

Two examples of Chaplaincy in an historical setting.

1. **Mother Teresa** 1910 –1997 was an Albanian Roman Catholic nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India in 1950. For over forty years she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying, all the while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's growth, first throughout India and then in other countries. She obeyed the command of Jesus to GO into all the world. But she began by touching one life at a time. In 1979 she had won the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity had continued to expand, and at the time of her death it was operating 610 missions in 123 countries, including hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis, soup kitchens, children's and family counseling programs, orphanages, and schools.

She began her missionary work with the poor in 1948, when she adopted Indian citizenship (she became as the people she ministered to), and ventured out into the slums. Initially she started a school, soon she started tending to the needs of the destitute and starving. Her efforts quickly caught the attention of Indian officials, including the Prime Minister, who expressed his appreciation.

Teresa wrote in her diary that her first year was fraught with difficulties. She had no income and had to resort to begging for food and supplies herself. Teresa experienced doubt, loneliness and the temptation to return to the comfort of convent life during these early months. A writing in her diary says: "Our Lord wants me to be a free nun covered with the poverty of the cross. **Today I learned a good lesson.** The poverty of the poor must be so hard for them. While looking for a home I walked and walked till my arms and legs ached. I thought how much they must ache in body and soul, looking for a home, food and health. Then the comfort of Loreto [her former order] came to tempt me. 'You have only to say the word and all that will be yours again,' the Tempter kept on saying. Of free choice, my God, and out of love for you, I desire to remain and do whatever be your Holy will in my regard".

Mother Teresa met every criteria that was necessary to be a magnificent chaplain. She was able to identify with those that she was called to minister to because of her own past experiences, and she had taken on the citizenship of the country where God had planted her, while at the same time knowing her true citizenship was in heaven. Empathy had become a personal learned lesson from her initial start in her ministry to the poor, and a lesson that she never let go of. She respected and valued every life. She fed them, clothed them, became a friend to them, and ministered to their health or lack of. She brought them a dignity that they would take to their grave and then provided for the future of the poor by setting up schools, orphanages, hospices, soup kitchens, and provided programs for the wellbeing of children and families.

2. **Reverend Richard Johnson** 1753-1827 was the first Christian clergyman in Australia. After graduating from Cambridge University in 1784, Johnson was appointed **chaplain of the prison colony** at New South Wales in 1786. This appointment was due, in large part, to the influence of The Eclectic Society, and two notable men: **John Newton and William Wilberforce** who were keen for a committed evangelical Christian to take the role of chaplain. Under these auspices, Johnson sailed with the First Fleet and arrived in Australia in 1788.

Governor Phillip had to find means of feeding and housing soldiers and convicts, and labour could not be spared for the building of a church. Services were held in the open air and even four years later, when Johnson appealed to Phillip for churches at both Sydney and Parramatta, he still had no success. He was later given a grant of land and worked it so successfully with the help of some convict labour, that in November 1790 Captain Tench called him the best farmer in the country. In June 1793 from the proceeds of his land and tired of waiting on the authorities to provide, he began to build a church himself, and by September completed a building capable of holding 500 people. Johnson, with his wife Mary, taught between 150 and 200 school children in Sydney's first church until it was burned down. An assistant chaplain, the Rev. Samuel Marsden, was appointed in this same year, and arrived early in 1794, and henceforth Johnson had the support of a stronger personality than his own to help further the work that was so necessary in a new and growing colony.

Johnson submitted himself to the will of God, and with his own resources set about educating children with the help of his wife. Life would have been very difficult to say the least in a new colony, and he is recorded as Australia's first Chaplain over Prison Ministry and then whether he fully understood where this call would take him or if he knew in advance that there would be a work of vital and necessary significance in caring for the children in this new land, that we now see him also as chaplain involved in School Ministry.