



Chapel of Hope

From THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Seminary graduates are ready to take to their field of service, but they need chapels.

As of May 9, 2015, the State of Texas has 33 new Christian ministers. And they are not the typical seminary graduates you might image. All are convicted criminals: some convicted of homicide; some locked up for other violent crimes. The good news is that these new Field Ministers are now ready to go back to prisons across Texas to live and minister to the inmate population inside the prison gates. The bad news is most Field Ministers will not have a prison chapel in which to serve and that is what Chapel of Hope is determined to correct!



Patrick Anthony Russo of Texas is one of the 33 graduates of the prison seminary program at the Darrington Unit prison in Brazoria County. Those in the program "have changed remarkably in the four years - not just academically, but in terms of their behavior and their examples to other offenders," Brad Livingston, executive director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, said Thursday. "These offenders will have an exponential impact.

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and other Texas officials and dignitaries attending the Southwestern Theological Seminary graduation inside the Darrington Unit near Houston. Each graduate received a bachelor of science in Biblical Studies.





Lucien Joseph Parker, Tommy Quinones, and Raymond Ramirez, members of the prison seminary's first graduating class, line up inside the Darrington prison chapel to receive their diplomas.

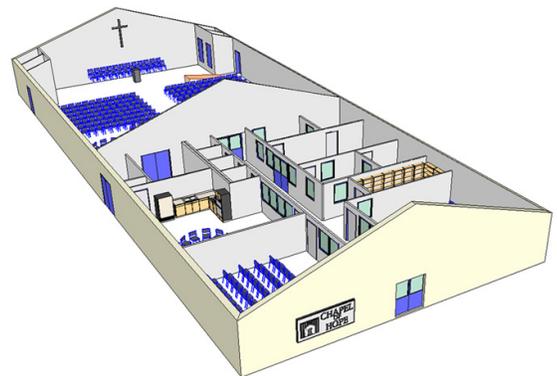
Graduates Vondre Demond Cash (from left) and Gary L. Everett smile at fellow graduate Troup Hubert Foster Jr., as he shows them his diploma. In 2010, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick – then a state senator – and Whitmire visited Angola, La., where officials credit their own program for changing the prison's decades-long culture of violence. The Texas lawmakers said the site of smiling inmates leading others in prayer moved them and helped bring the program to Texas.



Here's what new Field Ministers will find in a Chapel of Hope

- A sanctuary that seats 350 inmates
- A sound system for worship services
- Chaplain's offices and work area
- Air-conditioning, cold water fountain, baptistry, library
- Kitchenette for Kairos Prison Ministry, Day with Dads, family graduation ceremonies, staff recognition ceremonies, etc.
- 3 classrooms for weekly Bible studies and spiritual training
- 3 Restrooms for staff, visitors, and offenders
- Storage area

It costs \$1.4 million to construct a new Chapel of Hope. The cost may be great, but you can't put a price on the cost of a lost soul. Carefully consider the eternal benefits to our families of having a safer community, because released offenders' lives are transformed into becoming moral men and productive citizens.



With every gift given by generous friends like you, a Chapel of Hope *can* be built as a place to build and transform lives.

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