

At Trump Inauguration, Charismatic Leaders Pray Boldly in Jesus' Name. Is This Foreshadowing a New Day in America?

What a historic day in America. Today the inauguration of Donald J. Trump was bathed in prayer! And in his inauguration speech, the new chief executive called on God to protect us.

Of the six who prayed, one was a rabbi and another a Catholic priest. The other four were strong evangelical Christians, and each unapologetically prayed in Jesus' name.

I wanted to stand up and cheer, but I was too hemmed in by the crowd on the mall. (Read my previous report [here](#)). All I could do was videotape the prayers given by Rev. Samuel Rodriguez and Pastor Paula White-Cain, both of whom I've known since the late 1990s and both of whom have been on the cover of *Charisma*.

Franklin Graham of Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Bishop Wayne T. Jackson, pastor of Great Faith Ministries International, prayed powerful benedictions. Graham also mused that rain is a sign of God's blessing. It began sprinkling as Trump took the oath of office.

Trump has said he knew evangelical support helped him win the White House. He has reached out to and taken counsel from such evangelical leaders as James Robison and Darrell Scott. But long before either of them supported Trump, Paula White-Cain (who now pastors in Orlando) was praying with Trump and gathering leaders.

I knew Paula back when Trump contacted her after watching her television program. She told us stories about meeting with the tycoon and talking to him about the Lord—never did we dream someday he would be president.

A friendship developed, and in 2012 when Trump was thinking about running for president, he asked Paula to gather a group of pastors to pray with him about running. Of course, he decided to wait until 2016, but Paula had established herself in a key role as a spiritual adviser.

Sadly, some so-called evangelical leaders have attacked Paula for being non-Trinitarian and for being an advocate of the prosperity gospel. In the time I've known her, I've never heard her deny the Trinity. Like most charismatics and as a former member of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), she believes and preaches on the Trinity.

She refutes that she believes in the prosperity gospel. If she says so, I believe her. Maybe some of her friends in the black community teach it (she pastors a predominantly African-American church), but not Paula. Another charismatic leader lamenting those attacks said those doing it have a history of blasting charismatics in general, so this goes with the turf.

Today, Pastor Paula and Rev. Samuel Rodriguez were undoubtedly the first charismatic leaders to pray at a presidential inauguration.

Rodriguez's National Hispanic Christian Leadership Council (NHCLC) issued a press release saying he is the first Hispanic pastor to pray at a presidential inauguration and also the first ordained Assemblies of God pastor to have such a role.

Rodriguez's prayer was mostly reciting Scripture:

"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for Him and the kingdom of heaven is theirs. God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. God blesses those who are

humble, for they will inherit the earth. God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied. God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are those who are pure in heart, for they will see God. God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called children of God. God blesses those who are persecuted, for doing right for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. And God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are My followers. You are the light of the world, like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on its stand where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, and everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Respectfully, in Jesus' name."

Paula's prayer was even longer and I found it very moving. She said, in part:

"In the name of Jesus, with grateful hearts, thanking You for this great country that You have decreed to Your people. We acknowledge we are a blessed nation with a rich history of faith and fortitude with a future that is filled with promise and purpose. We recognize that every good and every perfect gift comes from You, and the United States of America is Your gift for which we proclaim our gratitude. As a nation, we now pray for our president, Donald John Trump, Vice President Michael Richard Pence and their families. We ask that You would bestow upon our president the wisdom necessary to lead this great nation, the grace to unify us and the strength to stand for what is honorable and right in Your sight.

"In Proverbs 21:1, You instruct us that our leader's heart is in Your hands. Gracious God, reveal unto our president the ability to know the will, Your will, the confidence to lead us in justice and righteousness and the compassion to yield to our better angels. While we know there are many challenges

before us, in every generation You have provided the strength and power to become that blessed nation. Guide us in discernment, Lord, and give us that strength to persevere and thrive. Now bind and heal our wounds and divisions, and join our nation to Your purpose.

“‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,’ the psalmist declared. Let Your favor be upon this one nation under God. Let these United States of America be that beacon of hope to all people and nations under Your dominion. A true hope for humankind. Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”