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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Benedict R. Maryniak, John Wesley Brinsfield. *The Spirit Divided: Memoirs of Civil War Chaplains-The Union.* Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2007. xvii + 269 pp. + 17 pp. of plates. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-86554-996-8.

Reviewed by Benjamin Miller (Department of History, University of Florida)
Published on H-CivWar (July, 2008)

Memoirs of Union Chaplains

Serving as the companion volume to John Wesley Brinsfield's 2006 edited work, *The Spirit Divided: Memoirs of Civil War Chaplains: The Confederacy*, Benedict Maryniak and John Wesley Brinsfield's newly published edited volume *The Spirit Divided: Memoirs of Civil War Chaplains: The Union* provides a nice overview of and introduction to some of the primary source material available on the experience of Union Civil War chaplains. For the first time, two scholars have moved beyond publishing single-volume edited memoirs/diaries or collections of letters written by chaplains to show the diverse experiences of a sampling of the nearly twenty-four hundred commissioned chaplains who provided spiritual comfort to Union military personnel.

During the American Civil War nearly four thousand military chaplains served in the Confederate and Union forces. Of those individuals, 2,398 were commissioned by the Federal military, serving as hospital chaplains, naval chaplains, or army chaplains. According to the editors, this anthology is "designed to preserve not only their names, but also their written memoirs," a work which contains "letters, reports, and recollections in which Army chaplains describe their motives, and methods, their failures and achievements" (p. ix). Beyond recounting the simple facts concerning the service of Union military chaplains, the editors argue that the reflections of these chaplains have a larger lesson to teach modern readers. These men of the cloth "had to find, above all, the faith and perseverance to sustain the spirit of their people, their soldiers, during the greatest war ever fought on this continent" (p. x). In the present-day United States, when faith has become increasingly important to many Americans, it seems Brinsfield and Maryniak are correct in their assertion that chaplain reflections have much to teach us.

The editors relied on both published primary sources and archival material to compile this superb anthology. The vast majority of the archival sources are excerpted from material available at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.; the Military History Institute in Carlisle, PA; and the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Archives in Fort Jackson, SC. Of all these archival repositories, the National Archives appeared most pivotal. For the purposes of this project, Brinsfield and Maryniak combed through the service records and pension files of numerous Civil War chaplains, looking for information concerning their lives in the Union armies.

Brinsfield and Maryniak structure this work in five topical sections. Each part (except for the last) contains numerous letters, sermons, or memoirs of different chaplains. "Reporting for Duty" describes the reasons that individuals chose to pursue an appointment as a chaplain. It also provides accounts which discuss the day-to-day activities of a regimental chaplain. "Ministry in the Camps" focuses generally on how the chaplain ministered to groups of soldiers in the camp environment, specifically through worship services, prayer meetings, and revivals. "Ministry on Campaigns" shows how the chaplain adapted his religious functions to the differences required by an army on a military campaign. In general, the editors contend, "because the Union forces were so geographically dispersed, chaplains had very different experiences depending on their location and the operations their units were conducting" (p. 98). This section also includes insight into the chaplain's role during battle. "Ministry in Prisons and Hospitals" examines how chaplains interacted within the confines of prisons or hospitals. The final part (and by far the least substantial section), "The Measure of Ministry," provides readers with a transcript of Chaplain James Henry Bradford's 1892 remarks concerning his experiences in the 12th Connecticut (as well as the overall experience of Union chaplains) delivered to an audience of veterans in Washington.

The main strength of this text derives from the diversity of clerical accounts it provides. The editors in-

clude chaplains of several denominations, including both different Protestant sects and Catholics. Clerical experiences are also presented in a variety of locales, including hospitals, prisons, the military camp, and on the battlefield. All of these locales presented unique challenges as well as opportunities for the chaplain. For example, while stationed at a hospital Chaplain Amos Stevens Billingsley noted that although he had an active audience, his work was very taxing since he "average[ed] more than a sermon a day, for several months" and often preached two or three times a day while he was also responsible for writing letters for the patients as well as burying the dead (p. 216).

This text also does an excellent job of providing a ground-level view of religious activity from those individuals directly responsible for it. Here, one sees the trials and tribulations of the chaplains themselves though their own perspective. In many cases this viewpoint provides refreshing candor, as exemplified in a letter written by Chaplain Charles Alfred Humphreys detailing his own weakness in preaching. This view remains so often obscured by the emphasis of many historians who view the religious experience of the war through the memoirs and letters of the common soldier. Showing the existence of these primary sources will hopefully set the stage for more historical writing based on the viewpoint of chaplains themselves. For those scholars interested in religious space, this book provides many excellent excerpts that speak directly to how chaplains constructed it. Two examples shall suffice. Chaplain John E. Robie of the 21st New York Volunteer Infantry utilized the singing of hymns to create a sacred space for preaching and prayer. He remarked that "the ability to sing independently is a prime qualification for the chaplaincy" (p. 33). In a separate example, Chaplain Thomas Kinnicut Beecher of the 141st New York Volunteer Infantry constructed a prayer space in the military camp by standing on an elevated platform.

This fine volume, however, is not without its faults. First, the book is based on a limited amount of archival research. By concentrating on material available at the National Archives, the Military History Institute, the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Archives, or already in print, the editors omitted the wealth of material available in other repositories. Moreover, it seems striking to the reader that this work does not include the experiences of those missionaries who often performed alongside army chaplains. These missionaries, although serving on a more temporary basis and not officially assigned to specific regiments, like many chaplains were pivotal in creating a religious environment among Union soldiers. Many of these missionaries served under the auspices of the United States Christian Commission. For their manifold contributions to religious life, they deserve mention in this text.

However, these minor quibbles do not detract from the text itself. Published at the height of the recent outpouring of scholarship on the broad topic of religion and the Civil War, Maryniak and Brinsfield have compiled a valuable work, accessible to specialists and nonspecialists alike, which provides an excellent introduction to some of the primary source materials available concerning Union chaplains. Those readers more interested in the topic may easily use the text as a jumping-off point to pursue further research in the original sources from which the editors have excerpted sections.

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Citation: Benjamin Miller. Review of Maryniak, Benedict R.; Brinsfield, John Wesley, *The Spirit Divided: Memoirs of Civil War Chaplains-The Union.* H-CivWar, H-Net Reviews. July, 2008.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=14738

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