

SAVE Texas Prison Chaplains – 2000 to 2011 ... *Still Contributing*

Religion & Health Care Costs

more at www.PreciousHeart.net/Save_Chaplaincy.htm

- Health care costs have risen faster than any other correctional costs.¹ Prisoners are adversely affected beyond the intentions of prison mission goals, often developing more severe emotional problems added to their own criminal behavior problems and outside the realm of abnormal diagnosis in DSM IV.²
- Religion gives faith, hope, meaning, optimism and security to persons, impacting the well-being of persons and their ability to handle stress.³ In a review of over 200 articles,⁴ religious commitment indicated a positive impact on morbidity and mortality, with over 80% of the studies indicating longer life.⁵ Prisoners are at a risk for suicide, and “Published studies consistently have shown that religious commitment is inversely related to suicide rates.”⁶ Furthermore, given the ever-increasing cost of health care to corrections, Johnson and Larson state, “there is considerable empirical evidence concerning the beneficial effect of religious practices and commitment upon various health-care issues.”⁷

Religion & Institutional Adjustment

- Religion helps inmates deal with criminal behavior and issues of denial, helping them cope with the deprivations of prison life and understand the issues inherent in the loss of freedom; religion provides them with the opportunity to start a new life while in prison.⁸ No one doubts that religion fosters coping skills in prison.⁹

Religion & Recidivism

- Given the above, reduced recidivism is a by-product, clearly the more healthy and well-adjusted inmates are the ones who stay out. Every chaplain (and regular volunteers) know several inmates who have stayed out as a direct result of their programming. Moreover if two ex-inmates do not return, such offsets more than *entire* TDCJ monetary cost for a single chaplain in a given fiscal year. For example, Senior Chaplain Gerald Saffel of the Ferguson Unit tracked inmates baptized in three months (12-91 to 2-92) to July of 2000 and found a 7.7% recidivism rate; 13 did not return; Senior Chaplain Saffel more than recovered the entire cost of his own salary for *seven plus* years in three to six months.¹⁰ With the volunteers supervised, the facts and vision go far beyond expectations; Texas’ full time chaplains reduce recidivism and recover more than their entire operating cost several times over. *WHY* are superlatives like these not blazoned in the sky?

TDCJ Need

- Good News: from 1990 to 1997 the total crime rate dropped 30%; from 1988 to 1998, the crime rate has dropped significantly in direct proportion to TDCJ’s increase in inmate population.¹¹
- Greater Needs Coming to TDCJ: from 1970 to 1999 the mental health system has increasingly de-institutionalized its services, down from 12,413 in state hospitals in 1970 to 2,309 in 1999.¹² “Between 1988 and 1998, while the TDCJ incarcerated population increased by 262%, the number of mentally ill offenders in prison receiving outpatient mental health services increased by 429%.”¹³ Work’s increasing.

TDCJ Professional Chaplains: The Greater Picture

--Chaplains Supervise Pastoral Care of a Multi-Religious Environment:¹⁴

- Christians	104,481	- Jewish	871
- Muslims	9,151	- Buddhist	458
- Native Americans	1,277	- Wicca	289
- Jehovah’s Witnesses	1,206	Major Faith Adherents: 117,733 of 158,005 = 74.5%	

--The *Christian category* alone comprises 66%, including 43,651 Baptists, 27,534 Catholics, 2,080 Methodists, 4,018 Pentecostals, 535 Lutherans and 259 Presbyterians.

--Point Question: with 120+ categories of adherents, do the Religious Constituents of Texas have a vested interest in the Professional Chaplains charged with supervising Faith issues?

--152 Chaplains Supervised in One Month, July 2000¹⁵ - *Little has Changed in 2011*

- Employee Volunteers	65	w/ 552 hrs	- Mentor Volunteers	1,729
- Hospitality Volunteers	150	w/ 853 hrs	- Voyager Volunteers	328
- Volunteer Chaplains	403	w/ 7,192 hrs	- Marriage Seminar Volunteers	41
- General Volunteers	10,697	w/ 41,897 hrs	- Contract Chaplain Hours	926

--152 Chaplains Led or Did in One Month, July 2000¹⁶ - *Little has Changed in 2011*¹

- Primary Worship Services	2,158	- Chaplain Classes Taught	705
w/ Volunteers	2,859	- Chaplain Counseling Groups	465
Total # of Inmates Attending ...	150,190	- Individual Counseling Interviews	5,126
- Additional Services	1,701	- Family Death Messages to Inmates	931
w/ Total # Inmates	69,192	- Inmate Crisis Calls Supervised	2,066
- Spiritual Growth Classes	1,734	- Inmate Deaths Worked	59
w/ Total # Inmates	73,102	- Hours of Off-Unit Staff Ministry	692
- Community Service Hours	699	- Community Speaking Promotions	194

-- Chaplaincy: *the only department that supervises, facilitates & instructs inmates in the finer aspects of family values rooted in faith*

Religion: Human History’s Most Significant & Powerful Source for Change

- Harvard Professor Gordon Kaufman said addressing the ultimate questions of life is a necessity for thinking persons.¹⁷ Professor John Newport of Fort Worth’s Southwestern Theological Seminary (the largest in the world) said this necessity is built into human nature and “has been true through the ages; as long as humans have existed, we have asked ultimate and crucial questions.”¹⁸ “Religion has existed in every society, from the most primitive to the most culturally advanced.”¹⁹ All of the major religions have always spoken to and provided interpretations about existence and influenced every aspect of human behavior, thought, feelings, family, culture, life, death and afterlife.²⁰ There is no more complex a profession.

Religion & Texas Chaplaincy: Full of Superlatives

- How can a 22 year old *entry* level Programmer or Engineer make more than a fully credentialed chaplain?
- Most Texas Chaplains have decades of experience (and graduate degrees), supervise older volunteers, counsel Texas’ most troubled persons, impact general inmate morale and reduce recidivism in a hugely cost effective manner. With the cost savings and superlatives like “*human history’s* most powerful source of change” and a “no more complex a profession,” the superlatives show a clear case and need for Parity and Professional Equity for Texas Chaplains. Let’s empower Texas’ Chaplains to do *more* of what they already do and grant Chaplains parity with the other professions—Chaplains *more* than earn it. They deserve it. Someone will be supervising all the religions ... might as well continue to be chaplains with a heart.

¹ Except there are fewer chaplains doing same work ... about 110.

Texas Prison Chaplains – *references have no end*

See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/index.htm for one of the largest collections of chaplaincy data in the world

¹ D. McDonald, *Managing Prison Health Care and Costs*, Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1995. The entire issues September 1995 *Corrections Forum* and October 1995 *Corrections Today* were devoted to correctional health care.

² Hans Toch, *Mosaic of Despair: Human Breakdowns in Prison*, Rev. ed. [1st 1975], Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1992; R. Johnson & H. Toch, *The Pains of Imprisonment*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988.

³ D. Moberg, *Spiritual well-being: Sociological Perspective*. Washington, D.C.: 1979; D. Hadaway & W. Roff, "Religious Commitment and the Quality of Life in American Society," *Review of Religious Research* (1978: 295-307); D. Williams, et al, "Religion and Psychological Distress in a Community Sample," *Social Science Medicine* (1991: 1257-1262).

⁴ J. Levin & P. Schiller, "Is There a Religious Factor in Health?" *Journal of Religion and Health* (1987: 9-35).

⁵ J. Levin & H. Vanderpool, "Is Frequent Religious Attendance Really Conducive to Better Health?" *Social Science Medicine* (1987: 69-78).

⁶ Byron R. Johnson & David B. Larson, "Linking Religion to the Mental and Physical Health of Inmates: A Literature Review and Research Note," *American Jails* (1997: 29); see also J. Gartner, et al, "Religious Commitment and Mental Health: A Review of the Empirical Literature," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (1991: 6-25).

⁷ *Ibid.*, Johnson & Larson, 30.

⁸ T. Clear & M. Myhre, "A Study of Religion in Prison," *IARCA Journal* (1995: 20-25): A study of over 700 inmates in 20 different prisons. T. O'Conner, et al, "The Impact of Prison Fellowship on Inmate Infraction at Lieber Prison in South Carolina," Center for Social Research (April 1997): two and a half times fewer infractions among those in Prison Fellowship programs.

⁹ See Johnson & Larson, "Linking Religion to the Mental and Physical Health of Inmates: A Literature Review and Research Note"; Gartner, et al, "Religious Commitment and Mental Health: A Review of the Empirical Literature." See Kaufman, *Relativism...*; Newport, *Life's Ultimate Questions...*; Gaer, *What the Great Religions Believe*; the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and all of the millions of volumes in the major seminary libraries of the major faiths in the world.

¹⁰ Gerald Saffel, Independent Study, Maximum Security Ferguson Unit, Midway, Texas (July 2000). Of course, Saffel did mention the faith work prior to and after baptism for the group prior to release, which certainly impacts whether it was actually three or six plus months of faith work for the 13; but of those he did baptize, there was a 7.7% recidivism on an 8 year span, which is still far better than the current rate of 30-40% recidivism on a 1 to 3 year span of general population inmates in other programs. And Saffel is still baptizing. See also, Byron R. Johnson, et al, "Religious Programs, Institutional Adjustment, and Recidivism Among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs," *Justice Quarterly* 14:1 (March 1997).

¹¹ Tony Fabelo, *Report to the Governor and Legislator*, Austin: Criminal Justice Policy Council (May 1998); Andrew Barbee, et al, *Sourcebook of Texas Adult Justice Population Statistics, 1988-1998*, Austin: Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council (November 1999).

¹² Joel Heikes, *The Public Mental Health System in Texas and Its Relation to Criminal Justice*, Austin: Criminal Justice Policy Council (February 2000): 11.

¹³ Tony Fabelo, Executive Director of Criminal Justice Policy Council, in the introduction: Joel Heikes, *The Public Mental Health System in Texas and Its Relation to Criminal Justice*, Austin: Criminal Justice Policy Council (February 2000): 1.

¹⁴ TDCJ Chaplaincy Department Statistical Run, Huntsville, Texas (August 29, 2000).

¹⁵ TDCJ Chaplaincy Aggregate Monthly Report, Huntsville, Texas (July 2000).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Gordon Kaufman, *Relativism, Knowledge and Faith*, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1960.

¹⁸ John Newport, *Life's Ultimate Questions: A Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989: 1.

¹⁹ Joseph Gaer, *What the Great Religions Believe*, New York: New American Lib., 1963: 16.

²⁰ See Kaufman, *Relativism...*; Newport, *Life's Ultimate Questions...*; Gaer, *What the Great Religions Believe*; the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and all of the millions of volumes in the major seminary libraries of the major faiths in the world.

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Everyone Wins ... Especially the Inmates' Families

Some has to facilitate religion ... should be professional chaplains