

RELIGION DIVIDED

A CIVIL WAR GOVERNORS OF KENTUCKY TEACHING THEME

CONTEXT

Religion often provided comfort to communities during the war years. Both sides believed that God would protect those in battle, and the side that won the battle was in his favor. However, from 1860–1865, not only did people begin to question this notion, but so did religious institutions. More often, their disagreements were centered on the role of slavery. In the North, there became a direct correlation between the end of slavery and the end of the war. Nonetheless, in the South those united with the Confederacy sought to defend slavery did not see it as a sin. Those in the Union saw the war as punishment for slavery, while those in the Confederacy saw every battle they won as a sign that slavery was not a sin. The documents selected in this theme highlight some of the struggles religion faced in response to the politics of the war, and the more important question of slavery.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [William M. Pratt to James F. Robinson](#)
- [C. Lewis to J. Stoddard Johnson](#)
- [J. F. Jaquess to Anne E. V. Johnson](#)
- [Hamilton Pope to James F. Robinson](#)
- [William H. Woods to James F. Robinson](#)

BIG-PICTURE QUESTIONS

- Why was the Civil War a turning point for religion?
- How did soldiers connect their religion and the war effort?
- Why at times did clergy feel like they could not comfort the distressed or dying?

SECONDARY LITERATURE

- Gehrz, Chris. “Recalibrating the ‘Evangelical Paradigm’” *Patheos: The Anxious Bench*. *NOTE: This article does not directly relate to the civil war, but does allow readers to gain a better understanding of religion so they can teach it in their classroom.
- Heyrman, Christine Leigh. *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.
- Harlow, Luke E. *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830–1880*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

ACTIVITY

Fishbowl

Instructions

- Put all student's names into a hat or bowl and divide them into separate groups (the amount of groups will correlate to the amount of documents that you are using). Assign each group a document. They will work as a group to analyze, and become experts on their allocated document.
- Each group will also need to read the documents from other groups and come up with 2-3 questions they have for the experts.
- The groups will act as the authorities on their specific document, and answer questions from their fellow classmates.
- When all groups have been questioned, bring the class back together and either for homework or in class assignment, have them answer the following question: How did religion complicate the politics surrounding the war?

