

A Minority Opinion
on
Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events

It grieves us to dissent from a document on which we have worked in good faith, and which contains so many excellent statements. The following considerations, however, compel us to reject that document.

Everyone knows that the notion of “civic events” has been used to justify participation in the notorious “A Prayer for America” in Yankee Stadium in 2001. The undersigned recognize that the CTCR has not been asked for an opinion on that particular event. However, the guidelines requested of the CTCR in the aftermath of that event can and indeed ought to be expected to be so clear and unambiguous as to rule out any repetition of such participation in similar occasions of syncretism in the future. Instead, it was stated in support of the document that both sides in the argument about the Yankee Stadium affair were entitled to appeal to the *Civic Events* document.

A previous draft of Guideline 3 had stated: “Side by side participation with official representatives of other religions offering prayers, readings and addresses on equal terms constitutes joint worship and should be avoided.” That language was removed, and an amendment to re-introduce language to that effect was defeated. Further, Guideline 3 was recast into an “on the one hand. . . .On the other hand” dilemma, with the comment that “this may well be an irresolvable tension.”

In a situation which calls for a clear confession of the Gospel truth (see Gal 2:11-21; Formula of Concord X), that duty may not be avoided by appeals to peace and unity. If the document is not intended as an unambiguous, confessional attempt to prevent future participation in events like the Yankee Stadium one, then we cannot in good conscience subscribe to it.

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