

Missionaries in Uniform

The cover of this bulletin captures a moment in American history. Chaplain John Gano is leading a prayer of thanksgiving in 1783 just after General George Washington had announced to his troops that peace had come.

Gano was pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York City before serving as George Washington's chaplain during the Revolutionary War. He is reported to have baptized Washington in the Hudson River.

Gano also established one of the first Baptist churches in North Carolina and was the first Baptist missionary to the Indians.

General Washington called on ministers in the early years of the Revolutionary War to help meet the religious needs of his soldiers. And in 1775 the Continental Congress created the Army Chaplaincy.

Military chaplains have provided moral and spiritual leadership to the military men of our nation in peace and war since that time. Chaplains were found in the ranks of both the Blue and the Gray during the Civil War. In later years they moved westward with the military forces as our great nation developed.

Southern Baptist chaplains are indeed missionaries—world missionaries. New Testament missions and churches established near military posts in our country and around the world attest to their evangelistic zeal.

The role of a chaplain is many sided. They serve as pastors, teachers, evangelists, counselors, and administrators. Though they serve because of the threat and presence of war, their ministry contributes to the cause of peace.

Southern Baptists have always heeded the call to man the spiritual "fronts"—whether they be military outposts, or home or foreign mission fields. Wherever our servicemen and women go to serve their country, our chaplains go with them to minister in the name of Christ.

—GEORGE W. CUMMINS

