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Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Fredericksburg, Texas
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History and Use of Flags in the Lutheran Church

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Introduction

This paper was prepared originally at the request of the voting body of Hope Lutheran Church of Detroit and presented to that body on April 18, 1978. Shortly thereafter, on January 28, 1980, it was presented to the
5 Southeastern Pastor/Teacher Conference of the Michigan District. Recently it was substantially revised and updated for presentation to this conference, using the latest flag laws and regulations enacted by our government. Thinking the request of Hope Church was an elementary and simple assignment, a letter was dispatched promptly to Prof. Martin Westerhaus,
10 librarian of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, in the hopes that his research would constitute the substance of my report. His reply was a little disconcerting: "I found nothing in our library on the history of the Christian flag." Subsequent inquiries to the Detroit (Michigan) Christian Communications Council, the Detroit Episcopal Diocese's theology department and the Detroit Lutheran Center provided a
15 similar reply: "Sorry we can't help you at all. We could find no book, pamphlet or tract written on the subject of the history of the use of flags in any of the churches of the United States." Search in the Detroit Public Library enabled us to obtain partial answers to questions of history.

20 History of Flags

The use of flags, or standards, did not begin with Betsy Ross during colonial days. The Holy Scriptures record that the Israelites had their standards at a census taking two years after the Exodus in the Sinai Wilderness. The first two chapters of the Book of Numbers tell us that the
25 four army divisions of Israel had to muster around their assigned ensign: "The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard. . . Those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah. . . On the south side shall be

the standard of the camp of Reuben. . . On the west side shall be the stan-
30 dard of the camp of Ephraim. . . On the north side shall be the standard of
the camp of Dan.” Standards of that day were carved figures of animals,
birds, objects or a king’s name raised on a long pole. Israel used standards
as did the Egyptians from whose country they had emigrated. These stan-
dards served to identify the individual Israelites, “each man by his own
35 standard,” the same as flags identify countries today.

The use of standards was commanded by God: “And the Lord spake
unto Moses and unto Aron, saying, Every man of the children of Israel
shall pitch his own standard, with the ensign of his father’s house.”¹ When
Jacob called his twelve sons together just before his death he pronounced
40 curses upon some and blessings on others.² His descriptive words became
the basis for the ensigns, or standards, for the respective tribes. Leonard
Wilson writes: “During their journeys to the Promised Land each tribe of
Israel, was distinguished by its own symbol, or device, whence we get the
lion of the tribe of Judah; the book born by the tribe of Levi; the ass of Is-
45 sachar; the ship of Zebulon; the ox of Joseph; the wolf of Benjamin, and so
on. This was the forerunner of heraldry; of what are known to us as Coat
of Arms; and of the practice, which has been continued to our own day, of
adopting certain fixed symbols to represent ideas and to distinguish na-
tions, families and individuals.”³ The Psalmist was happy to be counted
50 among God’s people. He rejoiced in the God of salvation: “We will rejoice
in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.”⁴

¹ Numbers 2:2

² Genesis 49

³ *The Coat of Arms, Crest and Great Seal of the U.S.A.*, page 8

⁴ Psalm 20:5

Christian empires and armies raised their religious standards in all ages. The Encyclopedia Americana reports: "Constantine's *labarum*⁵ was a banner of purple silk embroidered in gold with a monogram of the Greek initial letters for Christ, XP."⁶ The account goes on to say: "Religious symbols were prominent in the Middle Ages. In the battle of the Standard in 1138, the English assembled the banners of St. Peter of York, St. John of Beverly, St. Wilfrid of Ripon, and St. Cuthbert of Durham in a chariot for their victorious fight against the invading Scots."

The American Flag

Our country flew other flags before the basics of the present one were adopted on June 14, 1777, but that does not concern us here. Furthermore, whether Elizabeth Ross or others were the originators of the present flag of the United States is also of no interest to us in this consideration and we will not enter the continuing controversy. The fact that concerns us is that like Israel of old and like other nations of the world, we, too, have a flag. It is a symbol of our country. Refuse to honor it, despise or desecrate it and you despise and desecrate the country for which it stands. Honor and respect it and you honor and respect the United States of America.

As citizens we swear allegiance to our flag. We do this also as Christians in accordance with God's Word: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's."⁷ Sometimes a public demonstration of our loyalty to our country is called for by a recitation of the oath of allegiance, sometimes by a salute of the flag, sometimes by a simple display of the flag. This must be

⁵ An imperial standard of the ancient Roman calvary and later Roman emperors resembling the *vexillum* (Roman square flag)

⁶ *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. II, page 308

⁷ Matthew 22:21

kept in mind when loyalty to our country comes under suspicion, right or wrong. We will allude to this matter later on.

We found no exact date when the American flag was first used in churches of the United States, nor when its usage became common. The display of the American flag in Catholic churches was officially sanctioned as late as 1911. It is reasonable to believe that it was used to some extent before this time and that its use precipitated the official sanction. Prof. Westerhaus sent the following quote: "Although not prescribed, it is indeed most fitting to have in the sanctuary the national flag and the papal flag. The Holy Office (22 March 1911) explicitly permitted the flag of the United States in the Church during religious services and funerals, provided this would not imply disregard for liturgical prescriptions. The same privilege might, no doubt, under similar circumstances, be extended to the flags of other nations, particularly on the occasion of ceremonies of a national or somewhat military character."⁸ Note, there is no mention of the Christian flag.

Flags have always served to identify, to inspire and to evoke loyalty, and still do. People of all ages have been willing to "rally around the colors," to fight for and to die for that for which their standard stands. The flag represents strength and power. Gordon Campbell and I.O. Evans write: "Flags are as old as civilization, yet they still retain their ancient power."⁹ The symbolism of flags and the purpose which flags serve should be taken into account when considering their use in the House of God.

Attitude toward the Flag

It is interesting to note that in years gone by flags were the property of ruling classes. However, Mauro Talocci writes: "Since the American

⁸ *The Church Edifice and Its Appointments*, Right Rev. Monsignor Harold E. Collins. A quote from *Administrative Legislation in the New Code of Canon Law*, page 26, by Henry A. Ayrinhac

⁹ *The Book of Flags*, Introduction

Revolution (1775-83) and the French Revolution of 1789 citizens themselves began to think of themselves as participants in the formation of their nation.”¹⁰ The flag no longer belonged exclusively to the ruling classes. It became the personal symbol of the common citizen. People have come to feel that the flag belongs to them and express this not only by honoring it at public gatherings but also by flying it at their homes. Since it is their flag, they take strong exception when their flag is not given its proper place of prominence and honor.

Just as recently as 1986 in Brownsville, Texas, the Mexican flag was found to be given equal prominence with our U.S. flag in the City Commissioners’ Chambers. It took much persuasion, persistence and insistence on the part of Attorney Oliver Butler Jr. to restore our American flag to its rightful place of honor. Starting in 1986 concerted and repeated efforts were applied to pressure the mayor and city commissioners into removing the offending flag. These efforts failed. At election time in 1987, however, a campaign was initiated to remove from office the commissioner who was the most outspoken proponent of keeping the Mexican flag. It succeeded. Civic-minded citizen Mary Yturria, together with a city commissioner, entered the chambers after the election and removed the foreign flag. Only after the mayor promised to keep it out of the chambers did she consent to return it to him.

The U.S. Congress has adopted no laws nor appropriated a fund for the enforcement of its legalized rules of etiquette for the U.S. flag. It seems this was not and is not necessary. Patriotic citizens emerge in force when they feel their flag is desecrated or loyalty to their country comes into question. We think of a recent example. The *Brownsville Herald* carried (3-13-89) an article by Associated Press writer Sheri Prasso. Permit me to quote

¹⁰ *Guide to the Flags of the World*, page 8

130 a few statements concerning what happened at the Art Institute of
Chicago: "A hotly debated art exhibit that has a U.S. flag lying on a floor
touched off a protest by about 2500 veterans and supporters. . . Art stu-
dents stenciled American flags on the sidewalks around the museum. They
were charged with criminal damage to property. . . Veterans attacked
135 about a dozen students. They swung fists, threw hot coffee and shouted to
the students to leave the country. Veterans came from at least nine states.
. . They waved hundreds of flags. . . The demonstration was the biggest in
a series of protests over a student art exhibit titled, 'What Is the Proper
Way to Display a U.S. Flag?' . . . Includes art by 66 minority students." We
call attention to this editorial to keep us aware that slighting or dishonoring
140 the American flag can easily ignite feelings of anger in and hostile action
by patriotic Americans. Feelings, of course, can be unfounded and misdi-
rected, as we shall hear later.

The Christian Flag

145 R. F. Diffendorfer wrote about the origin and meaning of the Christian
Flag. He indicates that the American flag was used in churches of our
country before the Christian flag by stating that the American flag was
draped over the pulpit when the Christian flag was proposed: "On
September 26, 1897, the occasion of the Rally Day exercises of the Sunday
school at Brighton Chapel, Coney Island, New York, a speaker failed to
150 reach the meeting on time and the superintendent, Mr. Charles C. Over-
ton, gave an extemporaneous talk. Not having made preparation he took
for his text the American flag which was draped over one corner of the
pulpit. While he was speaking, he conceived the notion of having a flag for
Sunday schools and churches which would not be restricted by any geo-
155 graphical boundary and would remind all men of their allegiance to God
just as their national flag expressed loyalty to their country. He then

160 pictured the flag described above. The superintendent then communicated with a well-known flag maker in New York and during the week after this Rally Day the first Christian flag was made and was used in this little Sunday school. . . . It has been used all around the world.”¹¹ The Christian flag is ecumenical in nature, like our Apostle’s Creed. All Christian denominations regardless of their differing doctrines can fly it. It is the banner of the Prince of Peace. It contains no symbol of warfare. The background is white, representing peace and purity. We have been washed white in the blood of the Lamb. In the upper corner is a blue field, the color of the unclouded sky, the symbol of fidelity and truth. Its chief symbol, the cross of red, is the emblem of Christ’s shed blood on Calvary, and also the emblem of Christian sacrifice.

170 The Christian flag should not be confused with the so-called Sunday school flag widely used by the Reformed church bodies in conventions and Sunday school gatherings. This flag bears a red cross upon a white background with the words “In This Sign Conquer”; nor should it be confused with the church pennant.

Flags in Lutheran Churches

175 We found no literature which told us when flags were first used in Lutheran churches. The writer was a young boy of seven when World War I ended. During the war he was aware that his father might be called up to fight the “Huns” any day. His parents were active members of a German Lutheran congregation in Brillion, Wisconsin, and then, in 1919 of the First German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He had two uncles in the Lutheran ministry. And so, he was exposed to conversation regarding some of the problems which the church faced during and in post World War I days. What follows here is drawn out of his own

¹¹ *The Encyclopedia of Sunday Schools and Religious Education*, Vol. II, page 416

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memory. In addition, he tapped the memory of septuagenarians and octogenarians in the ministry.¹²

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We shall limit ourselves to the question, "When were flags first introduced into Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod churches?" The answer to this question will apply also to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and probably also to the American Lutheran Church. Our experience is limited to churches in the mid-western states. As far as the writer can remember from his childhood, college days which started eight years after the end of World War I, and his early days in the ministry when this subject was debated in pastoral conferences, the custom of placing flags in our churches began during World War I.

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Even before war was declared against Germany in 1917 anti-German propaganda was spread. Anyone of German extraction was under suspicion of collaboration with the enemy. Perhaps some of you recall the shameful treatment many United States citizens of Japanese descent received in California during World War II, how they were divested of their businesses and property and hauled off to concentration camps. We know of no concentration camps for German-Americans during World War I, but we know that most of our pastors who preached to German-speaking people were looked upon as possible suspects. Pastor John Gauss of Jenera, Ohio, for years president of the W.E.L.S. Michigan District, personally told this writer of his experience. One Saturday morning government agents took him out of his confirmation instruction class and together with an Englishman, Mr. Higbie, a "Gasthauss" owner, Mr. Chris Heyn, and the mayor of Jenera, Mr. Daniel Hull, hauled him to the Federal prison in Toledo. The charge was that they were pro-German and that they had

¹² Pastors Hans Schulz of Chesaning, Mich., Walter Voss of Kenton, Ohio, and Karl Krauss of Lansing, Michigan

210 communications with Germany. A very high bond (\$125,000.00 according
to his daughter, Mrs. Hugo Hoenecke) was set. On Monday afternoon
members of the Jenera congregation, by putting up their farms as collat-
eral, presented the bond and Pastor Gauss was free to continue his min-
istry. The end of the war put an end to the charges and no trial was held.
215 We remember him saying that only one person visited him in prison, an
American Lutheran Church pastor. Others, no doubt, did not know about
it until after his release.

Those were days when sentiment against all Germans ran high. People
were frightened and acted irrationally. Pastor Karl Krauss, Sr. of Lansing,
220 Michigan, in a German service preached on the text, "Render unto Caesar
(the German word is: Kaiser) the things that are Caesar's (the Kaiser's)."
Someone walking past the church's open windows heard the word "Kaiser"
repeated a number of times and reported it to the police. The next morn-
ing investigators were knocking on his door. On another occasion he was
225 reported because many people were seen entering and leaving his house.
The investigators took no action because, as they found out, the people
were visiting to announce for communion. Across the state one of our then
Wisconsin Synod churches in Ludington, Michigan, also felt the bitter sting
of the war hysteria. Pastor Henry Gieschen woke up one morning to find
230 his frame church building painted yellow. Many Lutheran churches
dropped their German services entirely to escape the unwarranted sus-
picions and hatred of misdirected fellow citizens in their communities.

In Wisconsin anti-German hysteria grew to the point where segments of
this society agitated so successfully that they almost succeeded in banning
235 the use of the German language in church services. The intervention of a
sympathetic governor blocked this prohibition. To prove that German
Lutherans were loyal American citizens, were not for the German Kaiser

and to tender a token of appreciation to the governor for his intervention, many of our churches began to display the American flag in their churches. Prof. Westerhaus writes: "I recall that St. Mark's in Watertown (Wis.) placed flags into the sanctuary sometime during the course of the second World War. My impression is that 'everybody is doing it,' that it was an action intended to demonstrate the loyalty and patriotism of the church and its members."¹³

The introduction of the American flag into our churches came first; then, closely on its heels, came the Christian flag. I have the impression that congregations did not want to lead anyone to think that their country meant more to them than their church and therefore also introduced the Christian flag.

Position of Placement of Flags in a Church

The position of placement of flags in a church has been determined by the government of our country. On Dec. 22, 1942, Congress legalized "Rules of Etiquette" for the flag. Section 3,k, of the United States flag code¹⁴ established an order for the proper use of the flag in a church:

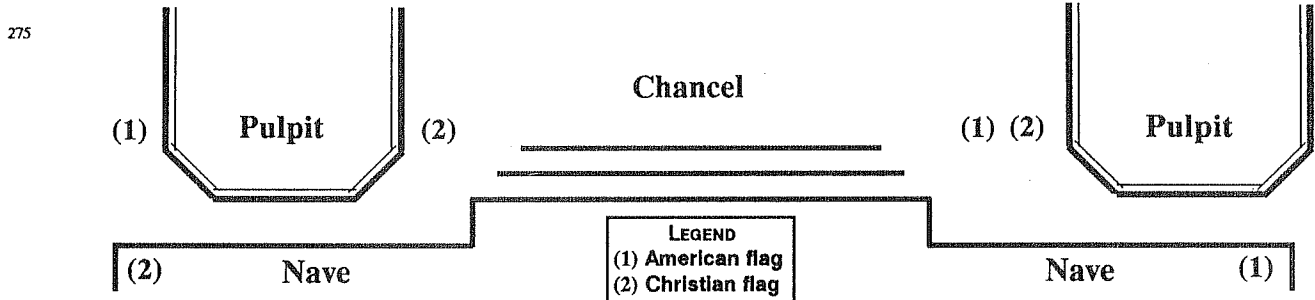
When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, if it is displayed in the chancel of a church, or on the speaker's platform in a public auditorium, the flag should occupy the position of honor and be placed at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the congregation or audience. Any other flag so displayed in the chancel or on the platform, should be placed at the clergyman's or speaker's left as he faces the congregation or audience. But when the flag is displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium elsewhere than in the chancel or on the platform, it shall be placed in the position of honor at the right of the congregation or audience as they face the chancel or platform. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on

¹³ Personal correspondence

¹⁴ The entire code is commonly known as Public Law 623 of the 77th Congress.

the left of the congregation or audience as they face the chancel or platform.¹⁵

This ruling gave congregations three acceptable options for placement of flags in their church.



280 According to this ruling the American flag, if in the chancel, must be set to the right of the pulpit (clergyman) and the Christian flag to the left of the pulpit (clergyman). The ruling also permits the placement of the flags on the nave floor at the front of the church with the American flag on the right and the Christian flag on the left (as seen by the congregation). The

285 writer has seen a number of pictures of chancels in Episcopal churches. Each had the two flags on "the platform," immediately adjacent to the left and right side of the pulpit. It appears disorderly to place the flag on a staff behind the speaker in the sanctuary. This is not giving honor to the flag.

290 It would be legal to hang the American flag flat against the back of the sanctuary wall above the altar or on the reredos, but very distasteful and repulsive to me - from the standpoint of symbolism. A general rule which applies to all situations of flag placement should be mentioned here: No flag may be placed above or, if on the same level, to the American flag's

295 own right as it faces observers. There is one exception. During church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea (Sec.3,c) the church pennant,

¹⁵ *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1977 Edition, Vol. XI, page 354. For the complete 1942 U.S. Flag Code see "The Proper Display of the United States Flag" in *The International Flag Book in Color*, pp. 225-227.

white background with blue cross on its side, may be flown above the American flag, but must be removed after each church service.

300 *Our Flag*, a modification of the 1942 "Rules of Etiquette," was adopted by Congress in 1976 because of the confusion the "Rules of Etiquette" had created.¹⁶ A revised edition was printed on April 5, 1979. We quote section 3,k, of "Flag Rules and Regulations" from this publication.

305 When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or
310 speaker's right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience.¹⁷

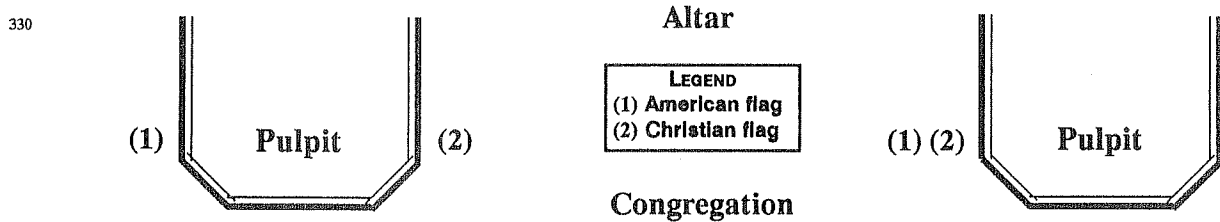
While at first glance the new regulation does not appear to vary substantially from the 1942 code, the revised code makes no provision for the
315 placing of the flag onto the nave floor as the 1942 code had done. Whether or not this was an intentional omission was addressed by this writer as a question to the Executive Director of the Flag Research Center, Whitney Smith, Ph.D., in Washington, D.C. To the specific question whether "the placement of the flags on the church nave floor, the American flag on the
320 right (from standpoint of observers) and the Christian flag on the left (from standpoint of observers)" is an acceptable practice for churches, Dr. Smith replied that this "is no longer permissible since the 1976 amendment of the Flag Code."¹⁸

¹⁶ The "confusion" is that referred to by Whitney Smith, Executive Director of the Flag Research Center (personal correspondence of 3-23-89). A possibly greater confusion has been created by the new regulations than existed under the 1942 law.

¹⁷ *Our Flag*, adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives on September 28, 1977, the Senate concurring, and published by the Committee on House Administration, 1979, p. 18.

¹⁸ Personal correspondence (3-30-89). A full copy of the letter is appended to this paper (see Appendix 2). Dr. Smith penciled in his comments in the right hand margin of my letter.

325 Dr. Smith did note, however, that under the new code “the Christian flag could be placed immediately to the right of the United States flag (from the standpoint of observers) instead of on the right hand side; the important thing is that the United States flag be to the extreme left from the standpoint of observers.”¹⁹ Practically speaking, this means we now have two options only.



335 It seems very few people were acquainted with *Our Flag*, the revised flag code, when it was published and very few churches followed its rules. Obviously this writer did not have a copy of *Our Flag* in 1978 when this paper was first presented. Since retirement he has had the pleasure of visiting many sister congregations. He can assure you that the great majority of our churches have not heard of *Our Flag* to this day. Admittedly he has not been in all churches, but, if a count were taken, a conservative estimate would be that a high percentage are in violation. Are we exposing ourselves to public criticism? Perhaps hostile action by flag “fanatics”? The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate adopted these “Flag Laws and Regulations” as law.²⁰ Are we in violation of our country’s laws within our very churches? Keep in mind: Sec. 3,k, is not merely a guideline for the use of flags in a church. This is the law of the land. Other denominations may also be in violation, but that does not excuse us.

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¹⁹ Personal correspondence (3-23-89). See Appendix 1 for full copy of letter.

²⁰ *Our Flag*, pp. 16-21.

Propriety of Flags in Sanctuary

350 We have seen many flags in the sanctuary of our churches, the American flag in the left corner and the Christian flag in the right corner, often behind the pulpit. This is in violation of Sec. 3,k, of "Flag Rules and Regulations."

355 For me a strong argument against the use of flags in the sanctuary rests in symbolism. The Lutheran church employs many symbols, to mention only a few: the crucifix reminds us of what Christ did for us on Good Friday; the empty cross reminds us that we have a risen and living Savior; the dove reminds us of the Holy Spirit and his work; the clergy robe reminds us that we are to listen to the Word of God and not be distracted by the person of the preacher. The sanctuary itself is a symbol. The sanctuary is the
360 inner part of the chancel, everything behind the communion rail.

Traditionally and symbolically the sanctuary reminds us of the holy of holies; the presence of God, the means of grace. The altar is the altar of God on which the bread and wine are placed. We kneel there to receive our Lord's sacred Body and Blood. From the sanctuary we hear our
365 pastor, as a servant of the Most High, pronounce Christ's forgiveness upon us. At the altar we offer our sacrifices of prayer and love. Here our marriages are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. The sanctuary, symbolically, belongs to God.

370 These considerations lead many pastors to feel that if we are going to employ symbolism in the church, then let us be consistent and not bring extraneous things such as flags into the sanctuary. One pastor wrote to the writer: "I gag when I see flags in the chancel. To me that is still my Savior's private area. I like the flags in the narthex, but if they can't be kept there, the nave is my final point of retreat." Another pastor wrote: "To me the
375 use of flags in the church makes no sense. The Holy Christian Church has

no flag, but creeds. Luther's coat of arms would make sense. I avoid having either. If you 'must' have a flag, have a flag pole in the yard."

In Hope's church library we have books such as, "The Small Church" by Webber, "Christian Art" by Kretzmann and "Christian Symbolism in
380 Evangelical Churches" by Thomas Albert Stafford. Flags are not treated in the first two mentioned. Webber (1939 Edition) has thirty-four pictures of church interiors with chancels fully visible. Twenty-eight of these show no flags. Three show only the American flag and three show both flags displayed. Some congregations, to this day, display no flags.

385 Stafford, in Chapter X, has a sentence on the propriety of using the American flag in the sanctuary: "The flag of our country should not be placed inside the sanctuary proper, because its symbolism is primarily secular, but it should be placed close to the chancel rail in order to signify that we conceive of our citizenship according to religious principles. This
390 should be emphasized by display of the Christian flag on the opposite side of the approach to the chancel."²¹

Adiaphoron

Scripturally, the use of flags in a church is classified as an adiaphoron. That means, it is neither commanded nor forbidden by God's Word, and,
395 therefore, we may not make our personal views or opinions a matter of conscience for a fellow believer.

The use of flags in the Lutheran Church, when first introduced, caused quite a stir, but not a controversy in the Wisconsin Evangelical and other Lutheran synods. Some felt the use of the American flag in the church
400 bordered on a mixture of church and state. Their argument, however, was untenable because the Scriptures do not teach a doctrine of separation of

²¹ *Christian Symbolism in Evangelical Churches*, Chap. X, by Thomas Stafford

church and state. They teach the doctrine of the separation of the functions of the church and of the state.

My only warning here is that we do not become legalistic and make a law out of what God neither commanded nor forbade. He did not say we must have flags in our churches nor did he say we may not. The use of flags in the house of worship should be a matter of discussion and resolution of each local congregation of believers in Christ. A Christian congregation may make its own decision in regard to the use or non-use *but not the position of placement* of the Christian and/or American flags in the church.

Conclusion

Personally I have no objection to the use of American and Christian flags in a church building. The flags remind me that I am a citizen of heaven through my Savior and Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that as a citizen of heaven, I must be a good and loyal citizen of my country. The 1979 "Flag Laws and Regulations" by granting only two options for placement of the American flag in churches has created serious problems for some of our congregations, even to the extent that were they to conform to these "Rules and Regulations," they would be forced to remove the American flag altogether from their house of worship. For example, the church with its pulpit against the left chancel wall (from standpoint of observers) cannot place the American flag at the right of the speaker. Or, the church with no chancel and only a small sanctuary, and which has built its pulpit into the right side of the sanctuary area (from standpoint of observers) has no room for the flags next to the pulpit without hiding part of the altar, restricting traffic before the communion rail and violating principles of symbolism. Where should my home church in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, with its pulpit four or five feet above the nave floor, place its flags? In

430 Hope Church of Detroit with its pulpit on the left (from standpoint of ob-
servers) it would be possible to place both flags "at the speaker's right," but
many newer mission churches would encounter great difficulty in placing
flags in one of the two places stipulated by the 1979 "Flag Laws and
Regulations." Many congregations originally solved their problem by
435 properly placing the flags on the nave floor according to the 1942 "Flag
Rules of Etiquette," but that is no longer permissible.

Time for communication with proper governmental authorities alone
will enable us to pursue the matter and, perhaps, obtain concessions, new
interpretations or even a set of new laws. In the meantime, open discussion
440 among us and possibly broader study district- or synod-wise should be pre-
liminary steps in the right direction.



THE
FLAG RESEARCH CENTER

3 EDGEHILL ROAD, WINCHESTER, MASS. 01890 U. S. A.

Whitney Smith, Ph.D., Executive Director

Tel. (617) 729-9410

23 March 1989

Rev. W. Valleskey
100 Tangerine Blvd., Lot 182
Brownsville TX 78521

Dear Rev. Valleskey:

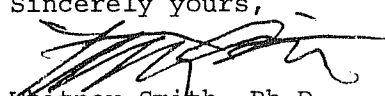
Thank you for your recent inquiry.

The Flag Code adopted by Congress in 1942 was modified in 1976. In the process the rule about placing flags in churches was altered because it had been very confusing for many people to understand. Also the custom developed in World War I, whereby flags were paraded into a church and therefore remained with the audience, was no longer common and flags displayed in churches were almost always permanent or semi-permanent.

I thereby would concur with what you have stated, except that the last sentence (It appears the best place ...) should be omitted. It also should be noted that the christian flag could be placed immediately to the right of the United States flag (from the standpoint of observers) instead of on the right hand side; the important thing is that the United States flag be to the extreme left from the standpoint of observers.

Enclosed are brochures concerning our publications which you might find of interest.

Sincerely yours,


Whitney Smith, Ph.D.

ws/sa

Rev. W. Valleskey

100 Tangerine Blvd., Lot 182, Brownsville, TX 78521
Phone: (512) 546-7522

3-30-89

Mr. Whitney Smith, Ph.D.
Flag Research Center
3 Edgehill Road
Winchester, MA 01890

Dear Dr. Smith,

Thank you for your prompt and courteous reply of 2-23-89.
I hope I am not taking undue advantage of your kindness
by asking more questions.

Please tell me what section of the Modified Flag Code
allows the placing of the American and christian flags
side by side (the American flag to the left - from stand-
point of the observers) in the chancel (platform) of a
church, or, correctly placing the two flags side by side
to the left of the pulpit (from standpoint of observers).
By inference from Sec.3,f: "No flag may be placed to the
American flag's right"?

| yes

Is it permissable to place the flags on the church nave
(auditorium) floor, the American flag on the right (from
standpoint of observers) and the christian flag on the
left (from standpoint of observers)? I find no reference
to this situation in "Our Flag," the printed revised e-
dition of 4-5-79. However, the original 1942 Rules of
Etiquette for the American Flag, Sec. 3,k, clearly prescribe
the rules.

| no longer proper
since 176
amendment
of Flag Code

Are the original 1942 Rules of Etiquette to be completely
ignored since the adoption of the 1976 modified rules
printed in "Our Flag"?

| yes

Sincerely yours,

W. Valleskey

N.B. If you cannot answer my questions would you, please,
refer me to someone who might be able to. I need the infor-
mation for a paper I am presenting to a ministerial conven-
tion on 4-24-89. Thanks, again!