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# The Chaplain on Board Initiative

A brief introduction

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Hope at the end of the road

JULY 12

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The Chaplain on Board Initiative

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***Welcome to the journey of a lifetime. Everyone participates for a season, until its time to hand over the baton to the next generation. Let us not miss the hand-over. Let us have something of value, to pass on – Willie du Toit (COBI Founder & Visionary)***

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# Mission Statement

**Building a strong corps of ordinary people to do extraordinary work during times of crisis, disaster, trauma, and any occurrence, disrupting the normal functioning of individuals, communities, groups, or organizations. Serving those affected and in need through compassion, bringing comfort, and consolation and physical acts of support.**

**We do this through training, equipping, availing, and placing Caregivers in any and every situation where such a service may be required.**

**We serve without reservation, love without condition and work without compensation. Simply put, our aim is to avail each Organization, Group, Company, or Institution to have a Chaplain on Board.**

## Our Vision

**To bring comfort, consolation, and compassion to people in times of crisis, through volunteers with a passion for people. As our slogan clearly states:**

**“Ordinary people with an Extra-ordinary passion for the well-being of others”**

## About us

**The Chaplain on Board Initiative, fondly referred to as COBI, by the marketplace and those we serve, is a registered non-profit company with registration number 2012/208030/08, officially registered on the 22 of November 2012.**

**Five directors founded it, all with a passion for the well-being and healing of those affected by traumatic incidents, accidents, and occurrences. Though we are a Christian based organization, the following must be emphasized:**

- **We do not promote any religion, nor do we present any belief system to those we serve**
- **We serve humanity in its total, irrespective of culture, race, religion, gender preference, political affiliation, or sexual orientation.**
- **We serve without prejudice, preference, preconceived opinions and without judgement**

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- We follow the mindset that trauma knows no boundaries, nor does healing present any barriers
  - Our goal is to reach those in need of healing to provide them, with their personal, preferred pathway towards healing
  - We are constantly aware of the diversity of our Communities and our duty and responsibility towards humanity – to heal without causing more harm and to restore without interference, causing confusion

## **Brief introduction: Our founding Director**

### **The planting of a seed:**

Our founding director, Willie du Toit is a former high-ranking law enforcement officer. During his early years, his superiors identified Willie's skills, characteristics, and natural passion, for the well-being of others, and suggested that he investigated the possibility of establishing and introducing a national spiritual and emotional care program in the form of a chaplaincy program, to the traffic profession, in South Africa. This was a new concept in South Africa in the 1980's and foreign to the local law enforcement profession, in general.

At that stage, though trauma amongst law enforcers had already claimed its toll, the timing of such a programmed proved to be premature, according to mindsets, and the general culture within the profession. Admitting you required assistance was frowned upon and caused law enforcers to hide their true state of mind and mentality. The seed, however, had been planted deep within the mind and heart of Willie.

### **Watering the seed:**

By 1993 the toll of dealing with deaths, crime scenes, traumatized people, and constant lack of spiritual and emotional support, Willie found himself in a position where he was ready to end it all. During one particular week of service, he dealt with eighteen deaths from Sunday to the following Sunday. It varied from brutal crime scenes to horrific accident scenes where in one incident, a 6-year-old boy died in his arms at an accident scene, while Willie sat with him in pouring rain, trying to shield him from the elements.

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**Alone in his apartment, Willie sat with his loaded firearm, one Saturday morning. His career having caused havoc mentally and physically, affecting even his relationship with his loved ones. As he sat, looking for some kind of spiritual intervention, there was a knock on the front door. He stood up from where he was sitting on the couch, ready to end it all, and opened the door. At the door stood three people, part a Christian group, known for their community outreach program. Though Willie did not invite them in, their brief message to him was clear enough as one of them said: “God loves you very much, and He cares for you. He knows what you are going through.”**

**Once they left, Willie closed the door and broke down, allowing years of traumatic stress, pressure, and the lack of support to find its way to the surface. That knock on his door saved his life. A simple act made the difference as someone cared enough to come knocking on the door of someone in need of healing. Hours later, through a deep and painful process, Willie made a promise that he would use that experience, to create moments where those in similar situations, will hear a timeous knock on their door before it is too late.**

**Willie resigned at age 37 from an extremely successful career as law enforcer, at the peak of his profession to enter fulltime ministry, fueled by his passion for the well-being of others, bringing along invaluable experience, and an unusual composition of skills, expertise, qualifications, and characteristics. Today, over 25 years later, having been further developed in various other avenues at international level, he heads up that which started as a small seed, way back in the 1980’s.**

**Willie’s curriculum vitae is available on request.**

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## **Our Team**

### **Current Board of Directors:**

**Willie du Toit, Jacqueline du Toit, Zithulele Vilane, Gerrie Duvenage & Billy Selekane. Three Board Members are serving in a voluntary capacity whilst the two founding members and visionaries, serve in a more permanent and executive capacity, though, at this stage, without compensation.**

### **Operational Team:**

**2 x Operational Managers as volunteers - Ekurhuleni**

**2 x Regional Overseers for the Vaal Region, as volunteers**

**1 x Regional Overseer Nelson Mandela Metro, as volunteer. We are in the process of establishing an Office in the Eastern Cape and have a scheduled training seminar from 25 – 30 of July, to train a large group of Chaplains for the area. An estimated twenty plus new volunteer Chaplains will be trained as a start.**

**We have in the excess of fifty trained volunteer Chaplains in the team currently, with a projected growth of thirty new volunteer chaplains per month.**

**Please note that due to the fact that we have been waiting for an appointment as Spiritual & Emotional Caregivers for a specific law enforcement agency within Ekurhuleni, we operated as volunteers and funded our own operations, to date, thus the small numbers involved.**

### **The Chaplain on Board Training Academy:**

**Our students have two options to choose from –**

- 1. Do the Training online**
- 2. Attend a 4-day training seminar in person**

**Obviously with the outbreak of Covid-19 we had to improvise and recorded our training session and placed it on an online platform. You may visit this**

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platform at <http://www.cobi.moodlecloud.com>. Visitors have access to three video clips, after which they have to enroll order to access our full course. A course fee is attached to enrolment. Those who wishes to be trained as Chaplains, have to do this introductory course. We also train Chaplains for other Chaplaincies and organizations. Our syllabus is available on request. Typical time to complete our Introductory course is between 32 – 45 hours.

We also offer more advanced training for those wishing to improve themselves and offer specialized training for those wanting to be developed in a specific field of operations. All COBI Chaplains have to be on permanent training, attending compulsory sessions, seminars, and conferences. Currently all lecturers are volunteers and seasoned Chaplains and experts in various fields.

### **Expectations from our students:**

Although our training is open to all, the Students who wish to be ordained as COBI Chaplains, are expected to be in good standing with a local Church, have a good reputation within their communities and follow a Biblical lifestyle.

- Students have to pass a written exam
- Provide letters of commendation from leaders
- SAPS must vet COBI Chaplains
- COBI Chaplains must adhere to our code of conduct, disciplinary procedures, protocol, and standard operational procedures.

All successful students receive a certificate of completion, whilst COBI Chaplains is awarded an Ordination certificate, appointment letter as volunteer chaplain, a COBI Chaplaincy Badge, and an identity card. COBI Chaplains must pay a yearly accreditation fee to receive an updated certificate of ordination, and identity card. Their status with the SAPS is also updated.

### **Accreditation:**

### **Current status:**

In the initial stages of our operations, we approached various local, recognized accreditation bodies in South Africa to obtain accreditation. After investigation assorted options we discovered the following:

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- That the recognized accreditation bodies would make our courses too expensive, and unaffordable to the market we wanted to train, as their accreditation fees had to be added unto our course prices. Apart from this, we did not have such fees available to obtain accreditation.
  - That some of these accreditation bodies literally would have “thinned” out our material to make it less “bulky” to suit their market.
  - We are however not against any accreditation or regulatory body, though to us the outcome of our course is more important than the academic qualification.
  - It must also be mentioned that Chaplaincy, currently, in South Africa is not offered by accreditation bodies as a stand-alone academic course. Some government universities and institutions that offers theology, includes a subject on Chaplaincy, at the most. None of these institutions major in Chaplaincy as an academic study direction.
  - We have however been approached by a National University as they are looking at implementing our Chaplaincy training as a compulsory subject for all their future Theology students. We are not sure whether this will in fact be taken further by them, at this stage.
  - We are currently in discussions with an International Educational Institute (American based), to grant our courses accreditation. Our courses have been provisionally accepted by them and the process should be concluded in the near future. Through them, COBI will offer a Certificate Course in Chaplaincy, completed over a period of 12 months. It will consist of our current Introductory course, with successful students accredited with three study credits out of a total of thirty study credits to obtain the certificate. Completion of our Introductory course will also grant access to enrolment with this Institution. This Institution however is not accredited according to accreditation bodies in South Africa as they do not seek local accreditation. As a matter of clarity, one study credit is granted for every 12 – 15 real study hours. So, in order to obtain thirty credit hours for the award of a Chaplaincy certificate, our students would have spent a minimum of 360 physical hours on their subjects.

In conclusion of this section, COBI is desirous to positively contribute towards the upgrading of the academic status of all Chaplaincy Training material, course, and platforms. We are keen to create, or join in partnership with all interested parties, an accreditation board, a professional institute for Chaplains and to raise the standards of a much-needed service within a

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traumatized country. At the moment Chaplaincy in the Community is where the Security industry was years ago, before it was professionalized. Those days security services were unregulated, and considered to be a function you give to an unemployed person who was willing to guard your premise at night, at minimum wage, with even less education, skills, and status. Our Communities deserve much better, their cry as they are bombarded with trauma, should tell us, Community Chaplains are here to stay, and they are an essential service and no longer just a hobby someone practices in between their day jobs.

### **Strictly confidential:**

We are however in the final stage of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with this agency, to officially offer them spiritual & emotional care services. Due to financial constraints and lack of available funding from their side, we will offer this service free of charge, but with the support of sponsors and other financial partners. Currently this agency has no support system in place and are in dire need for such a program, a process Willie du Toit has been pursuing and pioneering for several years, with this specific law enforcement agency.

Once this agreement has been signed, a public announcement will be made by both Cobi and the agency involved, and a public launch of the program will be done.

### **Immediate plans:**

#### **Law Enforcement Agency Support Program:**

With the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding, we will serve the law enforcement agency's staffing compliment of several thousand on a 24-hour standby basis during all traumatic incidents, accidents, and occurrences. We will be responsible to debrief them after their shifts, after traumatic events, support them during crisis situations and train and equip them regarding resiliency, handling stress related incidents and dealing with depression, substance abuse and other harmful practices. This agency has personnel and operations in all nine cities within Ekurhuleni.

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**Cobi has an operational plan, projected budget, and a needs analysis in place, to be implemented once the agreement has been signed, as the need is great and the service overdue.**

**With this service in place, we will employ a compliment of staff on a permanent basis, and expand our volunteer team, to be able to render efficient and excellent service to a profession in great need of our assistance.**

**Included in this agreement is our availability to the families of these law enforcers, and the community at large.**

### **National Child Protection Unit Support Program:**

**Research by current role players within the arena of Child protection indicates that a tremendous need exists for the expansion of their services. Whilst child abuse is on the rise, much of it goes undetected and unresolved. Not only is there a lack of funding, but also a shortage in manpower as well as shortcomings in the reporting of incidents of suspected abuse. The agencies and departments tasked with the investigating of reported abuse cases, lack the infra structure, resources and at times, the time to follow up on such reports, causing many cases to fall through the cracks.**

**Cobi has been approached to enter into discussions to see if we can make a positive contribution to the existing systems and structures. The suggestion is that we train, equip, and establish a permanent Child protection Chaplaincy unit to assist in following up such reports of cases of alleged child abuse, make an assessment and give more substantial and concrete feedback for the authorities to then take the matter further. This Chaplaincy unit will then also support the children and affected families throughout any proceedings which may arise from such a reported case.**

### **Establishing a 24-hours Support Centre:**

**Though there are various independent, private Chaplaincies operating in certain communities all over the Country, none of them are profitable, sustainable, and working together in a united effort to heal our land. Each one of these groups are passionate about what they do, supported by like-minded volunteers, and have to make do with mostly personal resources, or small donations from rare donors. Although the services offered by these groups**

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often saves lives, it is all done without compensation. Many of the volunteers are employed full-time within another industry, causing their availability to be limited and their resources to be stretched.

When an incident or an accident occur, the public calls an emergency Centre, who dispatches the necessary services. Some of these centers are aware of the existence and availability of Chaplains, whilst many are not. In many cases, where a Chaplain should have been on a scene, it never happened due to a lack of communication and networking between service providers.

Our aim is to establish a 24-hour support Centre, specifically in view of rendering spiritual and emotional care to every community, within South Africa. All existing wellness and spiritual and emotional care groups will be registered within the data base and be encouraged to be linked to such a support Centre. In this manner, there will always be support on hand, no matter the frequency of trauma, the need for support or the location of the request.

Cobi has already identified a potential partnership for such a 24-hour support Centre, with a company, within Ekurhuleni.

### **Other Agencies & Government departments:**

Various government agencies and departments dealing with the well-being and social upliftment of communities have expressed their concern for the emotional well-being of their own staff, as many of these staff members who frequently have to deal with the struggles, challenges, and problems of community members, show obvious signs of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. This occurs over a period of time when someone is continuously exposed to the suffering of others. For example, the translators used during court cases as they hear the heartbreaking

### **Medium & long-term plans:**

We have enquiries from various other provinces and metropolitan areas to expand our service to their regions. Currently we are gradually training volunteers within these regions as preparation for expansion. Our immediate focus however is on the establishing of our service to the law enforcement

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agency identified in Ekurhuleni, as we are in the final stages of concluding our agreement and at the brink of the implementation of the service. Once we are comfortable with the operations and well established, we will use the same model to replicate our services in other regions and provinces.

## **COBI – THIS IS WHAT WE OFFER**

### **Chaplains – Who are they?**

Chaplaincy is an ancient profession which has its origin when Saint Martin of Tours (born 316 AD), as a young Roman soldier, saw a half-frozen beggar, lying half naked in the snow. Out of concern and compassion for the well-being of this man, Martin cut his cloak into two, and covered the man with one half. It is all he had, and he decided to share that which he had. He is also known as Martin the merciful.

That evening young Martin had a dream and in his dream the Lord Jesus Christ was wearing the other half of his cloak or cape, which he gave the beggar. The profession of Chaplaincy was born out of this unselfish deed. The word Chaplain basically means “to share and to cover those in need”. Chaplains go out into their communities, find those in need, share what they have and cover those with compassion and the support required to bring them through whatever season they are faced with.

Traditionally Chaplains were attached to military units and state institutions, but all over the world, as the need for caregivers increased day-by-day, chaplains have become an ordinary sight within many countries, communities, and organizations. Thus, the establishment of COBI with the vision to raise up chaplains for every community, company, organization and occasion where the challenges of life threatens the well-being of humanity.

Chaplains are trained to bring immediate relief to victims whilst still on the scene of trauma, or to journey with them long after the incident. Chaplains form part of a network of service providers, all linked together to assist victims of trauma towards complete healing and ultimate restoration. Without the involvement of Chaplains, the pathway towards spiritual and emotional healing is neglected and for that reason we live in a society with scared, but healed

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bodies, and emotions unable to cope with the challenges ahead. Bodily scars are obvious signs of past wounds and physical healing, whilst mental scars are signs of the existence of untreated emotional wounds. Chaplains are trained to detect invisible scars and assist in the healing of undetected wounds.

## **Two approaches – One goal:**

Cobi Chaplains are all trained to be pro-actively and re-actively involved in their communities.

### **Proactive approach:**

A Chaplain is also an ambassador or advocate for the well-being of their communities. Usually, they will assess the challenges their communities are faced with and introduce pro-active measures, programs, and projects to educate, prevent and support their communities to build resilience or an awareness towards the dangers of such challenges. For instance, if there is a high presence of drug abuse, a chaplain will bring role players into the community to support those who require professional help, run workshops, campaigns and other educational projects on drug abuse, in the community. They constantly stay ahead of the needs of their communities and ensure continuous access to support systems. Our Chaplains build relationships, form partnerships, and establish and maintain effective networks of service providers, to be activated during times of trauma and or disasters.

### **Re-active approach:**

Chaplains are trained and equipped and always ready and on standby to assist the community, law enforcement, disaster management, medical responders and any organization, company, group, or institution, affected by any traumatic event, at any time. They respond to the call for help of an individual and are there when an entire community is devastated by a disaster. During this time, they activate their networks, call upon their partners and bring in the service providers they have built relationships with. Chaplains are bridge builders, liaison officers, carriers of hope and servants of all.

In short, one goal - Chaplains love to serve and serve to love.

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# **SOME OF OUR ACTIVITIES**

## **A brief glimpse:**

### **Since our inception (November 2012)**

**Our Chaplains have been to innumerable suicide scenes, attempted suicides, accidents scenes, disaster scenes, both natural and man-made, crime scenes, involved in search and rescue operations, conveyed death notifications, debriefing and counselling sessions, hostage situations and many more incidents, accidents and occurrences causing trauma, devastation, and destruction.**

**We have supported the South African Police Services, Metropolitan Police Departments, Ambulance Services, Medical Responders, Schools and other Educational Institutions, Government Departments, Corporate Companies, businesses, Airports and places of entertainment and recreational facilities.**

**As Chaplains we have done hospital visits, conducted funerals, visited orphanages, fed the hungry, clothed those in need, held services at Old Age Homes, prayer meetings at Police stations and so much more.**

**We have been at the birth of child of a stranger where we laughed out of pure joy, celebrating new life. We have been at the death of a stranger, weeping and mourning with the family for the loss of someone we never knew. We sat with Mothers and Fathers who lost their children, husbands who lost their wives and wives who lost their husbands. We had to console children who suddenly became orphans and answer impossible questions and explain the unexplainable.**

**We have trained hundreds of volunteer chaplains and sent them to the four corners of the earth.**

**We weep with those who mourn, and we celebrate with those who rejoice. We bring hope to the hopeless and find a way forward for those who lost their way. We seek no glory, nor do we crave the applause of man. All we truly ask is for an opportunity to pass it on. To wake up when the next call comes, be able to do it one more time. We are Chaplains, the world our workshop and the broken our mission.**

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## **The past six months:**

Incidents received for the period December 2022 to June 2023

Month	Call serviced by COBI	Call not serviced by COBI	Total calls received via various emergency groups
December 22	5	4	9
January 23	6	12	18
February 23	5	6	11
March 23	11	17	28
April 23	12	27	39
May 23	13	18	31
June 23	16	8	24
Total	68	92	160

The above are only incidents that were posted on emergency chaplaincy groups and are mainly related to small companies and the community. Volunteers did these callouts, with limited support and in many cases, personal resources. For this reason, many calls remain unattended, or incomplete. Evidently Chaplaincy should become a recognized, well-supported essential service.

For the sake of giving interested parties a glimpse into the role of our Chaplains, herewith a brief description of certain incidents:

### **2 January 2023**

Call came through at approximately 21H56 requesting a Chaplain for a shooting incident at a security company office, where one guard was shot and passed away. On arrival the chaplain spoke to the officer on duty, as she was extremely traumatized as she witnessed the shooting on the CCTV camera system, and she could not warn her colleague. After a full and detailed debriefing, she acknowledged she could not have done anything to save her colleague. The chaplain went with the deceased Pastor to deliver the death notification to his family. The Chaplain stood down at approximately 01:15

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### **12 April 2023**

Call came through at approximately 12:59, a private garbage collection vehicle accidentally drove over a coworker, he was declared deceased on the scene. The driver and the crew were in a state of shock and traumatized. The chaplain managed to speak to every staff member on the scene and just by being present and speaking to them brought calmness and acceptance. The Chaplain got them some water as it was an extremely hot day.

### **21 June 2023**

Call came through at approximately 11:50, requesting a chaplain at a nursery school where a 4-year-old child passed away due to a heart attack. 2 Chaplains were dispatched, as at the time of the call, we were not sure how many children witnessed the incident.

The chaplains assessed the situation and one spoke to the teaching staff and one went to speak to the security guard. All the staff was emotional, and the chaplain just allowed them to speak. The security guard was grateful (as they all seem to forget about him) that someone was there for him. He broke down and cried on the chaplain shoulder. We were requested to assist at the memorial service to be held at the school. A group of chaplains were present, and they gave emotional support to the staff and parents of the scholars attending the school.

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## ***Boksburg Tanker Explosion – 24 December 2022***

### **Explosion report -Tambo Memorial Hospital**

**We include this summarized report, as it gives a clearer picture of the work, operations, and essential service we as Chaplains render during times of disaster:**

**On Saturday 24 December 2022 at 07:49 a message came through on the Trauma support group regarding a tanker truck and a vehicle that exploded on Hospital and Railway roads in Boksburg. An urgent request came in for immediate assistance from our chaplains.**

**Below please find the activities of the various chaplains at the above scene:**

- a. Chaplain Romeo Appies Arrived on scene approximately 08:45. Although he works for Transnet, he arrived at the scene in his capacity as Chaplain. Being a Transnet employee, he immediately assessed the situation, and looked for probable causes of the explosion, for safety purposes. His first impression was that a Transnet Freight Rail tanker exploded. Before he proceeded with his functions as Chaplain, he called his Transnet manager to dispatch their hazmat team to assist. He was directed to the Incident Commander Mr. Muzi Myoza who briefed him on what they believed happened, and Chaplain Romeo was then tasked to contact the train control officer of PRASA to establish whether the train lines were still in operation and if so, ensure all train movements to that area were ceased. These train lines are non-operational. At this stage, there were talks of another possible gas leak on the southern side of the damaged bridge, and all emergency personnel were instructed to evacuate the area in case there was another explosion.**

**Chaplain Romeo was situated on the north side of the scene He waited for the safety clearance and proceeded to go to the private houses and offered physical and emotional support. He stood down at 13:30.**

- b. Chaplain Louise Esterhuyzen arrived on the scene 08:30. She inquired where the immediate help was needed. She was directed to the opposite side of the railway bridge. It was absolute devastation, and she could smell the odor of scorched flesh. There were seven bodies covered and most of the injured were in the process of being moved to the hospital. As a medical first responder and Chaplain, her priority was to assist with**

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the medical needs. She teamed up with emergency medical staff to assist in the declaration of the deceased and placing them with the other bodies, where SAPS had to compile and complete their documentation. At approximately 11:00 they received word of another possible gas leak that could potentially cause another explosion. They evacuated the area. She assisted in setting up an area for volunteers where they could get some water and other refreshments. All available first responders proceeded to the hospital to assist with the evacuation of hospital patients as it was established the hospital suffered structural damage. She assisted in transporting water containers to the drop off points. She stood down at 14:15.

- c. Chaplain Amanda Morison Arrived on the scene at 08:15 as a former nurse. She assisted the medical staff in bandaging the wounds of burned patients. She proceeded to collect water from the collection points and handed the water to the emergency workers. Once all the patients were assisted, they were told to evacuate the area due to another possible gas leak. She stood down at 10:45.
- d. The Global Commander of COBI, Director Willie Du Toit arrived at approximately 09h00 to assess the situation and to determine the immediate need for assistance by COBI. After consulting with all services on scene, he activated the necessary COBI personnel and resources required to deal with the emergency. He stayed on scene, setting up a soft barrier, where all movements of vehicles, people services and resources could be controlled and directed as required.

This was done in accordance to international safety standards to limit access into the disaster zone and to be the first point of contact by everyone who approached the scene, enabling them to have first contact with relatives, friends and other parties who rushed to the scene to look for their loved ones, who potentially could have been affected by the explosion. Scores of people heard about the explosion in the media, and rushed to the scene to get more information, especially being a hospital and patients affected. A team of COBI Chaplains managed this entry point, to alleviate the pressure on the hospital and the other role players. No-one was allowed to enter the scene and the surrounding field of operations, without being interviewed and thoroughly screened as an essential service, required on scene. Our Chaplains are trained to make a rapid assessment, without unnecessary delay to essential and emergency services, and to create quick and efficient flow from this point, into and

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onto the scene. This controlled access point remained in place and operated by COBI until 15h00, when the most pressure surrounding the scene, had been dealt with.

**25 December 2022 – 28<sup>th</sup> of December:**

**COBI Chaplains continued to render assistance to the hospital, emergency services, clean-up teams and surrounding community, to work through the effects of this devastating incident. Chaplains gradually worked their way through the list of traumatized people.**

**High on the list of priorities was the Brits family, who lost four children in the explosion, as well as the staff of the OR Tambo Memorial hospital who lost many staff members. COBI were officially asked by the CEO of the hospital to take responsibility for debriefing and counseling of all affected staff.**

**Trauma counselling commenced, which took approximately three weeks, to work through the list. Our Chaplains worked around the clock, sometimes doing counselling sessions at midnight, to accommodate night shift personnel and other shift workers from other departments, such as security officers.**

**The Premier of Gauteng, Mr. Panyaza Lesufi visited the scene as well as some of the families of the deceased hospital staff. COBI Chaplains were tasked to join him and accompany him to the homes of the families, to render spiritual and emotional support during his visit.**

**On Friday 30 December 2022, an official memorial service was held in Boksburg Town Hall. COBI chaplains were tasked to be stationed in the wings of the hall to assist any person, should they have an emotional breakdown.**

**On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December, a large group of COBI Chaplains attended the funeral of the four children, who died in the explosion. The purpose of their attendance was to support the immediate family, the community and those affected by the grievous circumstances.**

**During the weeks, immediately after the disaster, our Chaplains attended many of the funerals of the deceased, held prayer meetings with the community, collected and delivered food parcels, clothes and other essential commodities. One of our Chaplains, a trained nurse, visited patients at home and assisted them in wound management and taking care of serious burns.**

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**To date, our Chaplains are still involved with the affected Community in Boksburg on a weekly basis.**

**It is estimated that during this disaster, thousands of rands were spent by COBI and our Chaplains, all funded from personal resources, as COBI currently has no other financial partners and supporters. To date, we have not approached potential sponsors, but with the rapid and evident increase in the need for our services, we are in urgent need of financial support, to enable us to render this service, and to be available at all times.**

**(Attached find a letter from the CEO of OR Tambo memorial Hospital)**

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# FINAL THOUGHTS

## **Some benefits to have a Chaplain on Board:**

### **The American Market**

**Chaplaincy in America has been considered an essential service for many years already. Though their original field of operation also started in the traditional sense such as the Military, it gradually found it way into almost every part of society.**

**There was also a pioneering phase with visionaries identifying the need for Chaplaincy with law enforcement agencies. Slowly but surely individuals made inroads into these departments as volunteers, serving them out of concern for their well-being, driven by nothing more than a passion, to be available during times of need. As the value of these services became evident, it became more structured, organized and eventually it became an essential, rather than a nice-to-have. Chaplains became professionals, and Chaplaincy a recognized career with remuneration and benefits, like any other profession.**

**Soon this started flowing into the marketplace, schools, educational institutions, the corporate world, hospitals, and places where people are traumatized or potentially could be traumatized through their careers and employment. Today it is unusual to find a school or university without a permanently employed Chaplain. It is strange to walk into a Government Institution and discover they have no Chaplain on hand. Companies employ Chaplains to take care of the needs of their staff and large non-governmental Chaplaincy groups exist in almost every community to deal with disasters and traumatic incidents. When a hurricane hits, one of the first groups to be on scene, will a Chaplaincy, trained equipped and resourced to bring immediate relief.**

**To them Chaplains are not a part-time function, nor an unnecessary expense. They are an asset to their Communities as much as law enforcement officers are.**

**Companies can approach a Chaplaincy and request a Chaplain to be placed with them. A suitable candidate will then be sourced to fit into that specific**

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company, be trained as Chaplain, and then outsourced to the Company on a contract basis, similar to contracting and outside security company. This Chaplain is employed by the Chaplaincy, but outsourced to where a need exists.

**Concisely, Companies in America have discovered the following, since employing Chaplains:**

- **Increases employee retention**
- **Decreases employee absenteeism**
- **Increases employee productivity**
- **Improves workplace safety**
- **Reduces employee stress**
- **Increases employee commitment to company goals and objectives**
- **Reduces employee conflicts**
- **Increases employee loyalty to the company**
- **Improves employee attitudes**
- **Increases employee morale and teamwork**
- **People feel valued**

## **Our Submission for the South Africa Market:**

**No Company or Organization can exist without the valuable resource known as staff or personnel. They are the reason you are able to offer what you promise to your clients, whether a product or service. Irrespective of the size of your staffing compliment, each one of them has been carefully selected for their expertise in your particular sector of the market or industry. Many of them come at a considerate price, especially if we operate in a more specialized service or production market. Most of us know how to maintain expensive equipment and how to prolong its life expectancy, but have we ever thought of the well-being of our staff?**

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**It is for this reason we at the Chaplain on Board Initiative took a hard and sincere look at the American market, where they have been employing Marketplace or Corporate Chaplains for many years already, with outstanding results! This is what they offer to their market, and prompted us, to follow suit:**

### **Employee Care Services**

***"Marketplace Chaplains USA, the world's original and leading provider of chaplains to corporate America is a proactive and personalized Employee Care Service. Client companies are assigned a team of male, female, ethnically diverse chaplains who visit the work site regularly, and are available for crisis care, any needed help, and confidential discussions 24 hours a day, 365 days a year nationwide. On behalf of company leaders, Chaplain Care Teams help meet the needs of employees and family members under an umbrella of compassion and concern.***

***Our chaplains care for the most valuable assets of our corporate clients – employees and their families. Our specialized Employee Care Services produces many benefits for the client company, as chaplains build work site relationships, provide a wide range of chaplain team services for employees, and give support to company leadership. Increased employee loyalty to the company and appreciation for company management, reduced employee absenteeism and turnover and increased productivity are just a few of the many benefits of the Employee Care Program that companies receive by establishing a "Partnership of Caring" with Marketplace Chaplains USA." (An extract from: the Marketplace Chaplains America's marketing campaign).***

**When COBI was established, after thoroughly investigating and studying the American model, this was the drive and vision of the founding directors –**

**To have a Chaplain on board of every company, organization, institution, and community, hence our name: THE CHAPLAIN ON BOARD INITIATIVE.**

**As non-profit Company, we are willing to pioneer this next step, we as a Nation has to take, if we are serious about healing our nation, uniting our diverse communities, and overcoming our challenges. But to do this, we require support from other pioneers in every industry!**

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**We are bold enough to ask you:**

**Whatever your position may be, an individual or a group, get on board today!**

Join us today in this remarkable journey towards a better tomorrow! Whether you are an individual looking to serve your fellow man or an Organization responsible for the well-being of others, get on board and begin to serve humanity in a spectacular way. I guarantee you, before long, you will begin to hear the following question being asked more frequently:

"EXCUSE ME, BUT DO YOU PERHAPS HAVE A CHAPLAIN ON BOARD...?"

## **For Financial Contributions:**

**The Chaplain on Board Initiative holds an active Banking account with ABSA Bank:**

**Name of account: The Chaplain on Board Initiative**

**Current Account number – 410 8455 254**

**Branch Code: 632005**

**Swift Code: ABSAZAJJ**



**Premier of Gauteng thanking Chaplain Lorraine Greeff for the support**



**Group of Cobi Chaplains with Premier of Gauteng**



**Bringing comfort to the families of those who died during the explosion. Cobi – bringing comfort during crisis**



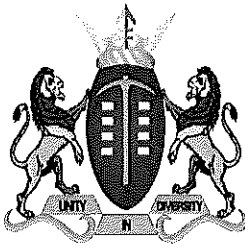
**During grief, actions speak where words fail. A Cobi Chaplain embraces a grief-stricken member of one of the deceased**



A group of Cobi Chaplains at a memorial service in Boksburg for victims of the explosion.



Cobi's involvement & support to the Community affected by the explosion, attracted attention of the media, locally and overseas. One of our Chaplains was interviewed by a German television news channel about Cobi's role.



## **GAUTENG PROVINCE**

HEALTH  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE CEO

Mr Z K O Ndabula

**Tambo Memorial Hospital**

☎ : (011) 898-8317

☎ : (011) 892-0358

✉ : [Zenzo.Ndabula2@gauteng.gov.za](mailto:Zenzo.Ndabula2@gauteng.gov.za)

10 July 2023

To whom it may concern.  
COBI Chaplains  
Benoni

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SERVICE FROM COBI CHAPLAINS**

This serves to acknowledge and confirm that COBI chaplains have been assisting the hospital staff and the community from the day of the gas explosion on 24 December 2022 to date. The assistance included staff counselling services for day and night staff as well as burns dressings for patients in the community. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

I therefore commend them for the good work they have done and continue to do.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Z K O Ndabula  
Chief Executive Officer