

Concerning Andrew Brunson

Whatever you think of American political parties and presidents, I think it's important to keep in mind that the issue of Pastor Andrew Brunson lies in two directions.

On the one hand, for me as a Christian, this is about prayer and fasting, showing solidarity with a fellow pastor in my denomination. That's why our congregations engaged in a day of prayer and fasting this past Sunday.

On the other hand, this issue is about a dictator torturing an American citizen in order to achieve his goal: The return of a person who sought sanctuary here in America.

To quote a former member of the Turkish parliament, now living in America:

“His pretrial detention, I would argue, has become a sort of torture,” Aykan Erdemir told CBN News. Erdemir is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a former member of Turkey's parliament.

‘He says Brunson's trial was historically long—12 hours.

“Right after the noon break when he came back and was defending himself he had a mental breakdown. He sat down; it's reported that he started crying and he told the judge how difficult it is to survive in this kind of isolation chamber,” Erdemir said.’ (<https://tinyurl.com/y742llpj>)

The whole segment is 15 minutes long.

I refrain from publicly speaking out for or against politicians, because it seems to me that this is a fruitless thing that tends to divide people unnecessarily, especially in such a polarized time as now. Why can't we all talk kindly, civilly, and rationally with each other?

Why add that last paragraph? Because this issue isn't about President Trump; it's about his doing his **duty** to protect American citizens here and abroad.

Now, to get back to the first issue—the issue that concerns me as a Christian, especially as a Christian pastor—as someone has said, our Lord told us to GO; he didn't tell us to return (Cf. Matthew 28:19). I hesitate to quote that because it appears so calloused in the present context, but I do so having smuggled Bibles into a country where this was forbidden.

There is another aspect to this: While the Apostle Paul took advantage of his status as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:35-39; 22:25-29), he knew ultimately that Rome would fail him.

And as a dear friend of mine shared some wisdom from *The Talmud* back in 2005: “Seek no undue intimacy with the ruling power for they only draw a person near when it is to their advantage, but they turn aside in your hour of need.”

The issue for me, ultimately is my “place and calling” (*WLC*, 108). My place and calling are to pray and fast, and I urge you to do the same.

Bob Vincent