



Here & Now

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An update for Florida Baptist Historical Society Board of Directors and friends

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Dear Board Members and Friends of the Florida Baptist Historical Society,

The Civil War was fought between 1861-1865. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg and offers an opportunity to think about some of the religious aspects of the war. One of the most interesting studies is chaplains in the Civil War. A helpful way to view the military chaplaincy 150 years ago is to compare the north and south chaplaincy corps.

A military chaplain may be described as a clergy person in military service for the purpose of ministering to the spiritual needs of those in the military ranks. In 1680, chaplains were reported in the English army for the "care of souls." The first United States chaplains were officially recognized in the army in a July 29, 1775, Act of Congress. In 1859, a law was enacted to allow the appointment of 30 chaplains for the nineteen regiments (a regiment was 1,000 men), and 198 companies (a company was 100 men) of the USA army.

In 2013 there are 2,900 chaplains on active duty in the United States military. The Marines and Coast Guard do not have a chaplaincy but use Navy chaplains as their ministry corps.



Abraham Lincoln

When the Civil War began in 1861, the north favored the use of military chaplains and the south did not. Lincoln wanted a strong chaplaincy and Jefferson Davis felt all southern enlistees should be fighting men. Under Lincoln 2,300 chaplains served in the Union Army. Public pressure forced Jefferson Davis to allow a chaplaincy, and eventually a total of 700 chaplains served in the southern army.

President Lincoln directed that colonels of each army regiment appoint a chaplain and normal chaplain service in the Union Army was 18 months. In the south theological students were eligible for the draft and Southern Seminary eventually closed during the war due to the military service of students and professors. Southern chaplains were usually elected by the troops of each regiment and commissioned by Jefferson Davis.

Chaplains could not give orders in either army and the chaplain reported to the colonel of his regiment. Methodists supplied about one-third of all chaplains in the war followed by Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists and Congregationalists. Well known northern chaplains included Henry Clay Trumbull and William Corby. I. T. Tichenor, James P. Boyce and John A. Broadus served southern troops.



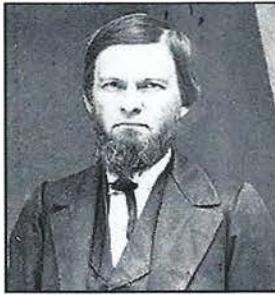
James P. Boyce

Chaplains of the north received \$1,700.00 a year, the same as a captain in the Calvary. Southern chaplains received \$1,020.00 per year but salaries did vary up and down as the war progressed. A chaplain in the southern army had the rank of between a first and second lieutenant.

Lincoln thought chaplains should maintain the social happiness and moral improvement of the troops. They were to also conduct worship services and report to their colonel the moral and religious condition of the troops.

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John A. Broadus

Southern chaplains were to bolster faith among the troops, witness to the lost, care for the sick, console the bereaved, and preach in services as time and circumstances allowed.

Chaplains in both armies experienced the problems of weather, troop movements, indifference of many officers, shortage of personnel, and inadequate rations. Uniforms in the north were worn by most chaplains but southern chaplains often times wore civilian clothes.

There were revivals in the army of the north and south and academic cases have been made that personal piety actually prolonged the war. Revivals lifted morale, increased a commitment to comrades in arms, reduced desertion, enhanced discipline and presented an omnipotent God who reigned regardless of the outcome of a particular battle.

In the northern army there were revivals following the Chattanooga, Gettysburg and Vicksburg campaigns. In 1863 a revival broke out in Lee's army and one soldier recalled "We had a Presbyterian sermon, introduced by Baptist services, under the direction of a Methodist chaplain in an Episcopal church." Over 100,000 were saved in the 1863 revival.



George McClellan

Chaplains on both sides preferred impromptu services in the field, on the march, near the battle lines. Services usually included a couple of hymns, prayer, Bible reading, a sermon and testimonies. Baptized troops were many times made members of the church where the baptizing chaplain had membership.



Oliver O. Howard

In preaching two subjects were predominant: patriotism and preparation for death. High profile conversions in the Civil War included General George C. McClellan of the north and generals Braxton Bragg, Joseph Johnston and John Bell Hood of the south.

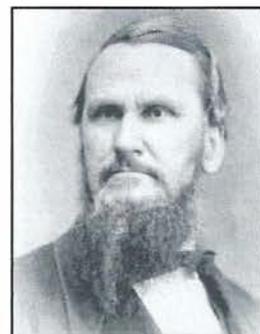
The Union had 117 chaplains to die in service and the south had 41 chaplains to die.

Northern examples of military leadership piety included generals Oliver O. Howard, John W. Geary, William Rosecrans and Lew Wallace. Southern examples of officer piety were Robert L. Dabney, William W. Pendleton, Leonidas Polk, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. These Christian men had a profound spiritual influence on their troops and did what they could to enhance chaplain and colporteur works.

No war is noble and no war is won. Troops have to fight because of greed, hate and selfishness. Just war is hard to define and hard to defend. Yet in all of Christian history there have been those who served in time of war and still served Christ.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Matthew 6:33



Robert L. Dabney