

The Other Army

Union and Confederate chaplains ministered to men during the Civil War.

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Tucked away on the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, is a one-of-a-kind museum. It contains no displays of antique cars. There is nothing to honor baseball players or rock stars. Photos of movie stars are missing.

It is the Museum of Civil War Chaplains. It honors those who served on both sides of the conflict, often in tough situations.

There was a small army of men, in many different places, who served God in the midst of very terrible dark times.

An estimated 3,000 men worked as chaplains. Most were very young. They wore blue or gray and represented several different denominations. They provided help to men who constantly faced death. Records tell of deaths from many sources, and the chaplains preached the gospel to those serving far from home and in danger.

Death stalked the army camps. Men were killed in battle. They died of battle wounds. Disease claimed many thousands. Others died from sunstroke and murder. Executions were carried out for several crimes.

And as it has always been for armies, there was boredom. Soldiers wrote letters, gambled, and played music.

In the middle of it all were the chaplains, ministering to individuals and large groups. Revivals often broke out and services were held in large open-air locations. Most were faithful men, working hard at their tasks.

Some chaplains joined their men in the fighting. Rev. Issac Tichnor fought with the men. He later was a pastor. He was also President of Auburn University. Still later he was President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Civil War chaplains performed many duties. Chaplain John N. Carlisle had the sad duty of telling a friend about his son's death and burial after the fighting at Chattanooga.

Chaplain Alexander Betts helped a wounded enemy soldier, telling him about the Lord as the man waited for medical help.

Union soldiers experienced a revival in their camp near Ringgold, Georgia, with hundreds being baptized in Chickamauga Creek.

Confederate Chaplain tells about the Great Revival in which nearly 10 percent of the Army of Northern Virginia came to Christ. They formed "reading clubs" and passed around Bibles.

Those of us who live in twenty-first century America may not have any idea what serving God in a tough place can be.

Consult the chaplains.

Source: *Battlefields and Blessings*.