



# CHURCH AND PRISON PASTORAL CARE IN KENYA

Initiatives the church in Kenya has put into practice in the  
face of social and ecclesial challenges faced by the prison  
ministry.

# CHURCH'S INTERVENTION TO PRISON PASTORAL CARE IN KENYA

- The initiatives that the Church in Kenya has developed and put into practice in the face of the social and ecclesial challenges faced by the Prison Ministry show a very close collaboration between state and various Faiths in ensuring the prisoners are well taken care of in terms of pastoral care.
- This collaboration is also affected by the various institutional challenges within the Kenya Prison system and the society at large.



## KENYA'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

- **Kenya**- officially the **Republic of Kenya**, is a country in East Africa.
- Kenya attained its independence in 1963 and became a republic in 1964
- With its capital city in Nairobi, Kenya has numerous wildlife reserves containing thousands of animal species.
- It has a land area of 580,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of nearly 43 million residents, representing many different peoples and cultures.
- The country is named after Mount Kenya, a significant landmark and second among Africa's highest mountain peaks.



## KENYA PRISONS SERVICE

- Kenya Prisons Service is under the Department of Correctional Service in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government . The department is responsible for containment and keeping in safe custody of prisoners for rehabilitation and facilitating access to justice for those still with pending cases.

### *Other key tasks include:*

- Rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners through vocational training, psychological and spiritual counseling for reintegration back into the society.



## CONTINUED.....

- Provision of basic human needs especially water supply, food, medication, clothing and beddings.
- Promoting inter-agency collaboration and partnership with stakeholders.
- Research and monitoring of crime trends in the country.
- The Department has 114 penal institutions with an average population of 50,000 to 55,000 inmates



## BASIC STATISTICS ABOUT KENYA PRISON

- The population of inmates currently is 50 947, male, female and juveniles.
- Male prisoners: Non-Convicted- 17 575  
Convicted- 30 083  
**Total** 47 658
- Female prisoners: Non- Convicted 1044  
Convicted 1371  
**Total** 2415
- Juvenile (Youth) inmates 874



# KENYA PRISONS SERVICE VISION, MISSION AND MOTTO

## *Vision*

- A Correctional Service of excellence in Africa and beyond.

## *Mission*

- To contain offenders in humane, safe conditions in order to facilitate responsive administration of justice, rehabilitation and social reintegration for public protection

## *Motto*

- Rehabilitation and justice



# CHALLENGES OF KENYA PRISON SERVICE

- Prison conditions
- Overcrowding
- Inadequate rehabilitation programs
- Lack of sufficient and skilled chaplains
- Delay of cases - justice delayed is justice denied.
- Recidivism





# GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO PRISON CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

- Throughout the long history of corrections, religious persons and religious institutions have greatly influenced the treatment of offenders. For centuries, churches were among the first institutions to provide asylum for accused criminals. The actual establishment of prisons and penitentiaries was a religious idea that allowed the offender to obtain penance for his crimes, make amends, and convert while being isolated from others. But probably the most significant influence was the establishment of a regular chaplaincy.



## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED.....

- Kenya's first paid chaplains were enlisted in 1963 after the country's independence.
- Their main role was to provide education and counseling for inmates. Currently, many inmates practice their religion on an individual basis or within the structure of an organized religious program.
- Religious programs are common place in all prisons in Kenya and have a very big impact on offender rehabilitation and victim reconciliation.
- Since 2002 the prison system in Kenya has moved from being punitive to rehabilitation and reintegration.



## LEGAL MANDATE OF KENYA PRISONS CHAPLAINCY

- Spiritual services are provided by the Prisons Chaplaincy Services established under chapter 73 of the Kenya prisons service standing orders and section 70 of the prisons Act cap 90.
- Whereas section 70 of the Act provides for the minister responsible for prisons to appoint priests of any religious faith to be prison ministers, chapter 73 of the service standing orders provide for establishment of a chaplaincy services consisting of Islamic, Roman Catholic , Seventh day and protestant Christian faiths.
- All these have a defined role to play in their pastoral care to prisoners staff and their families.



## VOLUNTEER CHAPLAINS

- Volunteer chaplains from parishes near prisons offer mass and administer sacraments to prisoners and staff within their jurisdictions.
- Government permits are issued to them on annual basis to facilitate their entry into the prisons.
- Dioceses have also seconded priests who also work on full time basis as chaplains though are not under the payroll of the government.
- They are granted allowances by their Bishops and the Prison department issues them permits to work.



# CHAPLAINCY SERVICES IN KENYA PRISONS

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Advising the commissioner General of prisons on matters related to spiritual welfare;** The Principal prisons chaplain who heads the catholic chaplaincy is the one who advises the commissioner of prisons on the chaplaincy administrative issues in the Kenya Prisons.
- Transfers and postings of chaplaincy personnel,
- Make recommendation to the Ministry in charge of prisons on recruitment of more personnel,
- Sorting out disciplinary issues within the chaplaincy personnel.
- Effective ways for implementation of spiritual programs in prison



## CONTINUED.....

- Vetting in volunteers spiritual workers to be issued with permits.
- Effective ways to promote 'freedom of worship' in prisons as enshrined in our Kenyan constitution.
- Construction of chapels in prison for prisoners, prison officers and their families.
- Reports on Progress/challenges and way forward for chaplaincy programs and projects after monitoring and evaluation visits to stations and provinces. Mostly these reports are done on quarterly and yearly basis to the Bishops and Prison service.
- Ensuring for the safe guard of chaplaincy's core values of discipline, honesty, holiness and integrity which are the driving force of chaplaincy vision, mission and motto for efficient and effective service delivery.



## CONTINUED.....

- Administering the oath of allegiance to the newly trained officers;
- After the newly trained officers finish their initial course at the prisons staff training college the oath of allegiance is administered to them by the prison chaplains and prison Maalim before deployment to the prisons in Kenya.
- In most of the dioceses in Kenya, the local Bishops have appointed Priests who are now working full time as diocesan prison chaplains. This has improved pastoral care to inmates.



## CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT AND MUSLIM CHAPLAINS ADMINISTERING OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO RECRUITS





## CONTINUATION.....

- Religious program managers; ensuring that all prisoners are afforded the opportunities to practice the faith of their choice and co-coordinating the various activities of those faiths.
- Chaplains provide pastoral and psychological counseling whereby they provide opportunity for those in prison to dialogue openly about their concerns and fears.
- Chaplains provide grief counseling to inmates when their relatives die and even in other difficult circumstances.
- Inmates are trained as spiritual workers inside the prison and assist in catechism lessons.
- Freedom of worship and provision of decent places of worship is a goal the chaplaincy endeavors to achieve.



## FREEDOM OF WORSHIP IS PROMOTED INSIDE PRISONS



## AN INMATE GRADUATES AS SPIRITUAL WORKER





## INMATES HOLDING THEIR CATECHISTS' CERTIFICATES



## *CONTINUATION*

- To the staff in Kenya prisons: the chaplaincy personnel provide pastoral care through spiritual and psychological counseling. For those preparing to marry, spiritual workers offer marital counseling and family care follow up.
- Chaplaincy personnel co-ordinate volunteers who contribute to the rehabilitation program. They work closely with representatives of the various faiths and encourage community participation in prison facilities and ensure that volunteers conduct their activities in diverse, effective and secure manner.
- Many faith groups from churches like Catholic men and women do visit prisons on regular basis to offer support and donate welfare items to inmates



## CATHOLIC WOMEN ASSOCIATION DANCING WITH INMATES FROM LANG'ATA WOMEN PRISON





## CONTINUATION.....

- *Rehabilitation of inmates through spiritual /counseling services and spiritual welfare to prison officers and their families:*
  - For rehabilitation of inmates various programs are being conducted as follows; leading mass celebrations, liturgical songs ,musical recording, teaching catechism, bible study, offering sacraments ,seminars /retreats, prayers and devotions, coordinating small Christian communities, pastoral and psychological services.
  - Programs for staff members and their families: offering mass services, sacraments, teaching catechism, preparing staff for marriages, retreats/seminars for catholic women, men, youth and children, coordinating small Christian communities, burial ceremonies, pastoral and psychological counseling services.



## PRISON CHAPLAIN ASSISTS BISHOP PETER TO OPEN A COUNSELING OFFICE IN A PRISON, CONSTRUCTED BY CATHOLIC CHURCH





- **Assisting inmates in legal matters;** some spiritual workers have been trained as Para legal officers to assist inmates in legal matters and networking with civil societies for legal representation to needy ones e.g. Christian lawyers, Faraja Trust Society.
- **Soliciting for donations and man power from friends of chaplaincy to boost rehabilitations programs in prisons** i.e. Medicine and food supplement to H.I.V AIDS victims and other needy sick inmates. Sanitary towels to women inmates, cloths and toys to children accompanying their mothers to prison, stationeries and manpower for the prison academies offering formal education to inmates etc.



A WELL WISHER DONATING A KEYBOARD TO INMATES IN KAMITI  
MAXIMUM PRISON



## CONTINUATION.....

- Networking with the community for the reintegration of ex inmates into society. Though this initiative has been a challenge as well due to stigma of imprisonment and suspicion from the communities.
- Issuing of recommendation letters to reformed ex inmates to their home parishes and NGOs for continuation of spiritual guidance and any other material assistance.
- The rehabilitation and reconciliation of offenders through mediator relationship in and out side prisons has contributed a very positive and meaningful reintegration of prisoners back to their communities i.e. we have instances where restorative justice has worked .



## GOVERNMENT SERVICES TO CHAPLAINCY

- Recruitment and deployment and remuneration of spiritual workers in the prison department on full time bases.
- Support construction of chapels through provision of land and in some instances financial support.
- Where there is no civilian catechist a uniformed officer is seconded on full time basis to work as a catechist. They are trained to be effective catechists.
- The prison system has set aside specific times for pastoral activities within the prison daily programs



## CHALLENGES

- The challenge of the current rehabilitation programs is that the prisoners are less prepared for life on the outside and that assistance in their reintegration is inadequate.
- Other experiences show that most prisoners returning home have difficulties reconnecting with families, housing, jobs and many remain plagued by substance abuse previous company and health problems .
- There is a high rate of unemployment in Kenya and thus getting a job for an ex-inmate is a challenge. So most venture into non-formal employment as self employed but it still remains difficult to get started.
- Today repeat criminal behavior is among the most trouble some issue facing Kenya prisons and this has severe consequences for public safety, country budget and society.



## MEASURING OF WORK PERFORMANCE;

- The Chaplains sign performance contracts with the Commissioner General of prisons every year and indicate targets to be achieved and measured at the end (*Performance management*)
- On quarterly bases of the every financial year, the chaplaincy submits a progressive report on work performance in their prisons and challenges encountered and means used to overcome them.
- On quarterly basis the catholic chaplaincy submit report to Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops on her work performance achievements and challenges encountered.



THE END

FR. Peter Kimani,  
National prisons chaplain

