

Progress and Vision for Brothers in White Chapel, Inc.

Introduction

Since its establishment in January 2022, the non-profit organization Brothers in White Chapel, Inc. (BIW) has made significant strides toward the construction of two prison chapels near Navasota, Texas. The chapels are intended for the Wallace Pack unit and the O.L. Luther unit, both of which, like many other prisons across Texas, currently lack dedicated spaces for worship and Christian education for inmates.

The Need for Prison Chapels

The absence of chapels in these facilities highlights a critical need for environments that foster spiritual growth and provide opportunities for faith-based education. Research supported by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) recognizes the positive impact that prison chapels have on reducing recidivism—the likelihood of released inmates returning to prison.

No inmate desires to return to prison after release, and meaningful change must occur within the individual to remain in society. Professor Byron Johnson of Baylor University, an expert in the study of faith-based initiatives and their relationship to recidivism, has demonstrated through extensive statistical analysis that such programs significantly influence inmate outcomes. In his book, *More God Less Crime*, Johnson offers empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of faith-based approaches in substantially lowering recidivism rates among Texas inmates.

Of the 160,000 incarcerated individuals in Texas who do not engage with faith-based teachings, as many as 60% to 70% are likely to return to prison within three years of release. In contrast, those who are immersed in a faith-based environment have an equally high probability—60% to 70%—of remaining free and not returning to incarceration.

BIW Chapel Initiative

With these findings in mind, Brothers in White Chapel, Inc. was created to address the need for spiritual resources within the prison system. By constructing chapels at both the Wallace Pack and O.L. Luther units, BIW aims to reach an additional 400 to 500 men in each facility through faith-based teaching. Considering that these prisons are

expected to remain operational for the next 20 to 30 years or longer, the total number of men positively impacted will likely reach into the thousands.

Funding and Construction Process

All privately funded construction projects within TDCJ facilities must adhere to strict rules and regulations. Each chapel is projected to cost \$2 million, and BIW has already raised more than \$1.2 million toward this goal. Although there is still a considerable distance to go before the completion of the first chapel, the BIW Board firmly believes that God will provide the necessary funds.

To ensure the project's success, BIW has commissioned GLS Architects to finalize the design of the chapel and oversee the selection of a General Contractor. TDCJ has approved the chapel locations and has expressed strong support for the initiative. Currently, preparations are underway to begin the site survey and conduct the geotechnical evaluation for the first chapel at the Pack unit, marking the start of the construction phase.

Appreciation and Call to Prayer

The BIW Board of Directors extends heartfelt gratitude to all donors supporting the chapel project, including many from FBC Bryan and Christ Church. The organization is also deeply appreciative of contributions from inmates and their families. It is our prayer that funding continues to flow until both chapels are fully completed and operational. We ask for continued prayers for the completion and successful utilization of these chapels, which will serve as beacons of hope and transformation for countless individuals over the years ahead.

Board of Directors:

Glen Wise, James Conley, George Faulkner, Tom Barnes, Tex Tonroy

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