

Foreword by Carol S. Vance

How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011



Forewords by

Frank E. Graham, Founder and President, Chapel of Hope

Jerry A. Madden, Senior Fellow, Right on Crime

Chair, Texas House Committee on Corrections 2011-12

Carol S. Vance, Former Chairman, Texas Board of Criminal Justice
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





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*⁶

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



⁶ See Appendix 6 and www.PreciousHeart.net/poems/Volunteer-Poem-2005.jpg.

Foreword by Carol S. Vance
Former Chairman of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice
Harris County District Attorney, 1966-79

Our Texas prison chaplains are an essential ingredient to reducing crime and recidivism in this state. Chaplains pave the way for some 20,000 trained and certified volunteers bringing life-changing programs for some of the most troubled men and women in Texas. Many a hardened criminal has had his life turned around because of the volunteers who bring the love of Jesus and life-skills programs that transform these offenders from hardened criminals to good citizens. The overwhelming majority of our volunteers come in under the Christian banner to teach and role model family responsibility, how to be a good worker and how to follow Biblical principles.



Michael Maness, a career and senior chaplain, explains in detail the job chaplains do and the challenges our chaplains face. Chaplains are necessary to make all the programs possible. Chaplains get the volunteers in and out of our prisons. They keep the rolls. They invite the volunteers and teaching teams in. They work closely with the guards. They find the space, and finally they encourage the inmates to take part. Keeping many balls in the air, the chaplains provide the leadership and multi-tasking necessary to produce good results.

I have been going in and out of prisons for the last 20 years, leading Bible studies and teaching the basics of the Christian faith. I love teaching the Bible, but these things don't just happen. The chaplain makes it all work. He calls our team if there is a lockdown. He keeps up with who is there. He encourages the inmates to attend. Without the chaplains,

programs would grind to a halt as wardens and correctional officers have to be constantly occupied with security first, last and always.

I have been involved in law enforcement and criminal justice for many years of my life including being District Attorney of Harris County and also an assistant district attorney for over twenty years. I also served eight years on the Texas Board of Criminal Justice and was Chairman a good part of that time. I can say without fear of contradiction that all the Texas Governors, all the Board Members and all of the leadership of TDCJ have been pushing for more volunteers and also recognizing their good work by giving out many awards at the day set aside for the recognition of the outstanding work of our volunteers. As a result the volunteers have increased and gained more experience in reaching out to the men and women in white.

Inmates need all the help they can get if we are to be successful in reducing crime. The average inmate has only a ninth-grade education, has few life skills, probably no mother and father who are married and in the same home and usually neither the character or know how to hold down a job. If they are going to quit crime, something radical needs to happen. This is not going to happen overnight and not going to happen without a lot of teaching and preaching and role modeling what it means to quit the gang and lead the good life.

Reality is there is no way to evaluate each of the hundreds of programs going on across the state every day and night, but there was a major study done in one prison where the programing was particularly intense. This program is called the "InnerChange Freedom Initiative." This first Christian prison in the U.S. was a dream of Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, the world's largest prison ministry operating in every state and many nations. Chuck wanted a prison with multiple programs, a large volunteer force, and on-site counselors. The program was to be voluntary where inmates apply to get in and agree to participate in the Christ-centered life-skills courses which include how to raise children, be a good husband, how to approach the work place, how to be a good citizen and many other fundamentals of life. They even participate in projects that help the poor.

After twenty years of operation, only eight percent of the graduates have returned to prison after release. This is in huge contrast with those released from the other prisons which have a recidivism rate that is nearly three times as high. And some of these inmates have tough records like murder and armed robbery. Many have been to prison multiple times. Strong

volunteer-driven Christian programs have proven beyond all doubt that radical change is not only possible but likely where Jesus takes over the hearts of men.

There is nothing quite like seeing a three-time ex-con working steadily at a good job, loving his family and being an influence for good. Much better than playing the revolving door game of in and out of prison all of a life time. And it does cost the taxpayers about \$20,000 a year for each person who stays locked up.

Not every prison can be a Christian prison with this intensity of programs. But every prison can have many dedicated volunteers, who under the care and assistance of the Chaplain, come in and are transformed. I have seen the results of even some men entering the ministry full time and then going back into prison to minister to the ones left behind. It all works. Jesus works. People are changed. But if we do nothing we will add to the crime rate, add to the recidivism rate, and add to the number of victims who are harmed.

Maness explains prison chaplaincy's many faces well. In addition to making the volunteer programs possible, chaplains deal with a host of other inmate issues, like telling an inmate his mother died, comfort during serious illnesses, attempted suicides, manic depression, loneliness, illness, and just plain old prison itself being in close quarters with not the nicest people in the world. Our prison chaplains face many people and many problems. Usually there is only one chaplain in a prison of about 1,300 people. A church that large would have ten to fifteen people on staff by comparison. Yes, the chaplain is expected to be preacher, counselor, hand holder, administrative staff, clerk or whatever. Most chaplains in most prisons are solo and overloaded.

But now imagine there was no chaplain there to handle all that!

If we get Smart on Crime we will increase faith-based programs, volunteers *and* the chaplaincy corps. Maness' book should get us to thinking more about crime and transformation. About law and lawlessness. About doing the same old thing and expecting a different result. About the true value of faith. Last but not least about the joy of seeing just one man turn from crime.

Besides, if nothing else, just listen to Jesus. Our Lord said at Matthew 25:37-40, near the end of his life on earth, that when we volunteer and go "visit those in prison," we are ministering to Him. "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to Me." HIS words and we should listen.

Take a ride through Mike Maness' book and learn firsthand about reducing crime, rehabilitating lives, making our streets safer, and bringing hope to the least, the last and the lost just like Jesus commanded.

The chaplain of the prison brings hope and light in what can be a dark and stressful place, all the more reason we need them.

Sincerely,



Carol S. Vance

Chairman and Member, Texas Board of Criminal Justice 1992-2000
Harris County District Attorney 1966-79
Harris County Asst. District Attorney 1958-66

1996 – Vance worked with Prison Fellowship's Chuck Colson in the est. of the first Christian Prison in America at the Jester Unit, named Carol S. Vance Unit in 1999.

Senior Partner, Bracewell and Giuliani LLP, 1979-2001, retired,
international law firm, Pennzoil Place, South Tower, Houston
Former President, National District Attorneys Association
Former President, Texas District and County Attorneys Association
Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
Outstanding Fifty Year Lawyer Award, Texas Bar Foundation (2008)

Author:

Boomtown DA (Whitecaps Media, 2010; 352p.).

After the Leap: Growing in Christ Published (Cook Publishing Company), on the basics of Christian discipleship.

Over the last 20 years Carol learned about Chaplaincy as he led Bible Studies and other Christian studies as well as considerable substitute preaching and speaking at many prisons. Also for the last 20 years he has taught *After the Leap* at the Vance Unit and helped lead a Bible Study at the Jester III Prison, both in Sugar Land.





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 above³¹¹

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
an exquisite vision of faith



³¹¹ Item 5, p.72, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf, the staff Chaplains facilitated and reported most of these, though not obvious, and no routing.