

How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011



Forewords by

Frank 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



Appendices Contents

Appendix 1 – Emmett Solomon on Staff Chaplains	186
Appendix 2 – TDCJ Chaplaincy Statistics	195
Appendix 3 – TDCJ Prisoner Faith Statistics	209
Appendix 4 – COMISS Report on Georgia 1992	217
Appendix 5 – Texas and TDCJ Budget Conundrums.....	237
Appendix 6 – Maness’ Volunteer Poems	259
Appendix 7 – Hospitality Program Cancelled	261
Appendix 8 – Prison Staff Chaplain Survival Guide	265
Appendix 9 – Chaplain Professional Equity 2001 and Subsequent Cuts and Additions.....	279
Appendix 10 – First Chaplaincy Audit in TDCJ History—2000.....	301
Appendix 11 – TDCJ Annual and Statistical Reports and Record Retention of Chaplaincy and Their Volunteers 2000-2015	322
	
Bibliographies and Resources for Chaplaincy	337
Links Referenced in Text	365
Index to How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy	374



Appendix 4 – COMISS Report on Georgia 1992

I believe Solomon’s IOC below and this 1992 COMISS Report to be the most important documents in the history of professional correctional Chaplaincy, something some wish did not exist. Thank God for COMISS.



www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/COMISS-1992.pdf

COMISS Report – Georgia Chaplains What Happened, Why and What Can and Should Be Done

www.COMISSNetwork.org
Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings
formerly Congress on Ministry in Specialized Settings



COMISS Table of Contents

Maness’ Introduction to COMISS in TDCJ.....	218
Solomon’s Critical Inter-Office Communication 1993.....	219
1992 COMISS Report	221
Introduction	222
I. Task and Methodology	222
II. What Happened?	223
III. Task Force Findings	225
A. Religious Community Perspective:.....	225
B. Chaplains Perspective:	225
C. Governor’s Office Perspective:	226
D. Legislative Perspective:	227
E. Agency HR Perspective:.....	228
F. Agency Corrections Perspective:.....	228
G. Advocacy Groups Perspective:	229
H. Press Perspective:	230
I. Professional Associations Perspective:.....	230
IV. Conclusions	231
V. Implications and Recommendations	232
A. For Effective Chaplaincy to Continue:.....	232
B. For Responding to Such Crises in the Future:.....	234
VI. Acknowledgments	234



Maness' Introduction to COMISS in TDCJ

The following Inter-Office Communication from Emmett Solomon is given below as it was given to us TDCJ Chaplains in 1993. I had been a Chaplain only two months. Since then, it is the only document given through official Chaplaincy channels on the state of the profession since 1993 to July 2015, the only document since then that encourages networking for the preservation of the Chaplaincy profession itself—the *only* one!

This IOC is all the more historic today—so important—for it also introduces the *only* study I am aware—the COMISS Report—that actually investigated and analyzed a state's drastic cutting of its Chaplaincy program. And, in light of all in this book, when Solomon shared that COMISS Report and to date in July 2015, that was the *only* study of any prison Chaplaincy program that has been shared by an administrator with TDCJ Chaplains since 1993 (see Bibliography for studies of other state chaplaincy departments).

I did not know *then* just how important the advice from Solomon and from that COMISS Report would be, but I paid enough attention then that I kept a copy all these years. Today, in 2015, just four years after our noble fight in 2011, I believe both of these documents to be the most important documents on the history of professional prison Chaplaincy, examples even. If the profession will survive, Chaplains will be following the principles of these in the 21st century, either knowingly or unknowingly.

That Emmett Solomon took the lead in Texas is no surprise to those of us who have known him and appreciated his courage and leadership. His Restorative Justice Network Ministries has gone nationwide. He tried to accomplish much of the substance of this report for many years, on and off, as he could in his continued relations with TDCJ and with prison Chaplains. His network was one of the significant cogs in the lobbying that helped us get the word out in 2011; one must not underestimate his contribution.

Yet, there is one cold hard difference: Georgia lost *most* of its Chaplains in 1991, and—wait for it—Texas was *zero*-budgeted and going to lose **ALL**. Imperative—*know* that assassinating all will preclude *any* recovery!

Georgia Recovers—because of a latent Chaplaincy left behind, Georgia today has nearly all of its Chaplains back and more. Yes, deleted and restored—some staffer *will* have to handle religion—yet the higher side

is that Chaplaincy saves money and cares for Volunteers. Nearly every Georgia Department of Corrections prison has a full-time Chaplain now, and the Volunteer services are *under* the GDC director of Chaplains. Moreover, Chaplaincy is under the “inmate services division” *alongside* education and health services in the organization—*that* is Chaplain professional equity. Yet, not *full* equity, for the paygrades for prison Chaplains in Georgia mirror those in Texas; there is still an unequal disparity between the degree-bearing Chaplains and other degree-bearing positions in both Georgia and Texas, to say little more on the workload.

Furthermore, on October 4, 2014, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Commissioner Avery D. Niles appointed former GDC Director of Chaplains Danny Horne to head the new GDJJ Chaplaincy department.²⁵⁰ On Horne’s appointment, Niles said, “The Chaplaincy Director will act as our gatekeeper for the protection of religious freedoms and traditions.... He will help us guarantee these First Amendment rights for all our youth in detention.”²⁵¹ Now *that* is a coming full circle. And there is a bit of *déjà vu* in the term “gatekeeper,” for that is what Director of Chaplains Emmett Solomon used to say 20 years ago.

Looking at Solomon’s IOC over 20 years later—those were the days—one can see his heart and fears. He *knew* then, and it came to pass in 2011. There is a great need for Chaplains to cooperate, for underlining the whole COMISS Report is the widespread scope of ignorance regarding professional Chaplaincy. To a great extent, the profession is explained on my web site, the ACCA web site, the books in the bibliography, and in this book.²⁵²

The IOC is given in Courier type, just as it was then, before computers.

www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/COMISS-1992.pdf



²⁵⁰ See www.DJJNewsandviews.org/Volunteerservice/Chaplaincy.html.
See also www.DJJ.state.ga.us.

²⁵¹ See www.DJJNewsandviews.org/docs/djjChaplain10714.doc, p. 2.

²⁵² See www.PreciousHeart.net/Chaplaincy and www.CorrectionalChaplains.org.

7. Become known in your religious group in your area.
8. Do your ministry but do not think it is only within the fences of your institutions. Our support is rooted in the general community. The more you do to help the community and involve the community in your program, the stronger Chaplaincy in this state will be.

The above mentioned list points out some of the ways to be proactive. We try to employ Chaplains who reflect a wide variety of religious communities so that the major parts to the religious life in this state will have a vested interest in Chaplaincy. An effort is being made to help our corps of Chaplains to reflect the wide diversity of the population. This office will continue working on your behalf, but we all have responsibility to let our story be known. It is important for you to work amicably with your institutional administrators but they cannot save your jobs. Our relationship to the general community has much more to do with the survival of the Chaplaincy program than just getting along in the institution. I do hope you will do your part in this effort.

ES/km cc: File

**Sage advice that helped save
Texas Prison Chaplaincy in 2011**



1992 COMISS Report

CONGRESS ON MINISTRY IN SPECIALIZED
SETTINGS (COMISS)
PUBLIC ISSUES TASK FORCE (PITF)
GEORGIA SITE VISIT TEAM REPORT: 7-27-92

*I have placed in **bold** some points to highlight*

www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/COMISS-1992.pdf



Introduction

The Congress on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS) is a national organization of organizations comprised of three types of constituent groups:

- a) professional associations representing ministers and ministries in specialized settings,
- b) religious bodies or denominations endorsing persons to provide ministry in specialized settings, and
- c) agencies and institutions employing persons to provide ministry in settings that include, for example, prisons, hospitals, counseling and mental health centers, and congregations.

The religious organizations include representatives from major faith groups in the United States.

COMISS, meeting in December of 1991, formed its Public Issues Task Force (PITF), instructing it, as its first priority, to visit the State of Georgia to learn from the changes which had recently taken place there relative to State-employed Chaplains. These changes included action to eliminate almost all State-employed Chaplains. This action was later modified to allow provision of ministries on a contractual basis with individual clergy, some of whom were formerly employed by the State. Additional Chaplaincy services were to be provided by Volunteer community clergy. This was a major change in Georgia, which had been a recognized leader in providing ministries to its citizens in State facilities.

The PITF members who formed the Georgia Site Visit Team met in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 13-16, 1992. The Team members met with a variety of persons representing different parts of the community.

The following report is issued by the COMISS Public Issues Task Force. It represents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Georgia Site Visit Team members.

I. Task and Methodology

The PITF was instructed to gather data from persons involved in the Georgia experience for the purpose of gaining learnings from the experience which would

help COMISS and its member organizations better strategize, anticipate, and respond to possible similar State initiatives elsewhere.

Central questions to be answered by the site visit included:

1. What happened?
2. What dynamics were involved in the decision(s) to change the status of Chaplaincy services in the State?
3. How did persons in different positions view the situation?
4. What can be learned from the Georgia experience that will Georgia Site Visit Team Report be instructive for ministries in specialized settings?

The Georgia Site Visit Team conducted interviews with participants in the Georgia experience. In some cases, the interviews were with official representatives of organizations directly involved. In other cases the interviews were with persons familiar with the event but who were not officially representing any organization. The interviews were conducted with a representative of the Governor's Office, legislators, religious leaders, agency staff, Chaplains affected by the Georgia decision, lobbyists, members of the media, and advocacy group leaders. These persons voluntarily met with the Team. Their perspectives represented a mixture of individual and agency official and unofficial views. In addition, Chaplains affected by the decision were invited to respond in written form. Additionally, the Team reviewed several written documents from legislative, executive, and agency sources.

II. What Happened?

Governor Zell Miller was elected to serve as the Governor of Georgia in January 1991, having served for a number of years as the Lieutenant Governor. He ran with several platform statements, including the need to reduce State spending and to implement a State lottery to produce a new source of revenue for the State. Some religious leaders opposed the Governor on the issue of the lottery.

The first legislative session in Governor Miller's term was held from January through March, 1991. Different from many other states, the legislature of Georgia meets for its regular term for a forty (40) day session. Since most legislators hold other positions, this is a part-time legislature. During this 1991 regular legislative session a balanced State budget was adopted, as was required by Georgia statute. The budget included an immediate 10% reduction in agency and department allocations.

The budget that was adopted was, apparently, a very optimistic one. As the year wore on, it became clear that income was not sufficient to balance State expenses. An emergency special session of the State Legislature was called for August of 1991. This budgetary crisis was, among other things, the result of recessionary conditions and especially the decrease in anticipated State revenue. There were two options: reduce spending or raise taxes. The Governor decided to cut spending rather than to seek tax increases.

An additional and potent task for this special session was also deciding on a redistricting plan for the State, an issue not without its political and personal-

legislator-safety concerns. Given these two major tasks this was a powerful, politically charged, and quick action-oriented environment.

One area to cut spending was to reduce the number of State employees, whose number had swelled to well over 100,000 in the past decade. As an additional incentive to this position, the Governor had appointed the Williams Commission to study State government and its organization, the first major study of this since Governor Jimmy Carter did so in the early 1970s. The report clearly develops recommendations to move toward the privatization of services now provided by the State. Simply put, privatization meant that services would increasingly be provided by non-State or private agencies. Because of the major emphasis on State-provided services over the past decade or so, there has not been a major development of not-for-profit service agencies. Privatization was and continues to be a major thrust of the ongoing recommendations of the Williams Commission.

The budgetary package was presented to the legislators who were strongly encouraged to vote for the package as a whole. This budget was agreed to prior to the legislative session through a series of meetings between executive and legislative personnel. The presentation to the legislators was as a joint effort of legislative and executive leadership. The total reduction package was approximately \$400 million.

Given the political pressure to act quickly (since every day in session cost the State more money), the **session ended in ten (10) days**. According to various sources there was little time for a systematic review of budget reductions and their consequences, debate, or lobby efforts. In the words of persons familiar with the special legislative session, "It was a done deal." This is in contrast to usual proposals that would have been discussed in public hearings. This particular budgetary action and its implications had no formal hearings and little public discussion. Eventually, at its ultimate passage there were less than \$600,000 of changes in the \$400 million agreement.

Within the budget reduction package was a proposal to eliminate Chaplains from the State employment rolls in the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Corrections. This affected seventy-eight (78) Chaplaincy positions. It was thought that local clergy would Volunteer their services to the State institutions. These pastoral services would primarily be preaching and prayer. These were the major pastoral responsibilities provided by Chaplains in the views of some legislators and administrative personnel not familiar with the services in fact offered by the Chaplains nor familiar with the special skills, education, and credentials necessary to do them in State facilities.

Upon hearing of the proposal to eliminate Chaplains, the religious community responded primarily in an **adversarial way**. This response came in letters to the Governor, to key legislators, and to State agency heads, in a brief meeting with the Governor, in meetings with key legislators, and in a press conference. COMISS members and individual members of the professional associations were encouraged to send letters expressing their concern about this proposed action as it would affect services to patients, residents, and inmates in State institutions. Important issues raised included the need for properly trained and credentialed clergy to minister in specialized settings, Chaplain accountability in State institutions, and possible State

legal exposure resulting from improperly credentialed persons providing spiritual care in these specialized settings.

In spite of these efforts, the legislature voted to eliminate almost all State-employed Chaplaincy positions, as well as several hundred other positions. This did not result from a direct vote on the issue of Chaplains, but rather was a consequence of the vote on the budget reductions, of which Chaplaincy positions were only one **relatively small piece**. Funds were in some instances provided to purchase Chaplaincy services from individual clergy on a contractual basis. Some currently serving Chaplains were retained on a contractual basis, but they lost benefits and standing in their institutions. Some Chaplains retired. Other Chaplains left the State service and found other positions. Others became unemployed.

III. Task Force Findings

It is clear that there are many different perspectives on what happened in Georgia, why it happened, and what are the implications of the actions. Since the *PITF* viewed its task as a learning one rather than an adversarial activity, it will report what it learned from the various participants prior to stating its conclusions and making its recommendations.

A. Religious Community Perspective:

Within the religious community there are diverse perspectives on why the Governor supported/created a budget which included the effect of eliminating State-employed Chaplaincy positions. These views include:

1. The Governor, the legislators, and some agency administrators had a very **limited view of the role of a Chaplain**, both as to function and as to skills, education, and credentialing necessary to perform the functions. The primary view was that the Chaplain was involved in preaching and prayer which could be provided on a Volunteer basis.
2. The Governor was retaliating for the religious community opposition to his proposal for a lottery.
3. There are different views about the role of the Chaplain as a professional member of treatment or rehabilitation team efforts. One view is held primarily by the mainline Protestant community; the other by the conservative religious community. The latter views clergy in institutional settings primarily as an evangelist responsible to preach, pray, and evangelize.
4. There is a **strong belief that the action of the religious community was not effective**.

B. Chaplains Perspective:

The perspective of the Chaplains included:

1. They were completely **caught off guard by the speed and reality** of the action, and surprised that the total elimination of Chaplaincy services as a State-funded operation would ever be considered or could actually happen in

Georgia. As a result, there was **considerable denial and inability to take action.**

2. **Mixed messages were received from administrators**, with some saying this would happen and others saying that it would and could not happen. Mixed messages also surfaced around the issue of how the Chaplains actually were viewed by these administrators as well as persons of the executive and legislative branches of the Georgia government. , one view is that the Chaplain is a preacher. The other is that the Chaplain is a clinician. In this context, the “preacher” could be replaced by other clergy, and the “clinician” could be replaced by persons necessary for continuing accreditation. As a whole, the Chaplains themselves were not clear as to an integration of this professional split. It did, however, make their positions vulnerable.
3. **Money was not the issue**, since the State was moving ahead in funding other services and areas. A clear sense of the Chaplains was that this was the result of power and politics, and that the so-called budgetary crisis was only a foil.
4. Many Chaplains felt personally and professionally discounted after providing years of service to patients, inmates, families, and staff members.
5. **Most Chaplains felt awkward in responding** both in terms of self-advocacy and restrictions imposed on State employees’ involvement in political action.
6. Some Chaplains, particularly Southern Baptists, felt supported by their denomination, while others felt little support. The Southern Baptist Chaplains Department provided a retreat, financial assistant, and job placement services. In addition, the denomination led advocacy efforts. The Southern Baptists were the largest single denominational group effected by the budgetary reduction.

C. Governor’s Office Perspective:

These perspectives were gained through a discussion with Governor Miller’s Executive Assistant for Community Relations. Efforts to gain direct access to the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor were unsuccessful.

1. The primary reason for the position cuts was economic. The State of Georgia had 112,000 employees. The economic growth in the 1970’s and 1980’s in Georgia was considerable, and the State budget grew accordingly. Where the economy fell the existing number of State positions could not be maintained. The Governor saw that the existing budget could not be met and called a special session to redistrict and to cut expenses.
2. The Chaplains were cut because this was proposed by the Department Heads. It was thought that **these employed positions could be cut and the services provided by Volunteer community clergy.** This “sounded right” and was feasible. Additionally, Chaplains are not mandated by some agency accreditation standards and, thus, were expendable. Where they

were mandated, as in some federally controlled correctional facilities, the Chaplain positions were retained.

3. There is a **lack of understanding** of the special training of Chaplains, with the **clinical pastoral role not known** and the prayer and worship role being the dominant one perceived.
4. The Chaplains had **no effective lobby**. The **political risk** for everyone of cutting these positions was seen to be **minimal** by those voting on the budget and by those suggesting the budgetary reductions.
5. The religious community will need to provide Chaplains on a Volunteer or contract basis. The State, in some instances, may pay for Chaplaincy services, but Chaplains will no longer be full-time, paid State employees. Chaplains are seen as needed (at least in terms of their prayer and worship role), but there is a commitment by the Governor to not support Chaplains as state employees.

D. Legislative Perspective:

The following views were expressed during conversations with the legislators, all of which are not necessarily in agreement one with another:

1. There was a serious budget crisis to be addressed and definitive action was needed.
2. A balanced budget package was presented to the legislature at a special emergency session, which also had to deal with the redistricting issue. The package was worked out in advance by the governor and legislative leadership. The governor agreed to present and back the budget, and thereby deflect some criticism from the legislators themselves.
3. There was little time to study the large complex budgetary package to become familiar with all its ramifications, including the line-item elimination of the Chaplains as State employees.
4. **Chaplains were not necessarily personally known by legislators**, nor were the specific and specially trained services that were provided.
5. The idea that Volunteer clergy were available and could easily provide preaching and prayer services sounded like a reasonable and acceptable way to save the State money and to continue to provide religious services. Even some constituent clergy who were asked agreed to do so. Some even Volunteered when word of the changes became public.
6. The religious community does not have an effective lobbying network. When, however, it did make its voice heard it was usually protesting something of a moralistic nature (e.g., lottery) or promoting a self-serving issue (e.g., Chaplaincy positions). **The religious community is not generally seen as a helpful partner.**
7. In the next session of the legislature bills were introduced into and passed by the Senate to reinstate some State-employed Chaplaincy positions. This bill has never reached the floor of the House, remaining in the House Rules Committee.

E. Agency HR Perspective:

Department of Human Resources: The following were perspectives expressed during conversations with agency/department personnel from Human Resources, which was responsible for positions in the Georgia mental hospitals:

1. Chaplaincy is not a mandated service and, therefore, can be cut without jeopardizing accreditations of any kind.
2. There was **not a clear understanding of the level of training Chaplains** within the system had and/or needed for their positions, and limited appreciation for their functions.
3. There was general acceptance of the notion that Chaplains basically do worship services (when they were not doing “clinical” things that could be done by other clinicians, some of whom are mandated workers because of accreditation). This can be done by Volunteers.
4. While Chaplaincy positions were listed on the initial requested cut list, they were not at the top of the prioritized list, but rather in the middle. The Office of Planning and Budget selected Chaplaincy for elimination while bypassing some items higher on the list. Department personnel were not involved in the discussion or proposal of the final cut list.
5. There is a **movement toward the establishment of privatization** of services within the department, and therefore to contractual arrangements for other services as well as Chaplaincy.
6. Since Chaplaincy positions were voted out by the legislature (which agency personnel view as a policy decision), the department will not be proposing that such positions be returned but will rather work to provide the services by way of the contract route.
7. **Unlike the Corrections division, there was no person or position to be a voice for Chaplaincy within the central office.**
8. Agency personnel indicate that they were told or mandated to cut State-funded Chaplaincy positions. Consequently, they saw themselves as having no choice despite possible contrary personal or professional feelings.

F. Agency Corrections Perspective:

Department of Corrections: Corrections was the second general area in which State-employed Chaplaincy positions were cut. Perspectives here included:

1. **Wardens were asked for a list of recommended reductions to meet the budget requirements. Chaplains were not singled out initially.** Later, the wardens were told that the Chaplains positions would be eliminated by the budget cuts. This is seen as a carry over effect from Human Resources.
2. Correctional agencies were told by the Office of Planning and Budget to eliminate Chaplains **except at prisons under Federal court**

order. Later, they were told that it would be possible to contract for Chaplaincy services.

3. The concept of privatization of services in corrections included Chaplains and will include others in Georgia.
4. Political appointments of correctional Chaplains was a problem especially since most were white Christian males. In contrast, the Department was moving for diversity in gender, race, and religious tradition.
5. **In some prisons, Chaplains were viewed as the best clinicians** among the disciplines going about their work professionally and relatively quietly. However, others outside of the prison arena did not understand what the Chaplains actually did, nor their value. The fact that the value and specific contributions of Chaplains to the prisons was not well known, nor apparently well communicated, made it easier for the decision makers to eliminate State-employed Chaplaincy services.
6. **The governor himself employed two evangelists for the prison system.** These persons were not clinically educated nor credentialed for this ministry. But they had been active in his election campaign. They were given a salary and an automobile. Their task was to evangelize in the prison system.

G. Advocacy Groups Perspective:

Input was sought from advocacy networks representing persons with mental illness, mental retardation, and other developmental disabilities. These networks were not active in efforts made to prevent the elimination of Chaplains.

1. The proposed cuts included many in community and institutional services for people with mental illness and mental retardation and their families. The mental illness networks believed that they had to take the position of opposing all cuts, as a number of the cuts focused on community based training centers and workshops. The August cuts came on top of 10 cuts already made during the year. Thus, Chaplains were only one part of a number of the proposed cuts.
2. There was a lack of networking and coalition building between Chaplains and the religious community. While there have been some conferences in Georgia to build partnerships between advocacy groups and the religious community, there has been no ongoing networking at a statewide level. These networks experienced no previous help from the religious community when their issues were dealt with.
3. **Little presence was seen of anyone actually advocating for the Chaplains.**
4. The crisis atmosphere and pressure to act created a real problem for all advocacy groups. There was very little room or time for maneuvering or compromising during the special legislative session. Advocacy groups that did impact the process involved a combination of significant grass roots lobbying with efforts around specific legislators. It was not possible to build new coalitions around new issues in as brief a time frame as was available.

5. There was an advocacy effort by the Concerned Black Clergy in Atlanta to express their fears that women and minorities would be the first to go in staff reductions. This group got some media and executive attention. Advocacy efforts for Chaplains, on the other hand, would have meant advocating for a group that was primarily white and male.
6. For the situation to have been changed radically, **there needed to be more time so that a grass roots effort could take place.**

H. Press Perspective:

Input was solicited from the Religion Editor at the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, and from the reporters who cover State government through the Capital News Bureau. Their perspectives include:

1. There were a great number of political issues leading up to, and during, the special session. The Chaplaincy story may have been a worthy and interesting issue, but it had to compete with a wide variety of other significant issues, and was seen as a relatively minor issue.
2. No active presence from the religious community was perceived on a regular basis prior to the special session. As a result, there was no clear communication network to flag quickly emerging issues. **The religious community is seen as reactive to issues rather than proactive.** It is also not in regular contact with news media persons.
3. There are significant roles played by Chaplains which are not well-known. The common **view of Chaplains as preachers and prayers** or as an evangelist coming in to lead a service is hard to change.
4. Apparently there was no approach to the press by those who were advocating for Chaplains to ask either for input or for help in how to access the media for assistance.

I. Professional Associations Perspective:

The perspectives and contributions of the professional associations are somewhat unknown by the persons involved in the Georgia event. Even though letters were written, conversations were had, and positions were taken, there was little mention of any of this by the Chaplains or any of the key people involved (with the exception of the Governor's Office who indicated that they became aware of the specialized training of ACPE Chaplains through contact from the ACPE office). Some of the professional association perspectives include:

1. If this can happen in Georgia, it can happen anywhere.
2. The professional associations lacked significant presence in the situation or power/influence to make a substantial difference.
3. Letters were written but not mentioned by anyone during the visit.
4. Support and advocacy were provided, but this was not mentioned by the Chaplains.

5. Georgia lacks any State-level professional Chaplaincy organization that might have been able to react or respond.

IV. Conclusions

The PIFT Georgia Site Visit Team concludes the following, after considerable discussion, and offers these conclusions to COMISS and its member organizations:

1. The processes that led to the elimination of the State-employed Chaplaincy positions were complicated and multi-faceted, making it every difficult to determine a linear cause and effect. Complicating this process was the general mechanism of persons laying responsibility for the initiation of actions on others.
2. The complexity and speed of the decision-making process made effective response nearly impossible in the context of the lack of an already established political/advocacy network. The general and almost universal sense the Team received was that there was little positive presence in the political arena of the religious community and no positive presence either of Chaplains as a group or of the professional associations. Furthermore, **connections with already existing advocacy groups by the religious community or the Chaplains as a group were limited at best.** The speed of the process, combined with the relative lack of networking by and political presence of the religious community and the Chaplains as a group, translated into relative ineffectiveness to bring change once the process started.
3. The support that Chaplaincy services did receive emerged too late and perhaps too reactively. Effectiveness was diminished by the factors indicated above, and by a lack of one organization or key person to lead and coordinate.
4. Political expediency and fiscal concern drove the process. As a result, there was no legislative or public discussion of the substantive issues of the State-employed Chaplaincy or of the quality of care provided by these Chaplains.
5. No one in key political positions knew (or acknowledged that they knew) what clinically trained Chaplains actually did, although all thought that they knew what a clergy person does, i.e., preach and pray. This seemed to indicate a lack of effective relationship between the administrators, elected officials, religious community, and the Chaplains themselves. Thus, there was also no effective spokesperson either within or without the structure who spoke for the clinically trained Chaplain.
6. **Past performance and reputation of clinically trained Chaplains seemed to have no effect in the overall political process.** Performance and reputation was effective in the more institutionally local workplace, where particular Chaplains were given the opportunity either to return on a contract basis, without benefits, or to move to another clinically based position required by accreditation organizations.
7. In a budgetary crisis, in a climate of package budgetary reductions, and in a highly charged political environment full of possible misunderstandings of the actual role and skills of a clinical Chaplain, Chaplains, their positions, and

their employment are vulnerable. Of the 700-800 jobs eliminated, approximately of them were Chaplaincy positions.

8. **History does not seem to have had value when the political players change.** This reinforces the vulnerability which a number of programs likely face but, in this case, underlines the vulnerability of State-funded Chaplaincy. **If history is not a principal resource or safeguard, what is? Likely it is involvement in the political process at multiple levels.** Some advocacy groups, well-known, active, organized, networked, and involved, were able to get things changed and done even in the highly charged atmosphere.
9. Even though local and national response combined was not effective in changing the outcome, there was a sense that an organized local level advocacy effort might have made a difference. There is little evidence that an organized national response would have made a difference.
10. Political and fiscal concerns and interests will continue to increase in strength in determining whether clergy will serve as Chaplains in a State-funded employee relationship to the State. While these concerns are not new, having been identified for some time by many Chaplains who work in State systems, their increased importance comes as economic conditions deteriorate.
11. Education of clergy to serve emotionally troubled persons, disabled persons, and persons in difficulty with the law has been viewed as important by agency representatives, theological schools, and the religious community. Clergy have been identified as key front-line caretakers in communities; clergy with specialized education have been viewed as important in institutions. There is little evidence that the loss of education for theological students and clergy was ever considered or addressed in any discussions concerning the decision to eliminate Chaplains. Four Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) accredited centers were affected. These centers had provided important clinical learning for theological students for almost thirty years.

V. Implications and Recommendations

A. For Effective Chaplaincy to Continue

If clinical Chaplaincy in State institutions is to continue to be funded by the public sector, the “ways” of the public sector need to be understood, dealt with proactively, and managed creatively by the local, regional, and State-wide pastoral care community. Being active, informed, and astute in settings and contexts where service is provided is crucial. The following attitudes and activities point in such a direction:

1. **Interpret continually the role** of the clinically-trained Chaplain and the value the Chaplain’s work to the full range of decision makers. The data needed for this include documentation of activities and studies produced to demonstrate the contribution of Chaplaincy to the institution’s goals and the effectiveness of the Chaplain’s activities in relationship to those goals. The attitude needed for this is a desire to enter the political and administrative

worlds of the State bureaucracy prior to a crisis in order to build the necessary foundation with key leadership.

2. **Be aware of the political dynamics** which impact Chaplaincy, assess continually the vulnerability of the Chaplaincy positions to various political forces, and develop compatibility with institutional aims. Suggestions in this regard include:
 - a. Identify someone to monitor the budgeting process to bring rapid attention to the items that will affect the Chaplain and the religious community.
 - b. Take initiatives with the State (a “How can we help you do what you want to do?” attitude) in building a pastoral care service plan.
 - c. Pay attention to agency mission statements and what their administration wants. Document what activities complement those goals. Be prepared to adapt programs and make changes as the agency and/or its administrators change.
 - d. Ensure diversity within clinical Chaplaincy corps, e.g., in race, gender, and faith groups.
 - e. **Know legislators. Meet with them. Find out what they need, and how Chaplains can be a part of addressing those needs.**
 3. **Maintain strong ties with community clergy, judicatories, local ecumenical groups, and professional associations.** Being a lone ranger is contraindicated. Suggestions in this regard include:
 - a. Inform especially the above groups of specific clinical Chaplain activities and their value.
 - b. Work to identify and/or develop networks of resources within the religious community for specific populations served.
 - c. Develop a local and State-wide response network that can quickly mobilize on a number of different but related issues.
 4. **Develop broadly-based community ties** that relate to the broad issues of human care and justice. Suggestions in this regard include:
 - a. Join or create a system that can both monitor and respond to issues relevant to ministry in specialized settings.
 - b. Partner with other groups, such as legislators, community organizations, advocacy groups, and coalitions which are at work on human care and justice issues.
 - c. Become active in issues broader than job protection. Persons who surface on the political scene only when certain jobs are at issue are perceived as being self-serving. Advocacy groups, legislators, executive administrators, and the like need to interact with Chaplains on a multitude of issues and have the experience of making a common cause. The involvement of a religious view in issues of health and public concern can be valued.
-

B. For Responding to Such Crises in the Future

COMISS and its member organizations may not be particularly effective in responding directly to a local, regional, or State-wide issue. But, COMISS and its member organizations can lead the way both in being a champion of the cause of pastoral care relevancy and effectiveness and in developing strategies, networks, and conceptualizations important to the ongoing expression of ministry in specialized settings. To this end, COMISS and its member organizations could:

- 1. Encourage the development of state organizations** which will develop a system that both monitors and responds to issues relevant to the pastoral care, counseling, and education movement.
- 2. Help to develop new paradigms** for pastoral care in specialized settings. For instance, some consider the term “Chaplain” to be limiting in adequately defining the role and responsibilities of pastoral care providers in specialized settings.
- 3. Study and develop funding options** for ministry in specialized settings. Reliance on the goodwill of persons within a State system is an acceptable strategy only in times of adequate financial resources. In tight financial times the rules of interaction change. Having alternatives to the old funding patterns seems necessary and vital.
- 4. Commission research on the contributions of Chaplains** to the treatment and rehabilitation process.
- 5. Develop an educational program to inform the religious community**, elected officials, an agency representatives about the role, training, and services provided by persons providing pastoral services in specialized settings.
- 6. Formulate pastoral care concerns** in the context of broader-based human care questions, and thus take a national initiative in relating to other national organizations around issues that both include and transcend those limited to specific pastoral care concerns.
- 7. Offer tangible support to persons impacted by such a crisis**, especially the Chaplains who are without employment. This support might include, but should not be limited to, placement services, financial assistance, support groups, and retreats.

VI. Acknowledgments

The Georgia Site Visit Team and the COMISS Public Issues Task Force wish to thank all those persons who so graciously gave of their time to be interviewed. In almost all cases, responses to the Team were welcoming, facilitative, and helpful.

The Team also wishes to thank all those persons and organizations which contributed either time or funds to make this visit a reality. We especially commend the offices of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education in Decatur, Georgia, for their hospitality in providing the meeting site and accompanying office resources.

The Team additionally wishes to acknowledge the concerned, creative, and collegial spirit which developed among its members. Opinions were often diverse, at times animated, and certainly spirited. Through it all, however, the common thread of concern for the ministry of pastoral care, counseling, and education in specialized settings remained paramount.

The Team offers this report to the PITF of COMISS and, thereby, to COMISS and its member organizations in the fervent hope that the ministry of pastoral care, counseling, and education in specialized settings can be furthered and deepened.

Bruce M. Hartung—Georgia Site Visit Team Chair
Bryn Carlson, George Doebler, William Gaventa, John Gleason,
Arne Jessen, Timothy Little, Duane Parker, Kathy Turner

—Georgia Site Visit Team Members, 7/27/92



www.COMISSNetwork.org

Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings
formerly Congress on Ministry in Specialized Settings



Note: the wisdom of this report speaks to every state-paid Chaplain. We facilitate human history's greatest resource—religion *and* precious Volunteers. We need to continue to articulate our profession and join together. Chaplaincy will *not* get easier to defend, that much I will guarantee.

www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/COMISS-1992.pdf





In Fiscal Year 2011

**120 TDCJ 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 above¹

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?



¹ Item 5, p.72, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf.
