

# **Family Research Council**

## **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Values Voter Summit**

### **Remarks by Ambassador Sam Brownback**

**Speaker:  
Ambassador Sam Brownback,  
Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom**

**Location: Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.**

**Time: 7:00 p.m. EDT  
Date: Saturday, October 12, 2018**

(Cheers, applause.)

AMBASSADOR SAM BROWNEBACK: Thanks, guys. Thank you all. Thanks.  
(Applause.)

Thanks, Tony. I thought – when he said one of my longest friends, I thought he was going to say, you know, the old saying: If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog. That he was going to say, my dog, Sam Brownback. But no. (Laughter.)

What a great event tonight! I mean, the president of the United States and then all of this that's going on. (Applause.) This is – this is fabulous. And then honoring Norine and Andrew Brunson and the amazing things – the terrible things that they've been through, but the faith that they have exhibited through it and with it, and all that they've experienced in going forward, and now even carrying that banner on forward more.

I want to – very brief comment. You've got to hear from them. You want to hear from the Brunsons, and you should. But just say a couple quick things.

Number one is to recognize what Norine did in that circumstance. She was there. She stayed by his side. She helped really carry Andrew on through it. And I know he'll recognize her as well, but, Norine, you were a rock through that whole period and that episode that went on. (Applause.)

I want to give you a great word of encouragement. We have a chance with this lineup, with this time, with this season that we're in, to really push open the doors of religious freedom around the world. I don't say that lightly. I don't say that easily. I don't think it will be easy. But we've got the chance within the next nine months to make a real breakthrough in this topic around the world. And I say that when we've seen this – we've seen religious persecution grow, not religious freedom, over the last 20 years. We've seen it get worse, not better. But we've got the chance now to make it different. And this is the time period that we've got to push as hard as we have ever pushed and more so to make this happen.

And look what's lined up for us to be able to make it happen right now. We've got the president of the United States pushing this topic strong. We've got the vice president of the United States that pushes it strong. We've got the secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, a fellow Kansan, pushing this strong. They are driving this. The first time ever in the U.N. General Assembly a president, a head of state, brings up the topic of religious freedom, and drives and pushes that forward in that international body. (Applause.)

Now, I've never been a big fan of the U.N. I just want to say and put that out there. But this is the way it should be used, is to drive a topic that's a global human right. And it's a human right not from governments; it's a human right from God. And us pushing that on forward.

This is a great lineup that we have. We've got an agenda. The president's announced the International Religious Freedom Alliance of us pulling together governments from around the

world to push this topic together. And he said we're going to – we're going to do that and we're going to stand that up this next year.

The National Prayer Breakfast is going to use the topic of religious freedom this year and push it at that event.

This past week I don't know if you saw that there was a trade negotiation with China that went on, and that was key, and that was big. But there was also a couple of other things that took place. There was sanctions being put on entities in China that are being used by a Big Brother type of apparatus to put down the people in western China, the Uighurs, the Muslim Uighurs. Those entities that are the Big Brother artificial intelligence system watching their own people, pushing them down, those were sanctioned by the U.S. government. It had been a long time coming. Visas were put on – visa restrictions were put on Chinese officials to come to the United States. They're ones that are persecuting people of faith. The agenda is being pushed forward there.

We'll be hosting the G-7 summit – the United States will this next year, as well. And then this season – this season you are finally starting to see global leaders say that if we don't get on top of the issues of religious persecution around the world, you're going to see more persecution, you're going to see more deaths, you're going to see more people locked up. This thing is going to get completely out of control because there is so much persecution that's taking place now. There's so much killing that's taking place now.

So Tony Blair said that at our ministerial that we had this past year. You're seeing more foreign policy professionals saying we've got to engage the faith community. I heard of one of the long-time Middle East peace negotiators saying, you know, if we had just engaged the faith community years ago on Middle East peace negotiation, maybe we would be somewhere today. Before they just excluded the faith community and said, well, they're – they get in the way of good foreign policy; not that they're a part of making it or that they're a group that should be talked to.

Faith communities around the world have grown stronger, not weaker, over the last two decades, so really this is the moment for us to push forward on this topic like we never have before because now is the time we can score. We can really get something done on it.

I want to ask you a quick few things to do. Number one, first and foremost, is pray – is really commit this to prayer over the next nine months, if you would, about really seeing these gates of religious freedom fly open around the world; that the iron curtain of religious persecution would come down; that this is the season that it would happen; that you would believe in those prayers and you'd put them forward.

Get involved in your town halls, in your local communities, inviting people who have experienced persecution. There are several here in this audience that have experience religious persecution abroad. A number of you know people that have.

I remember meeting with a pastor in Los Angeles who was out of Iran. He had been brought in a number of times to the police to be interrogated. And he said one time in particular he remembers when he was brought in to be interrogated by the police, and the policeman sitting across from the table from him took a bullet, and he was rolling it around in his fingers. And he said, I think every Christian should get one of these. That was his message.

Well, our message back is we're going to stand for those people. We're going to fight for them so that they can be free in Iran and everywhere else around the world – (applause) – that they can and will be free.

There are great organizations that you can support. Family Research Council is doing a lot of work in this area, but groups like Voices of the Martyrs, In Defense of Christians.

The United States has to be the lead country on this. We're the ones that believe in this the strongest and we're the ones that are pushing it. We're going to continue to do.

And then, finally – and I hope there's somebody in this audience or that hears this that will – this will sow an idea in their mind – we need a movie. We need a TV series about people that have been persecuted for their faith. I have heard so many absolutely amazing stories of valor, of courage, of faith by people that have been persecuted.

Meriam Ibrahim that Tony mentioned earlier, that was going to be killed, and she this past year – this year she met with the president of the United States in the Oval Office. And here was a lady who was going to be killed for her – for her faith in Sudan. And before she went in to see the president, when we knew we had the meeting set up with the president, she contacted me and talked to me and said, do you think he would mind if I would bring my 5-year-old son that's the reason that I'm alive, because I was pregnant at the time and they weren't willing to kill me while I was pregnant? If it's up to me, you can bring all the children you want into the Oval Office.

But we need to tell those stories in a way that the public gets it – you know, in a – in a series, in a movie, to where they can feel the passion, they can feel the faith, and they can be encouraged and uplifted by it.

Is it our key season. This is an absolutely critical topic, and I hope you continue to get behind it in prayer and indeed.

God bless you all. (Applause.)

(END)