

## A President's Prayer for the Nation

Before his inauguration as president of the United States on Jan. 20, 1953, Dwight Eisenhower invited evangelist Billy Graham to the Commodore Hotel in New York.

"I'd like to quote one or two passages from the Bible in my inaugural speech," he said. Eisenhower felt one of the reasons he was elected was to help set the moral climate of America.

Graham suggested 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Eisenhower prepared a speech that, to everyone's surprise, opened with what he called "a little prayer of my own."

In it, he prayed, "Give us, we pray, the power to discern clearly right from wrong, and allow all our words and actions to be governed thereby, and by the laws of this land. Especially we pray that our concern will be for all the people regardless of race, station or calling ... so that all may work for the good of our beloved country and Thy glory. Amen."



After his prayer, Ike's speech spoke repeatedly of spiritual things. "In the swift rush of great events," he said, "we find ourselves groping to know the full meaning of these times in which we live. In our quest for understanding, we beseech God's guidance."

He was sworn into office with his hand resting on two Bibles, both opened to 2 Chronicles 7:14. It reads: *If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Eisenhower's concern for the moral climate of America and the message of this this verse are fitting for sober reflection, and action, for our nation today.

Take this verse as a personal mandate to humble yourself and pray that America might turn from any wicked way.

Pray for your national, state and local leaders; they all need our prayers. Take a page from Eisenhower's speech and ask God to give our leaders the ability to discern right from wrong, and to choose the right, and then act on it.

– Beecher Hunter