
CIVIL WAR GROUP

Religion and the Civil War

Friday, October 14, noon

No American conflict has raised the specter of religion as has the Civil War. This conflict saw the massacre of 700 thousand Americans and two grieving nations, North and South. Each searched for solace in religion; both claimed God was on their side. **The** motto of the North was, "In God We Trust"; for the Confederacy, "God Will Determine the Victor." Americans turned more and more to religion and even to the occult. Both the Union and the Confederacy upheld their Christian identities in the face of their adversary, and both sides believed that the Abrahamic God worked in their favor. Churches were filled.

Both Union and Confederacy invoked the Bible as the source of all truth. Northern and Southern soldiers had their Bibles. Abraham Lincoln himself read the Bible daily, and its cadences can be found in his three greatest speeches: the First and Second Inaugurals and the Gettysburg Address. Jefferson Davis also used the Bible as a tool of war. President Lincoln placed the Bible on the contraband list, believing that the spread of bibles would encourage the enemy. On the other hand, he was willing to overlook that most Southern churches were also sedition centers. Ironically, the Bible strongly supports the institution of slavery beginning with Genesis and ending with St. Paul's epistles.

Anthony E. Gallo (93), who will lead the discussion, has written four Lincoln dramas and one Lincoln opera. From his 12 years of research, he has concluded that Abraham Lincoln was the most religious president in American history and the Civil War was the most religious conflict in American history.

Mark N. Ozer ('09)

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Lunch at noon. Reserve with Member Services or online. Price: \$21.