

Mayor's Report on Public Invocations 1/20/2016

A few weeks ago, an individual spoke at a Town Council meeting during the "Call to the Public" and expressed concern regarding the content of the invocation, specifically that of "praying in Jesus' name".

In the recent history of our nation, numerous complaints have been lodged against the use of the phrase "under God" in our pledge of allegiance and the phrase "in Jesus' name" in public prayers. Some institutions have responded by replacing the invocation with a moment of silence, and others have responded by removing the offending words in both the pledge and the invocation in order to accommodate those who found the language objectionable. To most Americans I have spoken with, neither one of those courses is acceptable.

In discussing this with our community, one of our local pastors provided the following insight on the censorship of invocation language: "To ask a Christian to pray in any manner other than in Jesus' name would be to ask them to violate their conscience, since they would have no assurance that their prayers would be heard should they do so. The sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of John is very clear on the subject. Invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer is an essential part of the Christian's faith, and could never be surrendered voluntarily."

At future Town Council meetings, provision will be made to reasonably accommodate those in the audience who find the invocation or pledge of allegiance offensive; but I will not violate the right of our Council members to pray according to the dictates of their own consciences.

Chris Marley, Mayor of Chino Valley