

"And to the gospel, for which it stands"

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

October 26, 2010



[Unlike Mary Valle](#), who recently heard of the Christian flag for the first time, I grew up pledging allegiance to it at school. [In 1897](#), a Sunday school superintendent in Brooklyn was discussing with students the symbolism of having a U.S. flag in the chapel. Someone asked why no flag with *Christian* symbolism existed as well, and the teacher came up with the design for the Christian flag then and there.

It's troubling that the Christian flag took the U.S. one as its model—and that the two tend to be flown in tandem, with the national flag given its [customary priority](#). The [Kingdom of God flag](#) is one attempt to address these issues. But no variation on design or protocol can escape the fact that flags in general connote militarism and nationalism, not the way of Christ. So why display a cross flag at church when you could just display a cross?

Still, a more pragmatic part of me sees the Christian flag as benign—its distinctness from the U.S. flag is at least as obvious as their similarities. So while displaying the U.S. flag alone might encourage churchgoers to conflate citizenship with faith, the two flags flown side by side might push back, their presence together emphasizing

that they're two different things. Flown alone, many might interpret the Christian flag simply as a highly visible cross.

What do you think? Is the Christian flag useful, idolatrous, pointless? Do you judge it any differently than, say, a [denominational flag](#)?