jpg).

**Foreword by Jerry A. Madden  
Senior Fellow, Right on Crime**

**Chair, Texas House Committee on Corrections  
2005-09 and 2011-12**

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This important book chronicles an awakening of sorts and shows a critical part of how the legislature responds to the public.

We need chaplains.

Several challenges faced us Texas legislators in 2007. Projections showed we would have 17,000 more prisoners in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice by the year 2012. Faced with that fact, my colleague John Whitmire and I decided to take action. The 150,000-plus prisoners in TDCJ could be seen in two categories: people we were afraid of and people we were mad at. We need prisoners to change into good people, to remove most of the reasons for our anger. Yet, as all know, we need to reserve a place for the dangerous ones.



We decided to emphasize rehabilitation in prison, parole and probation. We wanted to break the cycle of generations of some families coming to prison. We want criminals to stop committing crime, and we believe our programs changed them.

As Maness so forcefully presents, religion is truly the greatest source for change in human history, and our staff chaplains facilitate that. Likewise, we came to see there would be little true cost savings, in that some staffer would have to take care religion in prison—it's a *right* after all—and manage the good volunteers.

I like what Maness said, too, in that volunteers should *not* have to do it all. They are the greatest asset we have, next to the fine staff that works so hard to fulfill the auspicious mission of TDCJ.

We put \$241 million to work on drug treatment, alcohol treatment, mental health treatment, specialty courts, and in other prison reforms. We

totally revamped the juvenile system to reduce state incarceration of youth. In the large picture and for our efforts to be successful, many groups and individuals had to step up and assist. We found great resources of individuals in the judiciary, the volunteer community, the families of the incarcerated, the probation and parole departments, and in prison education.

Our chaplains were already there doing what we needed, changing the prisoners' way of thinking.

These groups and more are responsible for the great and needed changes in the Texas criminal justice system, which placed us in the forefront of prison reforms nationally.

Clearly, we had to make sure these efforts *remained* in place even in difficult times. With the economic bust and reduction in revenue in 2011, the Governor ordered all departments to substantially cut budgets. The TDCJ made many of their recommendations to cut the programs we had instituted in 2007, including cutting drug treatment and programs in probation and parole, and they also included the recommendation to eliminate chaplains.

Whitmire and I knew most of these programs were critical to keeping Texas' prisons from expanding. We had a lot of allies in the Legislature. Most legislators knew how important these efforts were to keep us from spending billions more dollars on prison expansion. Yet, expansion would take place, we wholeheartedly believed, if these budget cuts were allowed.

So we went to work to save chaplains and save all the treatment programs that we could. A lot of work by a lot of people resulted in almost all of the monies originally cut being restored. Programs were saved. The results got national acclaim.

To date we have saved well over \$2 billion, and more importantly our recidivism rate in Texas has dropped from 28 to 21 percent. That means a 25 percent reduction in the number of offenders returning to prison in three years. Not only are our programs working, but we closed three prisons and eight juvenile facilities.

It was a monumental effort.

Our few chaplains, with such a small portion of the TDCJ budget, facilitate religion and a huge Volunteer service that positively changes the thinking and hearts of many prisoners, making our state safer, and our families more wholesome. That is the story of this book, how so few got so many to rise and come to us, *their* representatives and senators, and showed

us what we already knew in our hearts, too, that without faith, it is impossible to please God.

If prisoners will sincerely embrace faith, they will change. They will even more sincerely tackle the other programs, too. And, with respect to bang for one's buck, there is hardly a more cost-effective program than chaplaincy.

Sincerely,



Jerry A. Madden, Senior Fellow, Right on Crime<sup>10</sup>

Chair, Texas House Committee on Corrections 2005-09, 2011-12

Liberty Bell Award, Texas Young Lawyers Association

2007 Public Official of the Year by *Governing Magazine*

with John Whitmire

2011 Legislator of the Year by American Legislative Exchange Council

Member, Texas Criminal Justice Integrity Unit



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<sup>10</sup> Right on Crime is a project of the Texas Public Policy Foundation in partnership with the American Conservative Union and Justice Fellowship.



**In Fiscal Year 2011**

**125 Chaplains Facilitated, Cared for 99.8% of  
20,000 Volunteers in their 418,000 visits with  
500,000 hours with an astounding  
4,000,000 prisoners in attendance—plus  
19,602 Critical Illness/Death Notices & more**

from Item 5 above<sup>311</sup>

the year they were cut and saved

Regarding this precious and immeasurably valuable record—a treasure—TDCJ staff Chaplains have been in the *center* of that miracle of human transformation for over a *century* as they help and facilitate and love Volunteers, helping all persons in the Vital Issues of life, laboring *with* the Volunteers to minister and care for *all* inside the prison, even of all faiths, with Christianity by a whopping margin, in that most exquisite of enterprises in Care for the Soul while facilitating the greatest resource for change in human history—*religion*.

*Is Chaplain Professional Equity too much ask for these few humble servants?*

*Finis*



Support [www.ChapelofHope.org](http://www.ChapelofHope.org)  
an exquisite vision of faith



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<sup>311</sup> Item 5, p.72, [www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf), the staff Chaplains facilitated and reported most of these, though not obvious, and no routing.