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**Need and Relevance of Pastoral Care in the
Prison System**

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1. Most Needed in Prison 2
James V. Bennett Quotes

2. Pastoral Care’s Vital Issues Aid Entire Prison Mission 4
Pastoral Care’s Vital Issues

3. *Staff* Chaplains—Key to Optimum Level of Care 5
Texas Prison Staff Chaplain 2012 Statistics Shortlist

4. Hard Fight in 2011 to Preserve Pastoral Care in Prison 5

5. Religion—Greatest Resource for Change in History 6
Staff Chaplain Maxim

6. Pastoral Care Profession in Prison vs. Hospital 8

7. Pastoral Care in Prison Facing Death—*Death!* 10

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1. Most Needed in Prison

Pastoral care is needed in prison as air is needed to live, the highest form of sociability, the most humane interaction in prison, the least related to the authoritative vagaries between the keeper and the kept, and one of the greatest influences for honorable conduct.

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 in 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. As in law and medicine, and, because of its theological moorings and relations and as it deals with unique human-to-human relationships, there will *never* be an end in refining 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 with most states following suit in degrees. Bennett said,

James V. Bennett Quotes

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

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), *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951), *A Way of Being* (1980) and his classic definition, "Empathic: An Unappreciated Way of Being," *The Counseling Psychologist* 5 (1975): 2-10; for the latter, 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, *Empathy and Related Emotional Responses* (1989) represent a host on the skill and value of empathy.

³ James V. Bennett, *I Chose Prison* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, 229p), 11.

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

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 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

⁴ Ibid., p. 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.

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

⁶ See www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Army_Chaplaincy_History.htm for 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 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 consistent statistic.

constant siege, with human dynamics unique to 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.

2. Pastoral Care's Vital Issues Aid Entire Prison Mission

In delicate pastoral care, chaplains facilitate the Vital Issues woven together in our mysterious, wondrous precious hearts—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 volunteers as they facilitate, nurture, champion, caress, challenge and walk gently between all of these Vital Issues:⁸

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.⁹

⁸ 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 Professor 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.).

⁹ 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.

3. *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 all the *care* Texas prison staff chaplains facilitated in 2012 alone:

Texas Prison Staff Chaplain 2012 Statistics Shortlist

- 125 TDCJ Chaplains Facilitated and Cared for 99.8% of
 - ü 20,000 Volunteers in their 418,000 visits with
 - ü 500,000 hours with an astounding
 - ü 4,000,000 prisoners in attendance—*plus*
 - ü 19,602 Critical Illness/Death Notices and more ¹⁰

A lot of *care* is taking place in prison, and if you look at the larger statistical tables in Texas prisons, you will see a nearly superhuman volume of care in a mind-boggling array of diverse programs.¹¹

4. *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 of us ignited a wild fire 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, and 3) devastated the pastoral care to prisoners and their families. Among those three, we nailed one point clearly in Austin in 2011: those killing chaplaincy ignored its well-documented entire cost recovery

¹⁰Maness, *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.

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 book's site for many of the statistical runs for previous years—outstanding stats!

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 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.

and how *some* staffer would *still have* to care for religion and volunteers (the veritable owners of the prison franchise).¹² The only reason for killing chaplaincy given in Austin was “the volunteers can do it all,” an abysmal rational countered in Austin by volunteers themselves saying, “No, we cannot do it.” And they *should* not.

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 *staff* chaplain; or, said in another way, without a *staff* chaplain, so many pastoral care “needs” go unmet, even go unseen.

5. Religion—Greatest Resource for Change 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 Resource for
Change in Human History—*Religion*.¹³

Notice that a prison chaplain coined that maxim first. 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 more often, primarily because prisoners have no ready access to free-world persons or to internet resources.¹⁴

¹² The “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 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.

¹³ 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 on prison chaplaincy in U.S.

¹⁴ Furthermore, though not aware of any study yet (though useful), it surely seems that the prison has many more involved with the fringe, radical and anti-social religions.

Religion—who does *not* value it? Religion in prison *is* the greatest source of change, and, in Texas, Christianity commands the largest percentage of prisoner and free-world volunteer adherents.¹⁵ While one would like to think the reason so few studies are done is because of the “value” of religion is so obvious, the vast majority of earth valuing religion since Neanderthal crafted his first spear, but the reality is the minimalist investment strategy in most state prison chaplaincy departments (when it is not killed altogether).¹⁶

Most of the pastoral care by volunteers in prison is programmatic 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. Sadly, Texas (and most states) destroys the meager statistics it collects after three years, not allowing for any significant longitudinal studies.¹⁷

Religion is a *right* in prison, and all prisons make allowance, but—*please hear this*—religion is so *needed* in prison. Professor Byron Johnson has proven in his monumental work, *More God, Less Crime*.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Thomas P. O’Conner, “What Works: Religion as a Correctional Intervention: Part II,” 14:2 *Journal of Community Corrections* (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 [Footnote continued on next page ...]”

Pastoral care originated from religion and the church—the Golden Rule, seek first the kingdom, love God and 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, pastoral care is vain. 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.

Still, for 20 years, I have seen how a man’s faith helped him cope, helped him deal with life, with living in hell, and—dearly—helped him reconcile his dastardly felonies with society and his precious family. Not just a right, but an absolute cherished right—and beyond inherent *rights*—religion is the *deepest* of all human needs and more than anything else most needed in prison. Indeed, more needed and constitutional than medical, school and three full squares of food a day! The professional staff chaplain is as justified and needed as any position, if not more so.

6. 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 prisons nationwide.²⁰

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.²¹

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.

²⁰ See www.CorrectionalChaplains.org and www.ACA.org.

²¹ 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, [Footnote continued on next page ...]

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.²²

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education is the standard-bearer for clinical training for most all professional chaplains, their journal being among the most long-standing and respected.²³ 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.”²⁴ The Association of Professional Chaplains has a large collegiality and has an excellent journal in ongoing research.²⁵ 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.²⁶

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

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.

²² Op. cit., fn. 2 above.

²³ 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?

²⁴ See www.HealthCareChaplaincy.org and their *PlainViews: Translating Knowledge and Skills into Effective Chaplaincy and Palliative Care*.

²⁵ See www.ProfessionalChaplains.org, Association of Professional Chaplains and its *Chaplaincy Today: Journal of the Association of Professional Chaplains*.

²⁶ 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.

North America.²⁷ *Value?*—here it is! A few times over the last two decades, I chatted with several fellow chaplains on the need for *us* to write something comparable and wrote a few pieces myself.²⁸

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.²⁹

Furthermore, *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011* is chock-full of *value* referenced and linked to the hilt.³⁰

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 or the military. 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?³¹ 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?

7. Pastoral Care in Prison Facing Death—Death!

Part of the heart cry we heralded in 2011, with eventually thousands of volunteers and citizens all over Texas certifying as they helped us, was that the *heart* of pastoral care in prison is seen most of

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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*.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Op cit., Maness, *How We Saved ... Chaplaincy 2011* (www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved).

³¹ Op. cit., fn. 11, especially *How We Saved...*, Chapter VI, pgs. 97-123, and VI.B.3, “Composite Savings—Where Is a MORE Cost-Effective Department?” pgs. 106-08.

all in how the staff chaplain facilitates the grief and the torment prisoners experience in personal crises.

One last time, the heartbeat and deepest level of “Care for the Soul” is when a trained, committed man or woman full-time *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 actual *facilitation* of both grief and communication before, during and after such a call—the golden hour in pastoral care in prison.

Terrifying is the notice of a horrific assault and battery on a loved one. So too stage-four cancer. 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.

Yes, 125 Texas prison chaplains facilitated 19,602 Critical Illness/Death Notices in 2012, the very year the chaplains were scheduled for execution.³² Over the course of 20 years, I personally facilitated about 5,000. 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 volunteers radiating out with thousands of programs, all immeasurably valuable, all administratively aided,

³² 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.

tracked, and caringly facilitated by a relatively few extraordinary *staff* chaplains.³³

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 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.

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 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 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, and is—truly—the chaplain's finest hour. Truly, as most good pastors and priests know so well, preceded by *years* of pastoral care in the

³³ 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 teacher support.

prison and followed by *years* of pastoral care, that is indeed hallowed ground and the golden hour.

For the staff chaplain who has been *there* for the prisoner in the city under siege for the past ten 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.

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 valuable in our lives. 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 to be priceless, even as a golden key to unlocking the treasures within their precious hearts.



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