



## Pastor Released from Turkish Prison Prays for Trump in Oval Office

Within hours of his arrival on American soil after being held prisoner for two years in Turkey, Pastor Andrew Brunson's release [was celebrated by President Trump in the Oval Office](#) on Saturday morning. The president quipped, "From a Turkish prison to the White House in 24 hours, that's not bad!"

After the laughter died down, Pastor Brunson asked the president if he could pray for him and Trump said, "Well, I need it probably more than anyone else in this room, so that would be very nice. Thank you."

Brunson stood up from his chair, went over to the president and knelt beside him and put his hand on the president's shoulder. He bowed his head and asked God to "give him supernatural wisdom to accomplish all the plans You have for this country and for him. I ask that You give him wisdom on how to lead this country into righteousness."

Brunson then added:

I ask that You give him perseverance and endurance and courage to stand for truth. I ask that You protect him from slander from enemies, from those who would undermine. I ask that You make him a great blessing to this country. Fill him with Your wisdom and strength and perseverance. And bless him. May he be a great blessing to our country.

In Jesus' name, we bless you. Amen.

And then Brunson's wife Norine prayed for the president, asking that he receive "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord."

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Brunson, a teaching elder of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, spent the last 23 years of his life in Turkey, pastoring the tiny Izmir Resurrection Church, a congregation with about 25 members that met in a small room in a tenement. Following a failed coup against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Brunson was arrested in October of 2016 on various charges that included attempts to overthrow Erdoğan's government, that he was involved with the American CIA in that failed attempt, and that he actually helped to plan the failed coup.

A sham trial was held in May of 2018, during which Brunson's witnesses were dismissed by the judge before even being heard, which was called "simply unconscionable" by Vice Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Sandra Jolley, who attended the trial.

In July, the Trump administration began to ramp up pressure on Erdoğan to release Brunson, with Vice





Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 15, 2018

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President Mike Pence telling Erdoğan to release the pastor or face significant sanctions.

On July 25, Brunson was moved from prison (where conditions were so harsh that he had lost 50 pounds during his imprisonment) to house arrest for “health reasons.”

This was clearly an unsatisfactory response to Pence’s demand, and on August 1 those sanctions were applied on two of Erdoğan’s top people, along with doubling the U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from his country. On October 12, Brunson was released from house arrest and was flown first to Germany for medical examination and then on to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

President Trump’s willingness to let Pastor Brunson pray for him begs the question: Is President Donald Trump a Christian? Trump says he is, writing in his book *Great Again* published during the presidential campaign: “I think people are shocked when they find out that I am a Christian.”

Dr. James Dobson thinks he is. The founder of Focus on the Family, Dobson told Charisma News in 2016 that “I don’t know when it was [that Trump accepted Christ], but it has not been long. I believe he really made a commitment ... [that] he’s a baby Christian.” Dobson said he knows who brought Trump to Christ: Paula Michelle White-Cain, better known as Paula White, host of the television show *Paula White Today* and senior pastor of the evangelical megachurch New Destiny Christian Center in Apopka, Florida.

In 2002 Donald Trump called her directly after watching one of her shows and began the relationship that continues today. He would often invite her to Atlantic City for private Bible studies and, after announcing his candidacy, asked her to join his Evangelical Advisory Board. When Trump was inaugurated, White provided the invocation prayer. Since then, White has served as one of the president’s closest advisors and has joined in Oval Office prayer meetings with him.

In an interview with the *Washington Times* last Thursday, White said that “a lot of evangelicals have grown accustomed to feeling used by the political process. Every politician appeals to us, every one wants to hear us out during the campaign, but then things change once they get into office.” Trump, she said, is “just different.”

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