

What President Trump Told Charismatic Pastors Yesterday at the White House

President Donald Trump met with pastors from across the country yesterday at the White House to discuss criminal justice reform and the church's role in assisting the community.

The list of attendees included John Gray, Choco DeJesus, Paula White, Darrell Scott, Harry Jackson, Alveda King and more.

"Today was a watershed moment for the president and faith leaders of the urban community coming together addressing and bringing solutions to their greatest needs," White says. "The fruit of this historic gathering will be evidenced in millions of lives."

According to a transcript posted to the White House site, Trump told the pastors:

Throughout our history, America's churches and religious leaders have called for change and have inspired us to care for and bring hope back to those in need. So many people in need. These are the people that—hey do a job, and it's really, largely unrecognized, which is something they don't even care about, frankly. They just want to take care of people. But the people realize it, and they love you. They love you very much. You know that.

By cutting taxes, reducing regulation, increasing American energy, and promoting American manufacturing—a situation where, as you remember, the other side of the equation said people don't want to do manufacturing anymore. I said, "Well, they don't want to make things?" Well, it turns out we're doing record business in manufacturing.

We've increased and created 3.7 million more jobs since Election Day. African American and Hispanic unemployment rates have reached the lowest levels in recorded history, meaning history—the lowest levels ever. African-American and Hispanic. Asian also. Women also – 66 years.

We've launched a bold workforce training initiative. So far, over 100 companies and associations have already pledged to train and retrain over 4 million Americans. So important, because we have companies, once again, coming back into our country, and they want to employ people. So we're training and working with these people, and we're getting companies to do the same. It's been—actually, it's been a very beautiful thing.

We fought very hard to include "Opportunity Zones" in our tax bill, which, as you know, we have. This tax incentive will bring badly needed investment into distressed communities—communities with high unemployment, communities where it's really tough, and tough to get a job. And already, we're seeing what's happening. We're seeing the benefits.

Our focus on opportunity for every citizen includes helping former prisoners. These citizens reentering society have had a tough time. We want them to get jobs so they don't have to return to a life of crime and go back into the same prison where they just got out. I mean, this has been a tremendous problem. And the best thing we could do, actually, is exactly what we're doing: creating an environment where the country is doing so well.

And prisoners have never, ever, even close, done better than they've done now when they get out, because they're getting jobs. And the reason is, it's hard to get people because we're pretty well filled up. So for the first time probably, I think I could say, ever, they're getting a break.

And I have to tell you, the people that are hiring

prisoners—and you’ve heard me say it—they’re loving them. And I don’t mean in every case. But in a big percentage of cases, they’re loving them. And these are people that are doing, really, an incredible job.

But a lot of people didn’t want to do it; they didn’t want to hire prisoners. They’re doing it. I have one man, a friend of mine, he’s now up to number 10. And I don’t say he loved all 10, but he liked 7 of them a lot. (Laughter.) In fact, said six of them are better than anybody else he has. I don’t think that’s a bad percentage. Right? (Laughter.) And he’s a fan. And a lot of people are becoming fans.

We passed the First Step Act through the House, and we’re working with the Senate to pass that into law. And I think we’ll be able to do it. When we say “hire American,” we mean all Americans—every American, everybody.

We cannot have opportunity without safety. We’re working every day with local and federal law enforcement to reduce violent crime all over the country. I mean, you look all over the world—you think—but all over our country. And the numbers are going down.

Every American child should be able to grow up in a safe community, surrounded by a loving family, with access to a great education that leads to a lifelong career, and success, and all of the things that go with great success.

We also underscore the crucial importance of faith in fostering strong families and communities. And I just want to again thank you all for being here. And you’re very special people. I don’t even know if you know that, but you’re very special people. You’re admired by everybody in this country. Even if they’re not believers, most of them admire what you’re doing. But maybe we’ll make them believers, right? (Laughter.) We’re going to work.

Many of these pastors responded with gratitude and are encouraged with the steps the Trump administration is taking to reform urban communities.

Here's what they're saying:

Bishop Kelvin L. Cobaris, The Impact Church of Orlando, Florida:

Today, I was honored to be part of the roundtable on urban initiatives with President Trump. Many of the leading clergy from around the nation echoed the same sentiments regarding the president keeping his word to empower the Faith based community and on how he championed the effort for prison reform. As a leader, I appreciate the opportunity to share with a president that will hear and address issues that matter to our community.

Bishop Kyle Searcy, Fresh Anointing House of Worship:

The meeting was very productive and encouraging. The president's efforts towards solving problems in the criminal justice system and urban America are sincere and action based. I'm confident we will make a difference in these areas positively impacting many Americans.

Darrell Scott, pastor of New Spirit Revival Center, Cleveland Heights Ohio:

The meeting today was another step in a series of steps designed to enhance and improve the quality of living for members of America's urban community in line with the president's vision of prosperity for all Americans. The faith-based community is recognized as a major voice of, to, and for America's urban communities, and its influence is recognized and respected by the Trump administration. Those in attendance today engaged in very productive dialog, which will lead to more dialog in upcoming meetings, that will have

a very positive effect upon this country, and hopefully help solve many of the problems in this country that currently exist.

Sharon Nesbitt, Dominion World Outreach Church:

I thought it was informative and strategic. President Trump message to us in bringing reform to our prisons was heartfelt. I'm excited about real dialogue to help urban initiatives.

Benny Perez, ChurchLV:

It was refreshing to sit down with President Trump to discuss the success of what has been happening as well as address some challenges still facing us regarding the urban community. His heart was evident as he listened to each pastor express their ideas in regards to helping people.

Alveda King, Priests for Life:

Was very comforted and encouraged to receive EO updates on prison reform, the job market and job readiness, aide to foreign nations, life and more ... just awesome! The president is as good as his word; keeps his promises. His empowerment agenda is backed by a solid team which includes strong voices in the faith community. MAGA rocks!

Pastor Julian Lowe, Oasis Church:

It was a privilege and honor to meet with and serve President Trump today. I am encouraged that we will continue to speak for those who have no voice, and I believe that myself along with the faith leaders of this nation can pray for and partner with this administration. I am praying for divine wisdom from heaven to bring prison reform, social justice and hope to the urban community.