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Pastoral Care Treasures in Prison and the Golden Hour

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A. Most Needed in Prison

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” recorded Matthew in his Gospel (6:21). Christian pastoral care is needed in prison as air is needed to live: it is the highest form of sociability, the most humane interaction in prison, the least related to the authoritative vagaries between the keeper and the kept, one of the greatest influences for honorable conduct, and in many other ways the very example of grace from the Christian chaplain and volunteers to the hurting souls in every corner of the prison.

Pastoral care is valued everywhere and has over the last century been detailed by many top theological professors and pastors and has clear connections with the experts on empathy.² Every human being has a soul, a spirit, and spiritual needs. Divining between the psychological and spiritual, a potent concern in care, there is no end to refining research, theory, and skill—all in Christian love. As in law and medicine, and, because of its theological moorings and its dealings with unique human-to-human relationships, there will *never* be an end in refining one’s skill in pastoral care.

Two penetrating quotes on the gargantuan need in prison come from James V. Bennett, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons from 1937 to 1964, the FBOP fostering seismic changes toward more programing and with most states following suit in a variety of degrees. Bennett said,

² See www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved/Bibliography-Chaplaincy.pdf and a host of links.

Pastoral care: see Seward Hiltner’s *Pastoral Counseling* (1949), one of the best that helped shape the meaning of pastoral care; Anton Boisen’s *The Exploration of the Inner World* (1955), the undisputed beginning of clinical pastoral education, and *Religion in Crisis and Custom* (1955); William B. Oglesby’s *Biblical Themes for Pastoral Care* (1980) and *Referral in Pastoral Counseling* (1978); Howard Clinebell’s *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth* (Yale University Press, 1983); and Charles Gerkin’s *Living Human Document: Re-Visioning Pastoral Counseling in a Hermeneutical Mode* (1984). The list has no end.

Empathy: Carl Rogers’ *Client Centered Therapy* (1951), for many the beginning of the “listening” schools of psychology; see also his *On Becoming a Person* (1951), *A Way of Being* (1980) and his classic definition, “Empathic: An Unappreciated Way of Being,” *The Counseling Psychologist* 5 (1975): 2–10, and see www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved/Rogers-Empathy.pdf. Arnold P. Goldstein and Gerald Y. Michaels’ *Empathy: Development, Training, and Consequences* (1985); Gerard Egan’s *The Skilled Helper* (1st ed., 1980, now in 10th ed.); and Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer’s *Empathy and Its Development* (Cambridge University Press, 1987) represent a host on the skill and value of empathy.

Society wants men to be taught to use
liberty wisely while deprived of it.³

I believe there is a treasure in the heart of every man
if we can find it — if we can help him find it.
I believe this is the true way to fight crime.⁴

*** James V. Bennett Quotes**

From the 1960s, research on prison programs skyrocketed, with several laboriously analyzing the studies themselves. Some proved that “nothing worked” at all, but none of the 1,000s of studies and analyses of studies dealt with the prison chaplains’ pastoral care until the late 1990s and then only scantily.⁵

Now then, if you are among the majority looking at prison from the outside, could you indulge me? Do our mostly healthy and courageous young men and women in the military *need* a chaplain? Sure they do!⁶ Certainly our fine free citizens in the hospitals of our

³ James V. Bennett, *I Chose Prison* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 229, the last two sentences of book.

⁵ In a 1974, Lipton, Martinson, and Wilks evaluated 231 studies of inmate treatment programs, Martinson declaring his now famous “nothing worked,” concluding that one in three returned to crime no matter whether the convicted were incarcerated or on probation, whether given psychotherapy, group counseling, job training, or no assistance at all. See D. Lipton, R. Martinson, and J. Wilks, *The Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment: A Survey of Treatment Evaluation Studies* (New York: Praeger, 1975) and Robert J. Homant’s “Ten Years After: A Follow-up of Therapy Effectiveness,” *Journal of Offender Counseling, Services and Rehabilitation* 10 (Spring 1986): 51–57. Some have challenged, but study on *value* of religion in prison has largely been left behind, until Byron R. Johnson’s *More God, Less Crime* (Templeton Press, 2011) and his related studies (fn. below), though he left the vast chaplaincy statistics untouched.

See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Programming_History.htm for this chapter in my doctoral dissertation in 1997 surveying the literature.

⁶ See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Army_Chaplaincy_History.htm for more the several huge volumes of the U.S. Army’s fine chaplaincy corps: *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Vol. 1, by Chaplain Parker C. Thompson., 1978), *Struggling for Recognition: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1791–1865* (Vol. 2, by Chaplain Herman A. Norton, 1977), *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1865–1920* (Vol. 3, by Chaplain Earl F. Stover, 1977), *The Best and The Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1920–1945* (Vol. 4, by Chaplain Robert L. Gushwa, 1977), *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1945–1975* (Vol. 5, by Chaplain Rodger R. Venzke, 1977), *He Was Always There, The U.S. Army Chaplain Ministry in the Vietnam Conflict* (Vol. 6, by Chaplain Henry [Footnote continued on next page ...]

great land need a chaplain. Then, not just for pity’s sake but for society’s sake, our most disturbed and rattled sons and daughters in our prisons need a chaplain who delivers quality pastoral care.⁷ More than the well-funded FBOP, the state prison is the most interpersonally hostile environment legally constituted, a city under constant siege, with human dynamics unique unto itself. By law, force and necessity, the prisoners are isolated from normal free-world contact. If our more healthy and honorable citizens and soldiers need a chaplain, then reason and the common good would say the need is much greater for their struggling sons and daughters in prison.

Yet, much more is immediately seen when we mention one word, religion, and there we see and know that religion is the greatest source for change and solace in the history of the world. And while truly respecting every faith and the power of *faith* to change and to facilitate solace in crises, we also see that Christianity predominates in the West and in the prisons, especially Protestant variants. Though “pastoral care” can be facilitated from every faith, the term has been best defined and refined through the centuries by Christian scholars, pastors, and chaplains. And not a few have distinguished pastoral care from the vast expertise in psychiatry and psychology.⁸ No one is in competition, and all realize the good of the secular sciences as well as their roots in the theological—or *should*—for all the noble religions have cared for the soul since their religion’s inception. Protestant Christianity has valued the “soul” as eternal since the beginning, even from Genesis, and through the present unto our eternal rewards.

B. Pastoral Care’s Vital Issues Aid Entire Prison Mission

In delicate pastoral care, then, valuing the eternal soul, chaplains facilitate the Vital Issues woven together in our mysterious, wondrous precious hearts—in our souls—all in heated conflict in most prisoners. Inside of the cold, hostile environs of prison, the staff chaplain labors uniquely and co-labors wisely with immeasurably

F. Ackermann, 1989), *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers: A History of the U.S. Chaplain Corps 1975–1995* (Vol. 7, by Chaplain John W. Brinsfield, 1997).

⁷ Yet only 6–9% of are made up of women, a decades-long consistent statistic.

⁸ See articles and books in the bibliography, the numerous pastoral care/chaplaincy associations, and several articles on that articles at *Testamentum Imperium*, www.PreciousHeart.net/ti.

valued volunteers as they together facilitate, nurture, champion, challenge, and walk gently between all of these Vital Issues:⁹

Pastoral Care's Vital Issues

God, Supreme Being and/or Spirit	Existence – Being – Non-Being
Life Crises and Goals	Identity and Sexuality
Eternity and Annihilation	Nature of Growth and Death
Universal Forces	Origin – Beginning – Ending
Purpose of Pain and Pleasure	Purpose of God and Humankind
Derivation and Purpose of Law	Sources of Authority
Destiny of Humankind	Coping with Life and Prison
Scripture Interpretation	Transcendence
Truth – Dignity – Honor – Love	Cycles and Stages of Life
Moral and Social Accountability	Family – Marriage – Separation
Wisdom and Life Skills	Essence of Good – Evil
Essence of Humankind and Principles	Purpose – Meaning in Life

Pastoral care listens and guides in all of these and more, as a light unto the path of life, while respecting and facilitating the faith of the prisoner. Every mission-critical function of the prison agency is aided as the prisoner adapts, grows, becomes more peaceful and honorable, and in the long haul becomes a stronger better man. And, to a lesser degree and as a *staffer* himself, the chaplain aids the staff.¹⁰

C. Staff Chaplains—Key to Optimum Level of Care

Pastoral care in prison is uniquely, optimally, cost-effectively, even exquisitely facilitated by the *staff* chaplain, as he or she cares for the souls of the prisoners, the prison staff, the volunteers, and the families of all three. The awesome task is underfunded and too often underappreciated today. Look at a small shortlist of the *care* Texas prison staff chaplains facilitated in 2012 alone:

⁹ See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Chaplain's_Job.htm. For more, see any of the works of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Philosophy of Religion John P. Newport (1917–2000; R.I.P. to a good man), especially his *Life's Ultimate Questions: A Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (Dallas: Word, 1989; 644p.). And, no, that is not a comprehensive list.

¹⁰ Scanty as is the literature on pastoral care in prison, it is nonexistent on the staff chaplain's work among the staff in prison; by reason and human concern, it should be obvious that a staff chaplain sharing accountabilities has a uniquely valuable place in care and company mission in every institution.

Texas Prison Staff Chaplain 2012 Statistics Shortlist

125 TDCJ Chaplains Facilitated and 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 and more ¹¹

A lot of *care* and *solace* are taking place in prison, and if you look at the larger statistical tables on Texas prison chaplaincy services, you will see a nearly superhuman volume of care in a mind-boggling array of diverse programs.¹²

D. Hard Fight in 2011 to Preserve Pastoral Care in Prison

I wrote the book, *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011*, on our hard fight and how we won a stupendous victory. Despite decades-old statistics on precious work, chaplaincy was killed in the 2011 Texas budget, and a few us ignited a wildfire that saved it. First time in print, we showed in Austin how the loss of the staff chaplain 1) devalued *care* for religion, 2) devalued *care* for the volunteers, 3) devastated the pastoral care to prisoners and their families, and 4) how chaplaincy recovered it cost at three times over. Among those four, we nailed one point clearly in Austin in 2011: those killing chaplaincy ignored its well-documented entire cost recovery, and then nailed how *some* staffer would *still have* to care for religion and volunteers (the veritable owners of the prison franchise).¹³ With some

¹¹Maness, *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011: Immeasurable Value of Religion, Volunteers and Their Chaplains* (Authorhouse, 2015; www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved), Item 5, p.72, culled from this report, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf, wherein the staff Chaplains reported these, though not obvious and no routing therein.

See www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved/Reports/FY2012-Volunteer-Stats-by-Month.xls, for what was available in 2011, but not used, by those who slated the end of prison chaplaincy, and at that book's site for many of the statistical runs for previous years—outstanding stats!

¹²Ibid., and see www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Prison_Ministries.htm for a very old and obsolete list of 700-plus providers of programs for chaplains, a list no longer maintained. To date in 2016, there is no readily accessible list, much less database, of the ministries and programs in Texas prisons, and I suspect the same is true nationwide.

¹³The “savings” alleged in cutting chaplains in 2011 was met resoundingly when it was pointed out that some staffer would *have* to handle religion in prison and all the volunteers—no true cost savings at all in cutting chaplains. For more on how staff prison chaplaincy recovers its entire operating costs *several* times over, see Maness, *How We Saved Texas* [Footnote continued on next page ...]

staffer, like an already over-worked lieutenant, having to facilitate volunteers, what *then* was the cost saving? There was no true cost savings, but that fight in 2011 did reveal the value of religion to some in prison. The only reason for killing chaplaincy given by TDCJ in Austin was “the volunteers can do it all,” an abysmal rationale countered in Austin by volunteers themselves saying, “No, we cannot do it.” And they *should* not. But we and the volunteers won, this time, in a free world where some truly do not value religion, even in the place where religion is needed most—our prisons!

I cannot express here the 20 years of work that was behind that heavily referenced book. As in the military and in our best hospitals, the optimum level of pastoral care in prison is facilitated best by a seminary educated *staff* chaplain; or, said in another way, without a *staff* chaplain, so many pastoral care “needs” go unmet, even go unseen. And care for the mostly Christian volunteers would go south.

E. Religion—Greatest Source for Change and Solace in History

We proved the value of pastoral care in prison to our beloved Texas legislators in Austin with solid support from many religious quarters, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Jewish, several religious lobbying groups, and more. Decisively and as if for the first time, we heralded and even highlighted a staff chaplain maxim:

Staff Chaplain Maxim

Chaplains Facilitate the Greatest Source for
Change and Solace in Human History—*Religion*.¹⁴

A prison chaplain coined that maxim. Most of the hospitals are parochial, though the chaplains give pastoral care to all, facilitating local clergy. All military chaplains give pastoral care to all religious adherents. Yet, prison staff chaplains see differing religious adherents

Prison Chaplaincy 2011, 100–110 and 195, a total cost-recovery detailed over ten years earlier. Worse, chaplaincy was slated for execution without any written impact analysis, any cost-benefit analysis or any written plan of continuity for religion or care of volunteers.

¹⁴ First articulated in 2000 when I led a coalition of 60-plus chaplains in Texas to secure our first pay raise in 40-plus years for TDCJ, MHMR and TYC, seen most here:

www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/01-Chaplain_Pt_1_Proposal_2000.pdf.

See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy, one of the largest sites on prison chaplaincy in U.S.

more often, and often the oddest variety, primarily because prisoners have no ready access to free-world persons or to internet resources.¹⁵

Religion—who does *not* value it? Religion in prison *is* the greatest source of change and solace, and, in Texas, Christianity commands the largest percentage of prisoner and free-world volunteer adherents.¹⁶ One would like to think that the reason so few studies are done is because of the “value” of religion is so obvious, for the vast majority of earth has valued religion since the Neanderthal crafted his first spear. Yet, despite that long history of the great value of religion within and to most of earth’s greatest nations—and the founding of most of their greatest schools—the reality is a *minimalist* investment strategy in most state prison chaplaincy departments throughout the U.S. (when it is not killed altogether).¹⁷

Most of the religious activity in prison is programmatic and facilitated by volunteers, as in worship, study, discipleship, mentor, and 12-step growth/addiction programs. Indeed, the number and diversity of “programs” would take a large book to detail and is long overdue. Yet, few are the volunteer chaplain assistances, and fewer still are those volunteer chaplains engage in deep one-on-one pastoral care. And in Texas, who knows for sure? Sadly, Texas and most states have had bad retention strategies and have destroyed the meager statistics they collect after three years, not allowing for any significant longitudinal studies.¹⁸ Though Texas has revised some retention, there are no longitudinal studies to date.¹⁹

¹⁵ Furthermore, though not aware of any study yet (though useful), it seems that the prison has many more involved with the fringe, radical, and anti-social religions than any other institution.

¹⁶ See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/FY2010_Chaplaincy_Faiths.pdf, for the first comprehensive breakdown and longitudinal look at the faiths of prisoners in Texas prisons.

¹⁷ That minimalist strategy is documented in several appendices in *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011* (www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved), especially Appendix 5 “Texas and TDCJ Budget Conundrums Appendix 9,” “Chaplain Professional Equity 2001 and Subsequent Cuts and Additions,” and Appendix 11 “TDCJ Annual and Statistical Reports and Record Retention of Chaplaincy and Their Volunteers 2000–2015,” with all appendices available for view at the book’s web site.

¹⁸ Except as one chaplain has archived, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy. See *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011*, pgs. 322–336, Appendix 11: TDCJ Annual and Statistical Reports and Record Retention of Chaplaincy and Their Volunteers 2000–2015.

¹⁹ From Open Records requests, the TDCJ’s RPD had not done any in the last 10 years.

Where are the longitudinal studies? Still, are they needed?

Religion is a *right* in prison, and all prisons make allowance, but—*please hear this*—religion is so *needed* in prison. Professor Byron R. Johnson has proven that in his monumental work, *More God, Less Crime*.²⁰ Thomas P. O’Conner’s hefty studies likewise proved the value of religion in prison, and he appears to be only director of chaplains to have contributed *several* academic pieces.²¹

Pastoral care originated from religion and the church: the Golden Rule, seek first the kingdom, love God and love neighbor, and, truly, *love is the greatest*—or it is cheap psychology. For those who killed chaplaincy in several states, who tried to kill it in Texas, and who do not value religion—for them, pastoral care is vain and at best a political Play Doe. There are wealthy and politically powerful religious groups that the prison administrators *cannot* hide from and to whom the administrators wisely cater. But chaplains, who facilitate, aid, and love the volunteers and love religion—well—look see in this article and in many books. It is true, despite chaplaincy’s noble and even hallowed roots in religion, some in authority do not want quality pastoral care in prison; again, they have killed it a few states and in 2011 *tried* to kill it in Texas.

We must not forget that some are *hostile* to religion and pastoral care—even today! That is critical to the actual sensitivity of

²⁰ Byron R. Johnson’s *More God, Less Crime* (Templeton Press, 2011). He initiated studies of faith-based programs. Johnson’s *The InnerChange Freedom Initiative: A Preliminary Evaluation of a Faith-Based Prison Program*, with David B. Larson, International Center for the Integration of Health and Spirituality (CRRUCS Report 2003), 19, noted “IFI graduates are significantly less likely to be incarcerated within two years of release than those IFI members not completing the program (8% vs. 36.3%).”

See www.Baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/25903.pdf.

²¹ Thomas P. O’Conner, “What Works: Religion as a Correctional Intervention: Part II,” *Journal of Community Corrections* 14, No. 2 (Winter, 2004–05): 4–26, reviewed a host of studies, saying decisively religion helps all aspects of prison, recidivism, coping, and pressing for more: “Perhaps what is needed even more than improved religious correctional interventions and research is for the multitude of religious traditions within the United States to raise their voices to ask that U.S. correctional systems become more loving, and thus, more authentically religious in nature” (p. 23)! At the time he wrote that, he was the Administrator for Religious Services for the Oregon DOC.

See www.Oregon.gov/doc/omr/docs/pdf/rs_whatworks2.pdf.

See his site www.TransformingCorrections.com.

delivering pastoral care in prison, knowing that some are hostile to that “care” just as they were hostile to Jesus.

Still, for 20 years, I have seen how a prisoner’s faith helped him cope, helped him deal with life, while living in hell, and—dearly—helped him reconcile his dastardly felonies with society and his precious family. Not just *a* right, but a cherished and *absolute* right—and beyond inherent *rights*—religion is the *deepest* of all human needs, and more than anything else most needed in prison. Indeed, religion is not only needed in prison, but it is much more a constitutional “right” in prison than are medical, schooling, and three squares of food a day “rights” in prison! The professional staff chaplain is as justified and needed as any position, and more, as the gentle facilitator of the vast treasure of Vital Issues woven through every prison’s human dynamics.

F. Pastoral Care Profession in Prison vs. Hospital

There are a host of chaplain organizations. The American Correctional Chaplains Association (ACCA) was established in 1885 and was the first affiliate of the American Correctional Association (est. 1870) that certifies most prisons nationwide, including Texas.²²

The Associated Chaplains in California State Service is an organization of *all* the state-employed chaplains in *five* state entities; look at all the places they have *staff* chaplains in California.²³

Yet, today, prison chaplains are woefully behind their counterparts in the great hospitals that have been continuously developing a large body of professional literature since the 1950s, the dawn of written professional pastoral care.²⁴

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education is the standard-bearer for clinical training for most all professional chaplains, their

²² See www.CorrectionalChaplains.org and www.ACA.org.

²³ The www.ACCSS.org invites exclusive *staff Chaplain* membership from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (www.CDCR.ca.gov), Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Department of State Hospitals (DSH), Department of Veteran’s Affairs (CalVet). Unlike Texas’ Chaplains I–III for all employed Chaplains, the CDCR positions are for Catholic Chaplain, Jewish Chaplain, Protestant Chaplain, etc. Just like Texas, while slightly higher in pay, there is a similar disparity in pay compared to the *other* degree-bearing professions in California.

²⁴ See our second footnote for a very short list.

journal being among the most long-standing and respected.²⁵ The Healthcare Chaplaincy Network in New York is a leader in research with a great motto: “Caring for the Human Spirit, Finding Meaning, Bringing Comfort.”²⁶ The Association of Professional Chaplains has a large collegiality and has an excellent journal in ongoing research.²⁷ Yet, unlike the medical and psychiatric sides in prison, after much research, I know of no state prison chaplaincy that fully funds membership, much less regular travel, for its chaplains in these great organizations. Sadly put, compared to the other degree-bearing professions in state prisons, chaplains are *not* treated equitably.²⁸

Perhaps the most significant piece published on the *value* of professional hospital chaplains was the 2001 landmark *Professional Chaplaincy: Its Role and Importance in Healthcare* put together by the five largest and often most esteemed chaplaincy associations in North America.²⁹ *Value?*—here it is! A few times over the last two

²⁵ See www.ACPE.edu and <http://pcc.sagepub.com>, *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, est. 1947, is a joint publication of Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, Inc. (www.JPCP.org) and Sage Journals, <http://online.sagepub.com>. As of June 2015, it is in its 69th volume, running for 69 years, one of the most massive bodies of literature on professional pastoral care, mostly in the hospital setting. Because of the internet, <http://pcc.sagepub.com/content/by/year>, view *all* volumes and articles to 1968—*phenomenal!* Why would *all* the state Chaplaincy services *not* supply a subscription to this?

²⁶ See www.HealthCareChaplaincy.org and their *PlainViews: Translating Knowledge and Skills into Effective Chaplaincy and Palliative Care*.

²⁷ See www.ProfessionalChaplains.org, Association of Professional Chaplains and its *Chaplaincy Today: Journal of the Association of Professional Chaplains*.

²⁸ In 2000, I led Chaplain Professional Equity in Texas with about 60 chaplains from TDCJ, TYC and MHMR in our successful effort to gain our first pay-group pay raise in 40-plus years: www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/01-Chaplain_Pt_1_Proposal_2000.pdf and a fact sheet www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/CPE-2000.pdf. This was the first time professional prison chaplains banded together for a legislative push in the U.S. history.

²⁹ See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Chaplaincy_Healthcare.pdf, a collaborative effort of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, www.ACPE.edu; The Association of Professional Chaplains, www.ProfessionalChaplains.org; The Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education, www.SpiritualCare.ca (*now* Canadian Association of Spiritual Care, celebrating 50 years in 2015 from 1965); The National Association of Catholic Chaplains, www.NACC.org; The National Association of Jewish Chaplains.

decades, I chatted with several fellow prison chaplains on the need for us to write something comparable, and I wrote a few pieces.³⁰

In 2000, I wrote a defense of prison chaplaincy’s contribution to several specific mission-critical functions in a flyer we shared in Austin for our 2001 push for Chaplain Professional Equity.³¹ Furthermore, *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011* is chock-full of *value* that is referenced and linked to the hilt.³²

Quality pastoral care facilitates the cherished Vital Issues and further credentials the universal value of religion itself, and as such it contributes to every mission-critical function of every agency, be that hospital, prison, military, or corporation. Furthermore, though “cost” alone will always be secondary to the lives changed in prison, staff chaplains recover their *entire* operating cost several times over. We asked in Austin in 2011: where is there a *more* productive or *more* cost-effective program in Texas than chaplaincy?³³ Therefore, given the universal value of religion and the proven cost recovery, and given the gargantuan *human* need so easy to see for those with a heart—instead of killing chaplaincy, why is it *not* the best funded?

G. Pastoral Care Facing Death and the Golden Hour

With eventually thousands of volunteers—each a citizen—all over Texas certifying as they helped us in Austin, part of the heart cry we heralded in 2011 was how the chaplains kindly and in a kindred spirit facilitate the volunteers themselves. Another critical part of the heart cry we heralded was that the *heart* of pastoral care in prison is seen most of all in how the staff chaplain facilitates the grief and the torment prisoners experience in personal crises—and in death!

One last time, the heartbeat and deepest level of “Care for the Soul” is when an educated and committed man or woman full-time

³⁰ See www.PreciousHeart.net/Chaplaincy and in Appendices 9 and 10 *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011* is the story of 2001 Chaplain Professional Equity and, as Paul Harvey used to say, *the rest of the story*.

³¹ See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/CPE-2000.pdf, a fact sheet 60-plus chaplains and I used in Austin, Texas, in 2000 to defend Chaplain Professional Equity, a synopsis of sorts of www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/01-Chaplain_Pt_1_Proposal_2000.pdf.

³² Maness, *How We Saved ... Chaplaincy 2011* (www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved).

³³ *Ibid.*, chapter VI, pgs. 97–123, and VI.B.3, “Composite Savings—Where Is a MORE Cost-Effective Department?” 106–08.

staff chaplain, especially one who has been in a facility for 10-plus years, sits one-on-one with a prisoner in the loss—in the death—of his mother or grandmother (or auntie), that dear person who raised the often fatherless child. Not the mere *monitoring* of a phone call, that anyone can do, but the chaplain *facilitates* of grief and solace and communication before, during, and after such a call. I call it the

Golden Hour in Pastoral Care in Prison.

Terrifying is the notice of a horrific assault and battery on a loved one. The chaplain is there, too. So is stage-four cancer of a loved one, of a dear father or mother or sister. Or the rape of a dear ... dear little one. Or rape of a sister. Or a car accident that cripples a brother or precipitates a heart attack of a father-like uncle. Grandmother's house burned down, all is lost, but grandmother is *alive*. Motorcycle accident maims a brother, cripples a child. Gun shot. Knife wound.

Accidents and acts of evil *cripple* many more than the victim.

Crises are no respecter of a person's status or schedule.

A 10-year-old little boy broke both legs and pleaded to talk to his father in prison, his *daddy!* A young daughter was raped and wants to talk to her *daddy!* A brother just arrived home from overseas military duty, a wounded warrior, missing an arm and a leg—he wants to talk to his brother in prison. Tell the story. Heart to heart. And the Vital Issues that a wise chaplain facilitates are golden moments of eternal value, and those moments contribute to every facet of prison life.

Yes, 125 Texas prison chaplains facilitated 19,602 Critical Illness/Death Notices in 2012, the very year the entire chaplaincy department was scheduled for execution.³⁴ Over the course of 20 years, I personally facilitated about 5,000 crisis calls. Value—the staff chaplain's office is the critical hub, or center of care, or the “heart of the institution” if you please, with much, much more facilitated in 500,000 hours every year through their 20,000 precious

³⁴ Slated for execution without any written impact analysis, any cost-benefit analysis or any written plan of continuity for religion or care of volunteers; shockingly, the only reason given in Austin and from Open Records requests was, “volunteers can do it all,” and despite that the total cost-recovery was detailed over ten years earlier. See Maness, *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011: Immeasurable Value of Religion, Volunteers and Their Chaplains* (AuthorHouse, 2015: 412p.; www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved), Item 5 (p.72), culled from this report, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf, wherein the staff Chaplains reported these, though not obvious and no routing therein.

volunteers radiating out with thousands of programs, all immeasurably valuable, all administratively aided, tracked, and caringly facilitated by a relatively few extraordinary *staff* chaplains.³⁵

Yet, of all the crises, perhaps you already know, *death* hurts the worst of all. Death of spouse. Death of child. Death of a brother or sister. Death of a lover.

Often for a young man, as most prisoners are *young*, the death of a loved one is his first encounter, the first time he lost a dearly loved brother or child. Many prisoners are *tough*, but not yet *experienced* in life's crucibles, not yet experienced in *deep personal grief*. Most normal people are not prepared for the world-shaking *SHOCK* that breaks the heart of the most sensible. That shock is especially brutal for young men in prison who—troubled as they already are—have also largely denied their dearest feelings most of their lives. Then, to encounter the most shocking and rocking and explosive of griefs in the death of a dear loved one, then ... then, cut to the quick of their already disenfranchised being—like *never* before—the young man breaks down.

He cries.

At the same time he is ashamed to cry. Often, the conflict swirls like a burning cauldron in his fragile heart.

In that moment of crushing grief, the prisoner is without anchor and adrift without an oar on the wildest ocean waves. Tears, bitter tears fall from his eyes like he has never shed before, and then he is afraid of his tears, too, as though they are not manly and somehow wrong. And he cannot go to his family. Crises cubed upon grief, each time unique.

Now let me gently nudge you, precious reader to the worst of all.

Death ... death in so many forms, by accident or by evil—*death*—that grim reaper's sharp dark scythe slices fast. For mostly young wild men, the death of their mother (or mother-like granny) while they are in prison hits the hardest, breaks the most hardened and pulls apart the heart. Tears, oh, the tears of the grieving are most

³⁵ Ibid., in Texas, without full-time clerical help. See 2000 Chaplain Professional Equity proposal, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/01-Chaplain_Pt_1_Proposal_2000.pdf, several charts comparing TDCJ chaplaincy with the prison school system's independent school system.

precious. I emptied a box of tissue every month for 20 years, thousands of tissues for only God knows how many tears.

That single solitary moment of death’s notification becomes the prisoner’s most vulnerable hour—the Golden Hour of Pastoral Care, and is—truly—also the chaplain’s finest hour. Truly, truly, truly, as most good pastors and priests know so well, and uniquely powerful in prison, when that moment of notification is preceded by *years* of pastoral care in the prison and followed by *years* of pastoral care, that is truly hallowed ground—the

Golden Hour of Care for the Soul.

And some tried to kill that Golden Hour in Texas in 2011.

For the staff chaplain who has been *there* for the prisoner in the city under siege for the past ten-plus years, seen all and managed a good chapel with integrity—the prisoners are *always* watching—that prisoner has seen “his chaplain” exhibit time and again, and *time and again*, a sincere compassion, a consistent integrity, and an authentic “Care for the Soul.” Precious. Golden. In that prisoner’s most vulnerable and heartbreaking moment of his short, troubled life, that prisoner feels *safe* with his tears. His Vital Issues are laid bare like never before with a skilled chaplain at the helm, perhaps also with a tear, and chaplain helps the young man or woman navigate the storm.

So many precious Vital Issues crash through our tender hearts in death, causing *all of us* to reevaluate, renegotiate and often see what was and is truly valuable in our lives. For some young men, the crashing is a shocking revelation. What we missed, too, regretted or fell short of, or were angry with—all hit us fast and hard. For our most troubled sons and daughters in prison, the need for pastoral care seems obvious and even priceless, even as a steel key to unlocking the golden treasures within their precious hearts.



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