

Inaugural Opening Prayer The Rev. Joseph Lowery January 20, 2009

The Rev. Rick Warren

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Almighty God, our Father, everything we see and everything we can't see exists because of you alone. It all comes from you. It all belongs to you. It all exists for your glory.

History is your story. The Scripture tells us, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God. The Lord is One." And you are the compassionate and merciful one. And you are loving to everyone you have made.

Now, today, we rejoice not only in America's peaceful transfer of power for the 44th time. We celebrate a hinge point of history with the inauguration of our first African-American president of the United States. We are so grateful to live in this land, a land of unequaled possibility, where the son of an African immigrant can rise to the highest level of our leadership. And we know today that Dr. King and a great cloud of witnesses are shouting in heaven.

Give to our new President, Barack Obama, the wisdom to lead us with humility, the courage to lead us with integrity, the compassion to lead us with generosity. Bless and protect him, his family, Vice President Biden, the cabinet, and every one of our freely elected leaders.

Help us, O God, to remember that we are Americans, united not by race, or religion, or blood, but to our commitment to freedom and justice for all. When we focus on ourselves, when we fight each other, when we forget you, forgive us. When we presume that our greatness and our prosperity is ours alone, forgive us. When we fail to treat our fellow human beings and all the earth with the respect that they deserve, forgive us. And as we face these difficult days ahead, may we have a new birth of clarity in our aims, responsibility in our actions,

humility in our approaches, and civility in our attitudes, even when we differ.

Help us to share, to serve and to seek the common good of all. May all people of good will today join together to work for a more just, a more healthy and a more prosperous nation and a peaceful planet. And may we never forget that one day all nations and all people will stand accountable before you. We now commit our new president and his wife, Michelle and his daughters, Malia and Sasha, into your loving care.

I humbly ask this in the name of the one who changed my life, Yeshua, Isa, Jesus [Spanish pronunciation], Jesus, who taught us to pray:

“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

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