

## An Inauguration Prayer

by Coty Pinckney 1/16/2009

[President-elect Obama has asked Pastor Rick Warren to pray at his inauguration. Dan Phillips at the pyromaniacs blog (teampyro.blogspot.com) asked several well-known pastors and theologians to let him know if they would pray at this setting if asked and, if so, what they would say. The first (really excellent) response is from John Frame; the second is from our friend Thabiti Anyabwile. Dan did not ask me(!), but here is my prayer for the inauguration.]

Faithful Creator, Holy Sovereign, Righteous Father:  
To you belong all power and all might. You raise up rulers on this earth, and you bring them down. You enable governments to flourish, and you remove them from the face of the earth.

Although we knew this, we have turned away from You, the fountain of living water, and have sought to quench our thirst from our own stagnant, broken cisterns. We have looked away from Your glory and have delighted in our own. Though You have showered us with blessings and have shown us Yourself in all we see, we have suppressed our knowledge of You and pretended that we control our own destiny.

Yet despite our sinfulness, in your mercy over the last two centuries You have granted this country increasing prosperity and unequalled power. You have blessed us with liberty and, with all our faults, have allowed us to stand as a worldwide symbol of freedom. You are healing, as pictured in part by the election of this president, much of the prejudice that once bound us. Though we deserve Your judgment, You have maintained and sustained this government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Through the prayers of many, You have provided widespread confidence in our electoral system – so that those who voted for and against our new president can share this stage. We thank You once again for this peaceful transition of power.

Our world today faces numerous difficulties that will test this man deeply. So we ask that you give to President Obama a heart that fears You and trembles at Your Word. In this way grant him wisdom to discern the right choices, and strength of character to stand firm when those choices are questioned. Yet together with that strength, grant him humility of spirit to consider others more highly than himself. Protect him from the arrogance that so often comes with power. Give him faithful friends and advisors who will love him enough to reprove him and rebuke him. Prepare him for the unexpected challenges ahead – challenges that You alone know are coming.

Though we pray for our president, we know that ultimately, You alone are the answer to our problems. So we ask You to work in the lives of our brothers and sisters who have lost jobs, who have lost homes, who have lost loved ones, who suffer from oppression and poverty. Use even these

tragedies for their good through Your great wisdom. We ask for strength and endurance for our sons and daughters fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as for those fighting AIDS and malaria in Africa – but we ask all the more for the light of Your Gospel to shine in these dark places, ending these wars and overcoming these diseases. We pray similarly for perseverance for those serving the homeless in our cities, and those working with migrant laborers in our farms – and ask that there too, and in every place of pain and suffering, the love and mercy found only through Your Son might be declared verbally and lived out practically.

Thank you, O Lord, for Your undeserved mercy on this people. Bring us to repentance, O Lord. Open our eyes to our sinfulness and to Your great power to save. Enable us to call upon the mercy found only in Your Son. Forgive us by His blood, for You are the God of grace.

To you is due all glory, all praise, and all honor.

In the Name of Jesus I pray,

Amen.