

descendants of the community's founders. No historian of any marginalized group could quibble with such painstaking research, and it is a testament to Cox's commitment to her historical subjects that she tells their story in such artistic and heartfelt prose. It is this insistence upon portraying the most positive aspects of the lives of these black pioneers, however, that occasionally comes across as hyperbolic. For instance, in the last few sentences of the book, Cox writes that the black pioneers "rose up to trample tyranny and to bring the blessings of liberty and equality along the length and breadth of the land" (200). It is likely that the black settlers themselves felt this way, especially because records such as speeches, diaries, letters, sermons, and especially black political convention records use this exalted language. Given the rancor and hostility of white racism and white supremacy *everywhere* in America, however, it would seem that black Americans did not actually trample tyranny, but instead constantly dreamt of doing so.

In God's Presence: Chaplains, Missionaries, and Religious Space during the American Civil War, by Benjamin L. Miller. Modern War Studies. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019. xi, 256 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

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Benjamin Miller's impressive *In God's Presence* is first and foremost a spatial study of religious life "under the gun." Evaluating the wartime interactions between spiritual captains and the men to whom they ministered based largely on the physical settings in which such interactions occurred allows Miller to make clear the vitally malleable nature of "religious space." But it is not solely in highlighting the differences between the understood religious realm, what the author calls the "sacred space" of churches and religious ceremonies, and the newly contested but still "profane" spaces of the camp, battlefield, and hospital that makes Miller's effort significant. To the contrary, for while the author documents in detail the wartime clergy's efforts to sacralize the numerous environments through which they were compelled to lead their beleaguered flock, arguably more memorable in Miller's offering is simply the constancy of the shepherds themselves.

Most of the men who served in America's Civil War armies were religious to one extent or another. Their spirituality had been forged in an antebellum world of separate public and sacred spheres, the latter's static spaces adding meaning to their faith and providing the context

for its expression. But with war, chaplains and missionaries recognized the need to construct a new religious world out of the horrific landscape in which they found themselves. With the willing consent of the fearful soldiers they served, they were successful. In chapters focusing on the various locales in which such dynamism unfolded, such as camps, battlefields, hospitals, and prisons, Miller details the clergy's ability to adapt their roles and the ceremonies they privileged in fulfilling their ecclesiastical duties and creating a religious community among the soldiers. These religious captains emerge from all of this world building as more than mere facilitators, moreover. Admittedly augmented by their pre-war societal status, the devotedness of chaplains and missionaries carried determinative influence among anxious men in both blue and gray. As Miller asserts, no matter where they served, "wartime clergy generated religious meaning merely by their presence" (3).

Employing a wealth of quotes from soldiers and displaying a firm grasp of the historiography of Civil War chaplains, Miller adds to our scholarly understanding of the role played by wartime clergy of various ilk, especially those who ministered while in harm's way. If the author's emphasis on the space in which religious exchanges were performed can occasionally seem strained in its "externalization" of such intimately personal events as a soldier's death and the ministrations offered thereto, in the end his dichotomizing concept of religious space in the Civil War yields real explanatory value. And the author's original and insightful argument that chaplains and missionaries fomented a type of civil religion during the war in their work in prisons and hospitals warrants a book-length study all its own. Finally, Iowans will no doubt be particularly interested in Miller's use of several accounts penned by sons of the Hawkeye State, including soldiers in the Fifth Iowa Volunteer Infantry, the Fifth Iowa Cavalry Regiment, and the 22nd Iowa Infantry.

The study of Civil War religion began in earnest with the examination of the religiosity of soldiers and the chaplains who ministered to them, but ironically little attention has been paid then or since to the actual methodologies used by clerics to fulfill their mandates outside of the camp. With *In God's Presence*, Benjamin Miller goes a long way toward remedying that deficiency in our understanding, casting his scholarly gaze upon the camp, for sure, but also outward onto the battlefield and then beyond the *mêlée* to the wartime hospital and soldiers' prison. In so doing, he offers a neatly constructed and innovative contribution to the emerging literature on religion and the American Civil War, one that students of American religious history and Civil War history alike should certainly read.