

SHOULD THE AMERICAN FLAG, OR ANY FLAG FOR THAT MATTER BE DISPLAYED IN A CHURCH SANCTUARY?

I grew up in a family that was deeply devoted to America. My dad fought in Korea. He had a deeply rooted love for our country and was always under the impression that Joseph McCarthy was right when he said that there were communists in the government offices. My dad was a prophetic voice where our nation was concerned. He always told me that America would become more like the USSR and the USSR would become more like America. I wish that he was alive today to see that this has indeed come into fruition. On the other hand, he had a relatively peaceful death and if he was alive today, he'd probably have a MI or stroke seeing what has come about and what is still in store for the nation that he loved. Dad was into "flag facts," and he would always explain to me that there was a difference between a regular American flag and a flag with a gold fringe around the edge. He also said that flagpoles that have eagles at the top are significant too. He explained that when a flag has a golden fringe around it, it symbolized that the entity where the flag resides is under Admiralty Law. That is a fancy word for military law. If you've ever been to traffic court, or any type of court and seen that flag you can understand why your rights have been ignored.

Dad was a rebel; in that he didn't like being pushed around. He hated the way that courts bamboozled people trampled on their rights. Dad was great at getting people out of traffic tickets. He was great at challenging the authority of judges and courts. He would have made a great lawyer. He spent hours, days and weeks in law libraries helping people out with their cases. In one such case, dad's friend received a speeding ticket somewhere in Contra Costa County, California. Dad poured over the books in the law library. Finally, his search was rewarded. As it turned out, according to the law, a witness to a crime is not legally allowed to serve a summons to a defendant. Dad knew that a traffic ticket is a summons, and he realized that the traffic cop was really the witness of the crime. So, my dad carefully drafted paperwork that his friend used in the court. The judge had no choice but to throw the case out of court. After the case was dismissed, the DA for Contra Costa County walked up to dad's friend and asked where he had gotten all of that information. Dad's friend lied (as instructed by dad) and said that he did the research. The DA became angry and told dad's friend that he never wanted to see that paperwork in his county again.

Let's take things back a bit further. My grandfather (dad's father) was probably one of the few honest Italian Americans from Bergen County, New Jersey. Grandpa was a county health

inspector for a while and was prodded many times to look the other way or to take money. This pissed my grandfather off and he addressed these things with the authorities, making my grandfather hated among his peers. Grandpa lost a lot of “friends” but he retained his integrity. One of his foes was a man with a last name similar to Helstalski whom my grandfather disliked with a passion. The other person that grandpa hated was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. One time I mentioned Roosevelt’s name in grandpa’s house and he very sternly warned me to never mention that name in his house ever again. For those who don’t know history, Roosevelt was president before and during WWII. Barack Obama is the Roosevelt of our time, if that is any help. Roosevelt was a socialist, although he said that he wasn’t and instituted reforms that some say brought us out of the Great Depression and many others say didn’t, saying that we would have eventually come back to prosperity. Looking back in retrospect, it was the war that brought our nation prosperity. So, now you know that stock from which I come from. Now you know why I see basically everything in black and white with very little gray. I’m a student of history and I’ve seen and am also currently seeing what happens when people don’t study or remember history.

I’ve been a born-again believer in Yeshua for 35 years. I’ve been to a lot of churches and seen a lot of things, both good and bad. I’ve seen errors performed over and over again. I see a Church that condemns Israel for their disobedience, that is currently in the same disobedience, yet claiming “grace” as a “get out of jail free” card. One thing that I ask believers to think about is this; “which kingdom to you truly serve.” You really cannot serve the kingdoms of this world and serve Yahweh at the same time. Yes, we have to live in this world and yes, we sometimes have to do things like going to war to preserve liberty, but the essence of our walk is to walk in righteousness, obeying Yahweh’s commands and accepting His grace when we realize our failures and truly repent.

To let you know ahead of time, I’m one of those people that believes that the only thing that is supposed to be on the raised area of the church front is the choir when they are singing and the Pastor and/or elders when they are delivering information. During Christmas, when there are Christmas trees, wreaths and other things adorning the “altar,” I usually spend my whole time in church doing heavy prayer and supplication for the pastors and elders of the church. I’m one of those people that think that Christmas Trees are pagan in origin and that they really cannot be “redeemed.” Yeshua came to redeem people, not trees, rocks, bunnies, drums or any other thing. He’s into buying back people that have been sold into slavery because of the fallen nature of mankind.

So, I think that you the reader can sort of estimate how I feel about having a flag of any type adorning the “altar” of the Church, even the so-called Christian Flag. What is before our eyes, is before our eyes, and those things can be a distraction. I remember times when there would be Christmas Trees in the church, I caught several people looking at the “pretty” tree instead of listening to the sermon. I saw the kids looking at the mock presents under the tree, totally ignoring anything being said up front. I remember the church that Barbara and I attended for a long time. They had three lit candles in sconces on the wall behind the pastor. During a time of prayer and reflection, a woman who was always obsessed by signs and wonders interrupted by saying that one of the candles was not lit anymore and that there was a prophetic significance to this occurrence. She wasn’t focused on the reflection time, but on the six lit candles at the back of the church.

Years ago, I knew a retired California Highway Patrolman. I was talking about buying a car and he asked me what colors I was considering. I told him that I liked red trucks. He told me that the colors red and white are the two colors that policemen see first and that more tickets are issued to people in vehicles with those two colors than any other color. What are two of the colors on our flag; red and white. If studies show that those two colors are noticed above all others, wouldn’t it show that the flag might be a distraction from what is really coming forth from the altar?

Now, what about the fact that most churches display a flag with a golden fringe around it. Now, I don’t think that pastors place the fringed flag in the sanctuary with the intent of placing the congregation under military law. I think that this is done in ignorance, unless of course the pastor or the elders are Masonic, then it may be deliberate. Did you know that in many churches, people singing in the choir are asked not to wear ornate or reflective jewelry? Again, it is because those things might cause a distraction, just as it would if the men would wear tight jeans or if women would wear short dresses. The focus needs to be on Yahweh, his praise, adoration and His Word.

The Church Building is in many ways a place of worship. I know that Rabbi Paul said that our bodies are the Temple of The Holy Spirit, and that we are to consider the Church Building, just that, a building. However, when two or more believers are gathered in the name of Yeshua, then He is there in our midst. At that point, when any two or more believers come together in His Name, that place becomes a place where Yeshua is. If the church building becomes a sort of Temple when Yahweh’s people are present, it should be treated as a temple. In the Temples of Israel, there were specific items that were allowed there, and all of those items

were dictated to be there by Yahweh through the Torah (instructions). In the Ten Commandments, the first Commandment dictate what Yahweh feels about having “extra” adornments:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
Exodus 20:3-6

Some might argue that the Ark of The Covenant had the likenesses of two Cherubim on its top. The top of the Ark is known as the Mercy Seat, and is representative of the Mercy Seat in Heaven, where Yahweh himself sits. The Mercy Seat represents Yahweh’s Throne. If you study the history of Israel, when Judah became wicked and idolatrous is when Yahweh took offense. They literally brought foreign gods and representations of foreign ideas into the Holy Temple. That is when Yahweh said, that He had had enough. It is when we introduce idols in the way of pagan ideas and practices into our heart that an outward appearance of those things comes into our homes, our businesses and our churches.

I’ve been accused of being too rigid when it comes to tattoo’s for example. I don’t think that believers in Yeshua should be marking up their bodies. First, it says in Leviticus that we’re not supposed to get markings or piercings on our bodies because those are the things that the pagans do, and Yahweh finds it detestable. Second, for those who argue that those things are done away with (which is dead wrong), I submit that you can’t argue that our body is the Temple of the Ruach Ha Kodesh. The Ruach of Yahweh resides within us. Do you think that it’s proper to put graffiti on the outside of the Temple? Some have argued that they put scripture on their Temple, so that is okay. Well, if someone came to Yerushalayim back in the day when the Beit Ha Mikdash (Temple) stood they would immediately know that this is where Yahweh resided because that is what the Temple represented. You saw Temple, you thought Yahweh. Well, if believers are walking in Yeshua’s Light and are following in obedience then there should be automatic correlation between Temple (insert your name here) and Yahweh. You don’t need an outward expression of belief in Yahweh, your life will ooze Yahweh.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

Now I'm not here to cast conviction or condemnation on those who got tattoos before they came to know Yeshua, or even those who didn't know any better. However, I have contended with those who get tattoos after they know better, or have heard the truth but still think that they have to put graffiti on the Temple. There are some people that think that there are some things that Yahweh despised before the Cross, that is somehow okay now, mainly due to grace. No, if He found things detestable before the Cross, He still finds them detestable, especially when they are things that pagans do. One young lady told me that the scripture in Leviticus was not in effect anymore because of grace. I told her that the very next scripture after the tattoo and piercing prohibition was one that says that we should not prostitute our daughters. I asked her if prostitution is okay? Having been caught off guard, the only thing that she could do is accuse me of labeling her a prostitute; something that I didn't even come close to doing.

Okay, so back to the flag, and should it be in a church sanctuary, or anywhere in the church. Some contend that it is proper because it symbolizes what we used to be, a nation of people that were governed by Yahweh's precepts. Yes, our nation was populated by people that for the most part were ardent believers in Yeshua. but where does that work into the flag? The thirteen stripes are symbols of the 13 original colonies/states of the Union. The white color stands for purity and innocence, the red stands for valor and hardiness and the blue in the star field signifies vigilance, perseverance & justice. Yes, those are all attributes that our nation once had, there is no argument. We should not forget that in its proper form, our government is "of the people, by the people and for the people." When this nation was young, the majority of people were pure and innocent, they did exhibit valor and hardiness and they vigilant, had perseverance and sought justice. As the nation aged, these things still existed, but the numbers of people that possessed these attributes became less and less. Now, only a remnant hold to these values. So yes, the flag does represent what we once were and what we once stood for, but we live in a world where things change and meanings are perverted. When I was young, and I referred to God, I meant Yahweh and people identified the word God with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now it is a generic term used by many religions. When I was young, a rainbow stood for Yahweh's promise to never flood the entire earth with water ever again. Now it represents

homosexuality and diversity, two things that Yahweh abhors. So many things are have changed so that they are not used to identify what they formally stood for.

So, things change with time within societies. I can understand the battle that must go on within some people as to whether to keep flying the American flag or not. It originally stood for many good ideals and a wonderful and resourceful people; a people blessed by Yahweh because they loved Him. For a remnant of people, it still does. We see our nation circling the drain rapidly and some like me wonder if what we knew as the United States of America will even exist five years from now. Yes, the stripes on our flag still stand for the original 13 states and the fifty stars on the star field still stand for the fifty states, but that is about all that the flag stands for anymore. There is no more purity, valor, or anything else that the flag stood for. Now it is just symbol with colors that has numerical value, and that's all. Yes, I would hang a flag outside of my house, either on the house itself or on a flagpole if I had one. Yes, I do believe that it should be carried in parades and it should adorn public places. You see, I am a hopeless romantic. I do believe that the American people can have a national repentance and that Yahweh could, upon that repentance, heal our land. I do believe that the flag is a symbol of the America that my fathers lived within and the ideals that they fought for. But I cannot agree that placing a flag in a Church sanctuary is a proper thing to do. The sole focus of what many refer to as the "altar" of a church is devoted to Yahweh and Yahweh alone. I agree that banners with scripture are allowed because they are symbols of Yahweh's Kingdom and rightfully belong where people can identify with them. If it has to do with Yahweh, and it is not a pagan idol, or any image made of things in heaven, on earth or under the earth, then it is appropriate. The American Flag is a symbol of an earthly national identity, not of the Kingdom of Yahweh.

I have probably made enemies by publishing my thoughts on this matter. But I will ask a few questions. If you were living in China, would you feel good if your pastor put the Chinese flag on the altar? If you lived in the former USSR, would you approve of having the hammer and sickle flag on the altar? If you were a Christian living in Nazi Germany, would you approve of having the Swastika flag on the altar? Those flags were symbols of the governments of the time and they were tyrannical governments. Here in the States, we are no longer a Republic; we are no longer free; very few are brave and for the most part there is little fidelity, purity and faithfulness anymore. Right now, the flag is a symbol of a government (no longer of the people, by the people and for the people) that is out to destroy Jews and Christians and to enforce every vile thing that comes against Yahweh's Laws and precepts and yes, even His grace. It has no place on the altar. And finally, I ask, which Kingdom to you walk in? There are in reality only two kingdoms, the "Kingdoms of this world," which is the world, and the Kingdom of Yahweh.

If we walk in Yahweh's Kingdom then we need to be the representatives of Yahweh. His banner of us is love, and our banner likewise is love, the love that we have for one another and the love that we have for the unsaved; a love that is willing to forsake this world and cling to the ways of Yahweh so that we can be that city on the hill, and the light that gives illumination to those who live in darkness. It's your choice; may you make the right one.