

Preface by Michael G. Maness

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.

Preface – Shock:
No Staff Chaplain in Texas Prisons?!?

“No staff Chaplains in Texas prisons?”—that shocked and hurt! In 2011 the Texas Department of Criminal Justice cut the entire Chaplaincy service.

In a nutshell: a small group lit a fire that saved it.

When the nut is cracked, some in TDCJ wanted to end professional Chaplaincy and replace Chaplains with Volunteer coordinators. The cut was never

about saving money. Some staffer would still facilitate *both* religion and Volunteers, and until TDCJ *created* the Volunteer coordinator position, that staffer would be a sergeant or lieutenant—period. Faith’s worth much more.

Once that nut was completely de-shelled and one saw that analysis was absent in 2011, the pith of cutting Chaplains, adding coordinators and increasing sub-contracting *negated* any true cost savings. Indeed, it was a simple passing of the cost and the logistics to the unit level. In a host of ways, cutting Chaplains made the facilitation of religion and care of Volunteers *more* expensive, *much less* efficient and *much less* effective.

Worst times three: no TDCJ manager gave a single contribution of the Chaplains, the only rationale was “Volunteers can do it all,” and no plans existed for religion’s continuity or for cost projections in the cut.

We fought that nut, hard, for cutting staff Chaplains was against the stated *law* of HB 1—*illegal?*—once one looked at the data, for the law *required* the most efficient and effective use of Texas’ money, *required* the most bang for one’s buck.⁷ The cut was thoroughly thoughtless.

Worst—*care* for Volunteers would be colder, much *colder!*

In fact, **four** of the greatest advances in Texas Chaplaincy in the last 20 years were accomplished by the Chaplains and Volunteers *themselves*, often



⁷ See Appendix 5 – Texas and TDCJ Budget Conundrums where the *law* in HB 1 says *163 times* that Texas’ monies are *intended* to be used in the “most efficient and effective manner possible” and Texas Chaplaincy is one of the most cost-effective.

up hill: 1) first pay raise in 40-plus years in 2001; 2) addition of 25 Chaplains in 2007; 3) *several* chapel renovation and building projects; and 4) the story of this book in saving of the entire Chaplaincy service in 2011.⁸

But the greatest loss—*please see this throughout*—is all about the value of religion and value of Volunteers. Cutting Chaplains *devalued* both.

Chaplains facilitate the greatest source for change in human history—*religion*. With Christianity at the top, religion is supremely important to nearly every citizen in Texas. More important than life itself to many. The Chaplain co-labors with Volunteers as no coordinator can. Staff is *obligated* to hear a *staff* Chaplain inform of abuse or neglect. Not so for *visitors*.

Most valuable of all, no *coordinator* will ever take care of and serve and shine the shoes of our super-achiever Volunteers like a Chaplain—ever. A coordinator will *coordinate*, and count beans, but will not have the duties to Care for the Soul, being a co-laborer, much less *value* religion as a calling.

In retrospect, I believe the Rehabilitation Programs Division leaders cut Chaplains. Open Record requests could not obtain “who” or the story, but we did find out that there was no written plan for the continuity of religious services: the *Volunteers* would just cope and scrap along. Like cattle.

The following is part narrative, part heart cry, and some tears for what we had to do to retrieve Chaplaincy. We had to defend it in Austin. For many, it was a shock to the bones, and I try hard in the following to relate the fear and grief of those hours for several of us. And there is speculation, too, side by side cold hard facts. Chaplaincy was *cut*, and that action said a lot in 2011: the data on Chaplaincy’s value had never been used, nor its cost savings, nor how Chaplaincy contributed to every mission-critical function in TDCJ, and nor how Chaplains *care* for their Volunteers.

I believe the TDCJ Director Brad Livingston to be a man of honor, but was advised in 2011 against Chaplaincy without a full consideration of their work measures, part of which are in Appendix 2, not to mention the *several* ways in which Chaplaincy recovers its entire operating costs (detailed later).

⁸ See www.PreciousHeart.net/Chaplaincy. And the see the Honorary State Chaplain certificate, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Certificate_Junell-01.jpg, that we gave to House Appropriations Chair Rob Junell for helping in 2001.

See www.PreciousHeart.net/images/Letter_McReynolds.jpg for the letter by Rep. Jim McReynolds sent on my efforts in 2001 and the effort in 2007 that returned 25 Chaplains.

Hammered from several angles in the following, the deletion of Chaplains was also a severe *cut in care* for Volunteers and a *devaluing* of religion.

The *only* rationale given in Austin was “the Volunteers can do it all”—nothing else—and we take that rationale to the woodshed and give it a beating. For God and TDCJ’s sake, the Volunteers should *not* have to do all; rather, they should be treated with the highest respect and continue to be honored each year by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice—God bless them.

Several of us came together and lit a firestorm that spread quickly and saved TDCJ Chaplaincy. If it happens again, it will happen in the *same* way, by surprise, without any data consumption (much less analysis), without any consult with the stakeholders—Chaplains, Volunteers, prisoner families, *prisoners*—and without giving any person a real chance to defend.⁹

Volunteers . . . thank God for you and *your* networks!

In many ways, this endeavor becomes another testimony of how precious Chaplaincy was, is and remains to be—truly valuable to Texans.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Michael G. Maness, D.Min., M.Div., B.A.

www.PreciousHeart.net

TDCJ Senior Clinical Chaplain 20 years

Author of eight books and over a hundred published articles

Managing Editor, *Testamentum Imperium*, 10 years since founding, an international theological journal with about 300 articles by scholars from seminaries and universities all over the world

www.PreciousHeart.net/ti

Executive Board, New Bethel Baptist Association, 20+ years

Certified Correctional Chaplain, ACCA, to 2012 and life member

Former Coordinator, Tyler County Ministerial Alliance, 18 years

Former Chaplain, Shannon Memorial Hospital, San Angelo

Four CPE Units, Association for Clinical Pastoral Education

Volunteer with the Woodville Lions Club, the American Legion and several other organizations



⁹ See Chapter II on 1991 in Georgia and Appendix 4 on the 1992 COMISS Report.



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?

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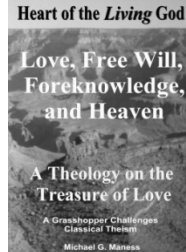


³¹¹ Item 5, p.72, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf, the staff Chaplains facilitated and reported most of these, though not obvious, and no routing.

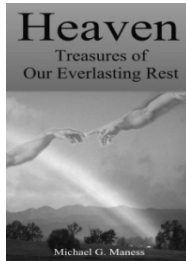
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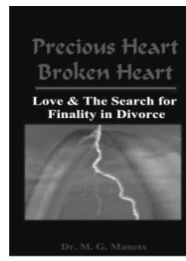
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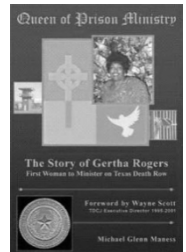
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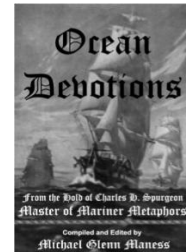
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