

Answering the Call

**The Story of the U. S. Military
Chaplaincy from the
Revolution through
the Civil War**

by

William E. Dickens, Jr.

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ABSTRACT

THE STANDARDIZATION OF THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

William Earl Dickens, Jr., Ph.D.

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Chairperson: Dr. Marvin Anderson

This dissertation argues that the standardization of the American military chaplaincy occurred during the Civil War. This dissertation seeks to prove that the chaplains of the North and South provided the model on which the modern chaplaincy is based. This model is seen in both the regulations which were established during this war and the actual ministry of the chaplains with the men of their assigned units.

This analysis relies heavily on official documents and reports as well as personal accounts, letters, and diaries. This dissertation also traces the history of the American military chaplaincy from its inception in 1775 through the Civil War.

To:

My wife and son, Melody and Joseph,
the family God blessed me with, for their constant
support and sacrifice.

To:

My parents who have always been a
source of encouragement.

To:

Dr. Marvin Anderson who provided
much needed supervision in
completing my Ph.D. dissertation.

To:

The members of Rosedale Baptist Church
for allowing me the time to pursue this dream.

Most Of All To:

God the Father who has given me the strength
to accomplish what I could not under my
own power.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS	viii
PREFACE	1
CHAPTER 1 “THE HISTORY OF THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR”	7
CHAPTER 2 “THE HISTORY OF THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY FROM 1783 TO 1861”.....	27
Post-Revolution Years (1783-1812)	
The War of 1812 (1812-1814)	
Pre-Mexican War Years (1815-1845)	
The Mexican War (1845-1848)	
The Post-Mexican War Years (1848-1861)	
Conclusion	
CHAPTER 3 “THE REGULATIONS REGARDING THE CHAPLAINCY DURING THE CIVIL WAR”	51
Introduction	
The Union Chaplaincy	
The Confederate Chaplaincy	

Civil War Chaplains and Combat

Conclusion

PHOTOGRAPHIC INSERT 82

CHAPTER 4 “THE IMPACT OF THE CIVIL WAR
CHAPLAINCY “ 94

Introduction

Religious Services

Hospital Work

Unit Visitation

The Chaplain’s Place During Battle

Influence on Morality and Vice

Other Areas of Influence

Conclusion

CHAPTER 5 “CONCLUSION” 142

Other Consideration

Areas for Further Research

APPENDICES

A. CHAPLAIN ELLA E. HOBERT 145

B. THE HUDSON-BUTLER CONTROVERSY 148

C. BLACK CHAPLAINS IN THE UNION ARMY .. 150

D. PRIMARY SOURCE LOCATIONS	152
BIBLIOGRAPHY	153
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	183
INDEX	184

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Chaplains of the Ninth Corps, Army of the Potomac (USA)
2. Lt. Bartley Pace Bynum, Chaplain (CSA)
3. Major-General Oliver Otis Howard (USA)
4. Chaplain Thomas Mooney (USA) holding Mass
5. Services aboard the *USS Passaic*
6. United States Christian Commission (USCC) near Germantown, MD
7. Sister M. M. Joseph, Union hospital worker
8. Union chapel near Poplar Grove, VA
9. Chaplain Gordon Winslow (USA)
10. Chaplain James White (USA)
11. Chaplain Thomas Quinn (USA)
12. Chaplain Henry Trumball (USA)
13. Chaplain Joseph Sutton (USA)
14. Chaplain William Williams (USA)
15. Chaplain William Harris (USA)

PREFACE

The coming of the American Civil War brought a new beginning for the military chaplaincy. The purpose of this book is to show that the Civil War served as the impetus for the standardization of the military chaplaincy in America. Others have proposed that this standardization occurs elsewhere.¹ It is true that the military chaplaincy is constantly growing and changing to meet the vast needs of the military. It is also true that other events have fostered this growth and change. However, it is this author's contention that the Civil War served as a major contributor to this growth. Indeed Roy Honeywell, author of Chaplains of the United States Army, agrees concerning the role of the chaplain that "The chaplain's task in 1917 had changed only in details from that of the 1860's."² It is this author's contention that the tasks of the modern military chaplain are very similar to those of the 1860's.

On July 29, 1775, the Continental Congress authorized the chaplaincy, making it the second oldest branch of the military, behind the infantry.³ Even so, the chaplain's role was nebulous. Harvey Cox states,

It is clear, too, that there was a conflict between the view of the chaplain as the servant of the Lord, a volunteer financially sustained by his own local church or religious association, and the view of the chaplain as a staff officer restraining by his prayer, preaching, and personal example the cursing, the intemperance, the violence, and the vice of men uprooted for war.⁴

Often members of the clergy, like doctors, traveled with the armies in an unofficial capacity as chaplains.⁵ Even with this lack of certainty over the role of the chaplain, there has been a functioning chaplaincy in the United States military since the

P R E F A C E

Revolution.

In the Mexican-American War the chaplaincy was “civilianized.” In fact, the army deployed during the Mexican-American War with no chaplains.⁶ Instead of commissioning new chaplains, the government used ministers from various denominations who went with the army but were not officially part of the army. In 1847 there was one regular army chaplain teaching ethics at West Point and twelve civilian chaplains serving at different posts, mostly in the west.

On the eve of the Civil War, then, the military chaplaincy was probably at its lowest point, both militarily and ecclesiastically.⁷ However, by the end of the Civil War the military chaplaincy had developed into a source of pride for the military and the church. The chaplaincy during the Civil War was not without its problems. There were bad chaplains and instances where the role of the chaplain was unclear within his assigned unit. However, a standardization occurred during the American Civil War which laid the foundation for the structure and function of the modern military chaplaincy.

Very little recent work has been done in the area of the early American military chaplaincy or religious life in the armies. The most recent work (1987) is by Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., entitled A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies. Shattuck deals with religious life as a whole, with specific chapters on the chaplaincy. Three other secondary sources deal specifically with the Confederate chaplaincy: Religion in the Rebel Ranks by Sydney J. Romero, Chaplains in Gray by Charles Pitts, and Rebel Religion: The Story of Confederate Chaplains by Herman Norton.⁸ All of these are over thirty years old and deal only with the Confederate chaplaincy. I will build on their research. The Union chaplaincy has been a neglected field of study, so much of my research in this area will be original.

Three major issues will emerge in this study. First, there is the history of the military chaplaincy from its inception to the eve of the Civil War shows the vast difference between the chaplaincy prior to the war and the chaplaincy of the war. Second, the Civil War changed the nature of the military chaplaincy. Prior to the war, the chaplaincy was unorganized and lacked leadership in

P R E F A C E

both the military and the churches. During the Civil War the chaplaincy developed into something quite different than its ante-bellum state. Third, the “fifth wheel” concept emerges in the larger context of the Civil War.⁹ The term “fifth wheel” refers to the awkwardness of the chaplaincy at the beginning of the war. Just as a fifth wheel would be out of place on a automobile, the chaplaincy seemed out of place in the army. Yet, during the Civil War it gained a lasting place in the American military.

Several issues emerged which played important roles in the standardization of the military chaplaincy. For example, there were delicate church-state issues concerning to whom the chaplain is ultimately accountable, his commander or God? Was the chaplain an officer first or a minister first? What was the chaplain’s role in the military unit? What were the chaplain’s responsibilities in combat? What were the chaplain’s responsibilities as a prisoner of war? Civil War chaplains grappled with these questions, and their answers helped to structure the modern military chaplain.

This book fills a gap in the study of the military chaplaincy, especially the early military chaplaincy, by focusing on the Civil War as the event which led to the standardization of the military chaplaincy.

The resources used for this study are general works on the role of religion in the early wars of the United States, especially the Civil War. Also important are first hand accounts, letters, and diaries, as well as governmental records of both the North and South. Many of these records are published. The National Archives in the Smithsonian Institute contain many unpublished governmental records. These were accessed through their ordering system. Gospel tracts from the period were reprinted by Reenactor’s Mission for Jesus Christ.

Several libraries were utilized for this research, among which are the Steely Library and the Chase Law Library, both at Northern Kentucky University and the James P. Boyce Memorial Library at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The United States Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, proved to be very helpful in their collection of primary resources. The Air University Library at the United States Air Force Chaplaincy School at Maxwell Air Force Base in

P R E F A C E

Montgomery, Alabama, contains government regulations and documents concerning the military chaplaincy. Several of the diaries that were accessed are in collections in the libraries of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The Civil War served as the catalyst in the standardization of the military chaplaincy. When one compares the structure of the chaplaincy and the roles of the chaplains before the Civil War to those during the Civil War, such comparisons uncovered certain continuities and discontinuities between the different periods and showed that the Civil War became the pivotal event in the standardization of the chaplaincy.

Questions explored here are: What factors were present during the American Civil War which caused this change in the chaplaincy? What differences were there between the chaplaincies of the Union and Confederacy? Why were these differences evident? What role did preaching play in sustaining the soldier? What lasting changes were made in the chaplaincy during the Civil War?

Three limitations became evident in this study. First of all, there are a limited number of reliable first hand accounts by chaplains in the early years of our nation's history. Secondly, the War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, while full of primary source material, is often inaccurate. Two reasons contribute to this problem: the first is that the reporting officer might have tried to make the situation look better than it was. Secondly, the reporting officer might not have had all the information necessary when making the report. Finally, there are numerous letters and diaries that have never been transcribed or cross-referenced and the aging of the ink and paper make them very difficult to read.

NOTES

¹Charles W. Hedrick, "The Emergence of the Chaplaincy As A Professional Army Branch: A Survey And Summary of Selected Issues," Military Chaplain's Review (February 1990): 20. Charles Hedrick states concerning chaplains prior to the National Defense Act: "They were not 'professional' military chaplains. In fact, it will be 145 years before the Chaplaincy as a professional branch of the United States Army formally begins. The watershed for the Army Chaplaincy as a professional branch

P R E F A C E

is the National Defense Act of 1920 that provides for the office of Chief of Chaplains. Prior to that Act of Congress, it was simply not possible for chaplains to realize their full professional potential, nor was it possible for chaplains to render their unique ministries effectively to the military community, as history shows on both accounts” (ibid.).

²Roy J. Honeywell, Chaplains of the United States Army (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1958), 183.

³C. B. Currey, “Military Chaplain,” in Dictionary of Christianity in America (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 240.

⁴Harvey G. Cox, Jr., ed., Military Chaplains: From a Religious Military to a Military Religion (New York: American Report Press, 1973), 21.

⁵Daniel B. Jorgensen, The Service of Chaplains to Army Units, 1917-1946 (Washington, DC: Office, Chief of Air Force Chaplains, 1960), 6.

⁶Charles W. Hedrick, “On Foreign Soil: The Tragedy of a Civilianized Chaplaincy in the Mexican-American War (1846-1848),” Military Chaplain’s Review (February 1992): 61-63.

⁷Evidence of this can be found in the behavior of individual chaplains, as well as the overall attitude taken by the military and church toward the need for chaplains. This became very evident in the years surrounding the Mexican-American War when the military decided to use a civilianized chaplaincy during the war and there was a anti-chaplain movement among the churches after the war led by Lorenzo Dow. Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 51-52. At the beginning of the Civil War, there were very few chaplains in the military and very few regulations concerning chaplains.

⁸Sydney J. Romero, Religion in the Rebel Ranks (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983). Romero’s book was published in 1982; however, it is a copy of his Ph.D. dissertation from Louisiana State University in 1953 with very few changes. Charles F. Pitts, Chaplains in Gray: The Confederate Chaplain’s Story (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1957.) Herman Norton, Rebel Religion: The Story of the Confederate

P R E F A C E

Chaplains (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1961.)

⁹The term “fifth wheel” was used by David B. Sabine in a 1980 article about the Civil War chaplaincy. David R. Sabine, “The Fifth Wheel,” Civil War Times Illustrated 19, no. 2 (1980): 14-15.

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORY OF THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

In 1775 the “shot heard around the world” was fired on the green outside Lexington, Massachusetts. On that day, normal citizens stood against Britain. Unknown at the time, they had started a war that would last for eight long years and cost thousands of lives, yet it would also give birth to the United States of America. Present that day, with the men of Lexington were Stephen Farrar, Joseph Willard and David Grosvenor. All of these men were preachers, who shouldered arms with their parishioners.¹ Also present was Benjamin Balch, who would eventually be known as the first Continental Naval chaplain. Even before the official position of chaplain was created, clergy were involved in the life of this revolutionary army.

Shortly after the events at Lexington and Concord, on July 29, 1775, the Continental Congress established the chaplaincy as a separate branch of the military from the army. The chaplain’s pay was to be equal to that of a captain, \$20.00 per month.²

This was not a new issue. Washington had asked for chaplains to serve with his companies during the French and Indian War. He felt that these men should be “. . . gentlemen of sober, serious and religious deportment, who would improve morale and discourage gambling, swearing, and drunkenness.”³

The chaplain was to be considered a “brother officer.”⁴ However, chaplains did not carry any official rank. The appointment of chaplains to the military forces of the colonies was not new. They in essence were copying the model they saw in the

CHAPTER 1

British armies.⁵ The chaplain had been a part of military forces in “Christian” nations for many years.⁶

When the Revolution began, the war was fought with militia units from the different colonies. In New England, one militia elected a Congregational minister from the town as chaplain.⁷ When such militia units were transferred to Continental service, many of the chaplains went with them.⁸

The appointment of chaplains was done in several different ways. They were appointed by governors, colonial legislatures, established churches, and brigade officers.⁹ Some went on a rotation plan from their churches, and some merely visited and preached in the camps.¹⁰ For example, the Connecticut governor chose that colony’s chaplains. Rhode Island’s chaplains were chosen by brigade commanders. Virginia’s chaplains were selected by regimental field officers. New York and Pennsylvania legislatures chose their respective chaplains. Massachusetts chaplains left their churches on a rotating basis to serve the troops in the field.¹¹

Regulations regarding the appointment of chaplains were somewhat nebulous. It was assumed that a chaplain would be ordained. However, this was not always the case. Joel Barlow, a Yale graduate, served with the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment for three years without being ordained.¹² At least chaplains were to be men of upstanding character. Congress stated, “only clergymen of experience and established public character for piety and virtue, and learning should be nominated.”¹³ Many however were chosen for the influence they might have on the men, rather than their sincerity. The ability to stir up the rebellion and encourage “the weak and timid” were important attributes.¹⁴ Often chaplains were chosen for other talents they had to offer. Some were chosen for their abilities with other languages, some for their political influence, and some for their medical knowledge.¹⁵

Prior to the July 29, 1775, order of Congress creating the military chaplaincy, Congress encouraged the churches to supply ministers for the army. The following report was issued by a committee of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.

Whereas it has been represented to this Congress that

CHAPTER 1

several ministers of the religious assemblies within this Colony have expressed their willingness to attend the army in the capacity of chaplain, as they may be directed by the Congress, therefore

Resolved, That it be and is hereby recommended to the ministers of the several religious assemblies within the Colony that, with the leave of their congregations, they attend said army in their several towns to the number of thirteen at one time, during the time the army shall be encamped, and that they make known their resolution to the Congress thereon, or to the committee of safety, as soon as may be.¹⁶

Once Congress authorized the supplying of chaplains, one chaplain was authorized for every two regiments, and the pay was set at thirty-three and one third dollars a month. This was done only after Washington mentioned to Congress the low pay received by the chaplains in a letter dated December 1775.

I have long had it on my mind to mention to Congress, that frequent applications had been made to me respecting the Chaplain's pay, which is too small to encourage men of Abilities. Some of them who have left their Flocks, are Obligated to pay the parson acting for them more than they receive. I need not point out the great utility of Gentlemen whose lives and conversations are unexceptionable, being employed for that service in this Army. There are two ways of making it worth the Attention of such; one is, an advancement of their pay, the other, that one Chaplain be appointed to two regiments; this last I think may be done without inconvenience, I beg leave to recommend this matter to Congress whose sentiments thereon I shall impatiently expect.¹⁷

The Journal of the Continental Congress contains the Congress's response: "That there be but one chaplain to every two regiments of the army at Cambridge, and that the pay of each chaplain be 33 1/3 dollars a month."¹⁸

While the army was encamped, one chaplain per two

CHAPTER 1

regiments was a good solution. However, by June the army was broken into three sections, one in New York, one in Boston, and a third in Canada. The situation with chaplains became difficult. Washington saw no way out, other than to allow each regiment to have its own chaplain. Washington also felt that they should be paid a decent wage. Washington made his feelings known in a letter to the President of Congress in June 1776. He also stated that he would abide by whatever decision Congress made on this matter.¹⁹

In July 1776, The Board of War authorized one chaplain for each regiment. "Resolved . . . That a chaplain be appointed to each regiment in the Continental army, and their allowance be increased to thirty-three dollars and one third of a dollar a month: . . ."²⁰ Not only had they been overworked, but they had also been underpaid. In April 1777 Congress raised the pay for chaplains to forty dollars per month.²¹

Shortly thereafter, Congress authorized one chaplain per brigade, with pay and forage equal to a colonel. In May 1777, Congress passed the following resolution,

Resolved, That for the future, there be only one chaplain allowed to each brigade in the army, and that such chaplain be appointed by Congress:

That each chaplain be allowed the same pay, rations, and forage that is allowed a colonel in the same corps.²²

This plan, while adhered to by Washington, was seen as a step backward. In a letter dated May 1777 sent to the President of Congress, Washington made his feelings known.

I will pay the strictest attention to the Resolutions transmitted to me; however I am not without apprehensions, that the Regulations lately adopted respecting Chaplains, will not answer. I recollect, when One was assigned, in the course of last year, to Two Regiments, the prevailing Opinion was, and that founded on a variety of reasons, that it would not do, and the old mode of appointment was introduced again.²³

CHAPTER 1

In June of that same year, Washington wrote a second letter to Congress expressing the concerns of his generals over this brigade chaplain model.

I shall order a return to be made of the Chaplains in Service, which shall be transmitted, as soon as it is obtained. At present, as the Regiments are greatly dispersed, part in one place and part in another, and accurate states of them have not been made, it will not be in my power to forward it immediately. I shall here take occasion to mention, that I communicated the Resolution, appointing a Brigade Chaplain in place of all others, to the several Brigadiers; they are all of the opinion, that it will be impossible for them to discharge the duty; that many inconveniences and much dissatisfaction will be the result, and that no Establishment appears so good in this instance as the Old One. Among many other weighty objections to the Measure, It has been suggested, that it has the tendency to introduce religious disputes into the Army, which above all things should be avoided, and in many instances would compel men to a mode of Worship which they do not profess.²⁴

The issue driving these comments is the diversity among the American troops. There were German Dutch Reformed, Baptists, Congregationalist, Unitarians, Deists, Presbyterians, and even some Anglicans. In many cases, under this new system a chaplain may be asked to serve anywhere from four to six regiments. Which, according to Washington, was an impossible task in and of itself.²⁵ However, this model of Brigade chaplain existed to the end of the war.

Besides these brigade chaplains, there was also the appointment of hospital chaplains.²⁶ Headley states, "The propriety of this custom is recognized by all--for the sick, the suffering and dying need spiritual advisers as much as they do hospitals and surgeons."²⁷ In light of this perceived need, Congress assigned a hospital chaplain to each military department. His pay was to be sixty dollars per month, three rations a day and forage for a horse. That same day, Noah Clark was chosen as the

CHAPTER 1

hospital chaplain for the Eastern Department.²⁸

There were also questions about remote garrisons who were not at brigade strength. At least in the case of the garrison on the Hudson River, Congress assigned a chaplain: "Resolved, That a chaplain be appointed to the garrison in the posts on the Hudson River, in the Highlands, and that he be entitled to the same pay . . . as a brigade chaplain. . . ." ²⁹

One of the responsibilities of the chaplains was to conduct worship services. Vice ran rampant in the Continental camps. In a letter from Cambridge, Massachusetts, dated January 8, 1776, to Nicholas Brown concerning the siege of Boston, Chaplain Ebenezer David stated that only one thing disturbed him. He stated that he was "grieved" by the foul language used by the men.³⁰ Again in a letter dated January 29, 1776, David says,

What GOD is about to bring to pass in the Kingdome of His Providence is known by him alone. it behoves us to view his hand discharge our Duty & Leave the event with Him. we are to wait upon him in the way of his judgements. There is nothing dispirits me so much as the wickedness of our land--the Prophanety of our Camps is very great--the stupidity of our sick amazing, I could wish that those of us who officiate as Chaplains were not lacking in Faithfulness--We have a large field for Action. I am astonished that I am no more affected by what I see--I was very happy in my mind to day while visiting the sick--I am not sorry that I came down to the Camps though I forego many privileges which I must esteem--there is great need of some persons who dare oppose vice and mention the Doctrine of Dependency upon GOD--I was grieved to hear a preacher mention our connection with the Tories as the great Sin of the day like that of Israels entering into Covenant with the Cannenites &.³¹

Washington among other leaders felt that controlling vice helped lead to an effective army. In a General Order issued by him in July 1776, Washington stated what he expected from his officers.

CHAPTER 1

The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice heretofore little known in an American army, is growing into fashion. He hopes the officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it, and that both they and the men will reflect, that we can have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms, if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it.³²

Gambling and profane speech were seen as some of the worst vices.³³ Indeed the Articles of War enacted by Congress instituted a monetary fine for profanity.³⁴ Worship services were effective ways to control vice. It is clear that Washington believed this to be true in his May 1777 letter to General William Smallwood.

Let Vice, and Immorality of every kind, be discouraged, as much as possible, in your Brigade; and as a Chaplain is allowed to each Regiment, see that the men regularly attend divine worship.³⁵

These services were considered the main responsibility of the chaplains.³⁶ Attendance at these services were certainly encouraged, and often required. In his June 1777 order, Washington expected his officers to lead by example in their attendance at the services.³⁷ Again in May 1778, his orders stated:

The Commander-in-Chief directs that divine services be performed every Sunday at eleven o'clock in each brigade which has chaplains. Those brigades which have not will attend places of worship nearest them. It is expected that officers of all ranks will, by their attendance, set an example to their men. While we are duly performing the duty of good soldiers, we are not to be inattentive to the highest duties of religion. To the distinguished characteristics of a patriot it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of a Christian. Signal

CHAPTER 1

instances of providential goodness which we have experienced and which have almost crowned our arms with complete success, demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of gratitude and piety to the Supreme Author of all good.³⁸

Massachusetts in 1775 required its troops to attend services with the threat of court-martial, reprimand or a fine.³⁹ Many things were done to make the attendance at worship easier for the army. Washington eased military exercises on Sundays.

In justice to the zeal and ability of the Chaplains, as well as to his own feelings, the Commander and chief thinks it is a duty to declare the regularity and decorum with which divine service is now being performed every Sunday, will reflect great credit on the army in general, tend to improve the morals, and at the same time, to increase the happiness of the soldiery, and must afford the most pure and rational entertainment for every serious and well disposed mind. No fatigue except on extra occasions, nor General review or inspections to be permitted on the Sabbath day.⁴⁰

Washington was not the only leader to have this attitude. General Ward forbade plays and wood-cutting on Sunday, while requiring attendance at morning and evening prayer services.⁴¹ In most cases the worship services were held when and where possible. Few chaplains belonged to liturgical churches, which made these often impromptu services easier.⁴² Sometimes these services were held out in the open, which could be dangerous. Chaplain George Duffield was conducting a service in an orchard in New Jersey when a British battery on Staten Island fired. The congregation was forced to move to a safer spot.⁴³

Often, makeshift worship areas were procured. Chaplain Joel Barlow preached in a barn. Chaplain Samuel Spring preached from a pile of knapsacks during Benedict Arnold's invasion of Canada. Dr. Langdon, president of Harvard, and Chaplain David Avery preached on top of a rum barrel in Cambridge Square.⁴⁴ Sometimes special places were built to house worship. The first army chapel was built toward the end of

CHAPTER 1

the war near Newburgh. It was called “the Temple” and Chaplain Israel Evans led the worship there.⁴⁵

The messages preached at the services varied greatly. As mentioned earlier, the control of vice was a central theme. Patriotic themes were often heard. Headley states that chaplains served “not merely as servants of God in the discharge of their official duties, but as patriots-- haranguing the soldiers, and even leading them into conflict.”⁴⁶ Ebenzer David reported in a letter to Nicholas Brown the subject of his sermon.

While guarded by 600 troops felt safe & bold to declare my Sentiments on Religious Liberty - that our Land had long time groaned under ecclesiastical tyranny &c. Some of the officers told me the Doctrine was sound but would not have gone down 20 years ago.⁴⁷

The patriotic slogan of the day was “Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.”⁴⁸

This was not a new phenomenon. Marie Ahearn points to this practice as a Biblical model.

The Bible, especially the Old Testament and the Letters of Paul, rendered the meaning of liberty in antithesis: either slave or free, with the contrast defining and pointing up the value of the gift to the free-born. Following biblical custom, sermons used antithesis in parallel fashion to expound the significance of liberty. As turmoil heightened in the decade of the 1770's, American ministers would assert that the loss of civil liberty would be fatal to religion and virtue, whose demise surely would follow close upon any infringement of colonists' liberty. The converse of this argument was preached, too, that preservation of liberty could only be maintained by religion and virtue. Finally, though usually implicit, there was the assumption that America was the crowning missionary outpost of Paul, and as such, the site of the Israel, that is the true church of the believers. The early seal of Massachusetts pictured an Indian calling “Come over and help us,” repeating the cry of the churches in Macedonia to the Apostle, who answered the call, and so

CHAPTER 1

commenced the great work of spreading Christianity to Europe (Acts 16:9). Now America, the final outpost of England is the salvific hope that must not submit again to the yoke of bondage. Christian America must be free.⁴⁹

This type of preaching prevented the war from being a mere struggle over taxation without representation. Much more was at stake. As support for Ahearn's comments, Headley states, concerning chaplains:

As before hostilities commenced, there was scarcely a military muster at which they were not present, exhorting the militia to stand up manfully for the cause of God--on some occasions saying, "Behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry the alarm"--it was to be expected, when war actually broke out, they would be found in the ranks of the rebels, urging forward what they had long proclaimed as a religious duty.⁵⁰

This proclamation that the task at hand was not merely a military struggle between warring nations was instead a struggle between the nation led by God and a nation bent on tyranny. Thus the theme of the individual duty of the soldiers became extremely important. The following comments were made by a soldier concerning the chaplain's sermon: "An Excelent Sermon, he incoridged us to go And fite for our Land and Country: Saying we Did not do our Duty if we did not Stand up now."⁵¹ Besides these responsibilities which centered on worship services, the chaplain also had responsibilities to the sick, wounded and dying. Chaplain Ebenezer David stated:

But when I came to where the large sheads called Hospitals were erected. I stood still & beheld with Admiration & sympathetic anguish what neither Tounge nor Pen can describe. Here I taried two days visited & prayed with the sick. Not withstanding their great distress found them in general as stupid as the beasts that pearish--Yet there were some who appeared not past fealing. One Evening a

CHAPTER 1

Number I had almost said of Skelitons after prayer arose and came towards where I stood for to convers; when much had been said by Interogation Answer & exhortation when I was about going away one says “Oh how I doe love to hear Ministers talk’ this was a Boy--I must say that I have ever found the Chaplains visits taken well by the sick.⁵²

In the war, this type of ministry became very important. This became easier once hospital chaplains were approved.⁵³ Other duties included personal counseling and interaction. Ebenezer David writes about his conference with three men who were to be executed.

There are 2 or 3 unhappy men to be executed here on Monday next. May they obtain mercy of GOD--the two which I have visited appear very stupid indeed--How many evidences we have of the absolute need of the Spirits influences. &c.⁵⁴

Samuel Kirkland, chaplain at Fort Stanwick also saw the necessity of personal contact between the soldiers and the chaplain.

I am to be faithful in improving opportunities of personal intercourse with the troops, to enliven their love of God and of liberty, and their readiness to do and to suffer for the cause of the country.⁵⁵

Another of these duties was making special speeches and discourses. Washington made his chaplains preach short sermons at the news of the surrender of Burgoyne.⁵⁶ Again, chaplains were used to give discourses of thanksgiving when the French alliance was announced.⁵⁷

Among these more clerical duties, like their counterparts in the Navy, often chaplains held non-clerical positions. Presbyterian chaplain James Caldwell, served as chaplain, commissary officer, and a soldier.⁵⁸ This often involved shouldering a musket or leading troops.⁵⁹

While most chaplains served faithfully, without blemish,