146193 - Women praying in the musalla to the right of the men

the question

We are Muslims living in America. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has enabled the community to buy a mosque that was originally a church. First of all, we would like to ask you about things inside the building that are symbols of their religion -- can they be covered up if it is not possible to take them out?
The second question is: it is not possible to make a prayer space for the women in the back. The only place where it is possible to make a prayer space for the women is either to the right of the men or to their left, with a wall to separate them from the men. We hope that you can advise us as quickly as possible so that we can start working to complete the renovation of the mosque.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is obligatory to remove the religious images and symbols mentioned from the mosque. If it is not possible to take them out, it is sufficient to cover them up or paint the wall in such a way as to make their features disappear. If they are statues and it is not possible to remove them, the head only may be removed, because of the report narrated by Muslim (969) from Abu'l-Hayyaaj al-Asadi who said: 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib said to me: Shall I not send you on the same mission as the Messenger of Allaah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent me? "Do not leave any image without erasing it or any high grave without leveling it." according to another report: "or any image without erasing it."

Al-Tirmidhi (2806) and Abu Dawood (4158) "Jibreel came to me and said to me: 'I came to you last night and nothing kept me from entering but the fact that there were statues at the door and there was a curtain in the house on which there were images, and there was a dog in the house.

So tell someone to cut off the heads of the statues that are by the door of the house, so that they will become like trees, and tell someone to take down the curtain and make it into two cushions which can be placed on the floor and on which people may step, and tell someone to take the dog out.'" And the Messenger of Allaah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did that. The dog belonged to Hasan or Husayn, and it was under a table of theirs, and he ordered that it be taken out..

The hadeeth was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 68.

Secondly:

There is nothing wrong with making the prayer space for the women inside the mosque on the right or left of the men, as has been explained in the answer to question number 79122.

It is possible for them to follow the imam by hearing his voice directly or through a microphone; it does not matter if they cannot see the imam or the people praying behind him.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on women praying in mosques in which they cannot see the imam or the people praying behind him, and they can only hear his voice?

He replied: It is permissible for women and men also to pray with the congregation in the mosque, even if they cannot see the imam or the people praying behind him, if it is possible to follow the prayer. If his voice reaches the women where they are in the mosque and they are able to follow the imam in prayer, then it is permissible for them to pray with the imam, because the place is one and it is possible to follow the imam whether by hearing his voice through the microphone or hearing the voice of the one who conveys it from the imam. It does not matter if they cannot see the imam or the people praying behind him; rather some scholars stipulated that it should be possible to see the imam or the people praying behind him in cases where someone is playing outside the mosque. End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (15/213)

See also the answer to question number 93369.

We ask Allah to help and guide us and you.

And Allah knows best.