

# Joe. My. God.

## Gay Orgs React To Warren Selection

December 18, 2008

**Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force:**

**"President-elect Obama campaigned on a theme of inclusivity, yet the selection of Rick Warren to give the invocation is a direct affront to that very principle. This was a divisive choice, and clearly not one that will help our country come together and heal. We urge President-elect Obama to withdraw his invitation to Rick Warren and instead select a faith leader who embraces fairness, equality and the ideals the president-elect himself has called the nation to uphold."**

Joe Solmonese, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign:

Dear President-elect Obama

Let me get right to the point. Your invitation to Reverend Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at your inauguration is a genuine blow to LGBT Americans. Our loss in California over the passage of Proposition 8 which stripped loving, committed same-sex couples of their given legal right to marry is the greatest loss our community has faced in 40 years. And by inviting Rick Warren to your inauguration, you have tarnished the view that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans have a place at your table.

Rick Warren has not sat on the sidelines in the fight for basic equality and fairness. In fact, Rev. Warren spoke out vocally in support of Prop 8 in California saying, "there is no need to change the universal, historical definition of marriage to appease 2 percent of our population ... This is not a political issue -- it is a moral issue that God has spoken clearly about." Furthermore, he continues to misrepresent marriage equality as silencing his religious views. This was a lie during the battle over Proposition 8, and it's a lie today.

Rev. Warren cannot name a single theological issue that he and vehemently, anti-gay theologian James Dobson disagree on. Rev. Warren is not a moderate pastor who is trying to bring all sides together. Instead, Rev. Warren has often played the role of general in the cultural war waged against LGBT Americans, many of whom also share a strong tradition of religion and faith.

We have been moved by your calls to religious leaders to own up to the homophobia and racism that has stood in the way of combating HIV and AIDS in this country. And that you have publicly called on religious leaders to open their hearts to their LGBT family members, neighbors and

friends.

But in this case, we feel a deep level of disrespect when one of architects and promoters of an anti-gay agenda is given the prominence and the pulpit of your historic nomination. Only when Rev. Warren and others support basic legislative protections for LGBT Americans can we believe their claim that they are not four-square against our rights and dignity. In that light, we urge you to reconsider this announcement.

Geoff Kors, executive director of Equality California:

"It is appalling that President-elect Barack Obama would invite California Pastor Rev. Rick Warren, an ardent supporter of Prop 8 and someone who is opposed to the equality of LGBT Americans, to give the invocation at his inauguration. Would President-elect Obama invite someone to give the invocation who supported eliminating the civil rights of a minority other than the LGBT community? Of course he wouldn't! This is a slap in the face to the millions of LGBT Americans who supported his historic candidacy"