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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS DELIVERS REMARKS AT FAITH-BASED  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUMMIT**

**Pastor Gilford Monroe, Faith Advisor, Office of the Mayor:** Hey, good morning to everyone again. Good morning everybody.

All right on this nice beautiful day in New York City, rain is a sign of blessings. So before we begin, I would like to have a moment of silence so that you can have a opportunity to have a prayer for our city, a prayer for our mayor, a prayer for our commissioner of HPD, a prayer for our team in the Office of Faith Based, and just a prayer for all of the people that you serve so faithfully every single day in New York City. So in whatever tradition that you serve or how you see it, we are going to have a moment of an opportunity to be able to be silent before the most high and to be able to give thanks to him for today.

Thank you all so much for that, those prayers. And I'm sure again, our city is always grateful to all of our faith leaders this morning. So today's a great day. It's the mayor's first Affordable Housing Development Summit to deal with the homelessness crisis that we have in New York City, but also to help with home ownership and also to help with creating an economy that is booming in New York City. So thank you all for coming this week. Today we have really great panelists who are going to present before all of us today, and we are very, very grateful that you took the time to come out here today to be with us. So I want to introduce to you, the mayor of New York City, Mayor Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you, thank you. Thank you so much. And I say it over and over again. It's going to resonate. You don't stand for me, I stand for you. I'm here to serve you and I'm focused on that service. And this is a dream come true for me. When I was borough president, Pastor Morose and I had building by faith, and as I spoke with my faith-based leaders to talk about these housing opportunities, I was just so restricted because as the borough president, we were limited. We were able to put millions of dollars in some of the projects with our faith-based leaders, but we were not able to look at the full landscape of the resources that were available to the city. And so now we have the opportunity to do so.

And so, let me tell you this, I don't know if he actually stated it or if it's just attributed to him, but Henry Ford stated that if he would've asked people, they would've said, "Build faster horses."

And he was talking about cars. And so much of the conversation that I am having, I'm having with faster horses thinkers. I'm not a fast horse thinker. I'm talking about something totally new on what we must do in our city. This is a moonshot moment. We've tinkered around the edges enough. We played these games of mayors coming in, governors coming in, presidents coming in. The system is broken. And I really question if the entire opportunities or the entire experiment of cities is something we need to reexamine. It's broken. It's not only broken in New York, it's broken all over the country, if not the globe.

And all we do is kick the can down the road. We know at the beginning of the year, we are going to fail a large number of people and they're primarily black and brown and immigrants. And we know it. We have this downstream mindset. Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, "We spend a lifetime pulling people out of the river. No one goes upstream and prevent them from falling in the first place." We have profitized downstream. We hang out downstream and we spend billions of dollars of taxpayer's money for the broken issues we created upstream. And there's no desire. Who are we kidding?

There's no desire to stop 30 percent of our inmates from being in Rikers Island because they're dyslexic. There's no desire to invest in foster care children so 6,700 of them don't fall in through the cracks. There's no desire to have a healthcare system that does not feed the healthcare crisis, instead of doing preventive medicine to prevent the healthcare crisis. There's no desire to come and bring you together and say, "You have all of this property. Why don't you come with a real housing plan?" There's no desire to fix it. People are making money off the dysfunctionality of our cities across America.

That's why I'm being attacked all the time because I'm an upstream thinker and I'm willing to push the envelope and face this head on. Because the people you are trying to help is the life I lived. I'm dyslexic. I was arrested. I was rejected. But now I'm elected. I'm the Mayor of the City of New York.

So a broken person, and only those of you from the biblical sense and the sense of a faith base, only you could really understand this moment. God took an imperfect person that everyone thought was impossible. People went around to everyone else and they ignored the Joseph called Eric Adams. He wasn't good enough. He wasn't smart enough. He wasn't the type of person that should have been. But God had another plan. He said, "I'm going to take the brokenness of him and show all who are broken the possibilities. So those who are sitting in jail right now, they're not going to say that's who they are." Where you are is not who you are. They're saying, "My mayor was in jail." Those children who are sitting in school right now trying to figure out why they can't learn, they're being bullied. They're saying, "Wait a... My mayor was dyslexic. My mayor was a D student."

Those who lived on the verge of homelessness are going to be able to say, "My mayor carried a garbage bag full of clothing to school every day because his mother wanted him to have a change of clothing so they won't be thrown out. My mayor knows what it is to eat the surplus food that was given out at the shelters. My mayor went through this." This is what this moment is about. And so your plan, yes, it's going to unsettle some people, but we're supposed to be unsettling in people. Too many people have been comfortable with the condition of this city. And we're going

to look through it and we're going to find those places. But at the end of the day, I need the faith-based institutions to build the housing in this city. I need for you to be providing the care. We should not allow people to profit, even from the shelters.

People are making billions off the shelters in the city and providing nothing for people in return, but just a bed and some stale food that can cause a healthcare crisis down the road. The audacity of the moment that we're in right now, that's what I'm up against. And there must be intervention and prevention. Prevention is the long term things that we are doing. Dyslexia screening in all schools. The money we put in foster care to pay for the college tuition for foster care children and give them stipends even after they graduate. The money we put into childcare so mothers can have childcare while they go back to work. Mothers and families can do so. What are we doing around gun violence? Allowing with our block power, those who are just as involved to get jobs in the green job. Those are the long term things.

And we are focused on those long term things at an unprecedented level. But there's some intervention we need to do right now, right now, right now. And that's the most comfortable part of the conversation when we come down to intervention. I can't have a city where people can't take care of their basic needs and they are in danger to themselves and others. I can't do that. That is not humane. And you cannot tell me if Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John was not here right now, they would be on the streets with me talking to those people who are in that condition. This is a right now issue and it's not a comfortable conversation. Because we would rather say, "Well, let's wait until we build more housing." Yes, that's a long term plan, but what do we do right now? That is what people don't want to deal with.

And I'm not going to punt. I'm not going to kick it down the line. I'm not going to act like I don't see it. I'm going to deal with these issues face on. I did not become mayor to climb a hill. I became mayor to climb a mountain and I'm going to meet the challenges face on. And I need you. This is the body of people that I've longed to mobilize. This is the most powerful group in our city because you are not doing it for profit, you're doing it for people. You are doing it for people. You see the broken people in your pews. You see them in your hospitals. You see them throughout the entire city. You have never removed from being on the front line.

In January and February, I went into the streets. I sat inside tents. I sat inside encampments and I talked to people one-on-one. I saw human waste in the corner, stale food, people talking to themselves, hearing noises, talking about who they want to kill, feeling that someone is taking them away. And those first two months in that cold weather, and I sat there and prayed and I said, "God, I can't ignore this. I can't act like I don't see this."

This is why we're doing this. We're not doing this because we are inhumane. We're doing it because we are humane. This is your moment. You have one of your own that's mayor, have a God fearing man that's unapologetic about it. That's the mayor of the City of New York. And we're going to look over what you are proposing on how we deal with these crises that are facing us as a city. I know we are going to come to a solution because I prayed for this moment and God has always, always answered my prayers, answered my prayers. And I believe this is an extension of those prayers. Thank you.

**Pastor Monroe:** All right. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you again so much, Mr. Mayor. We thank you for the opening. I'll have Mr. Neill Coleman to come forward from Trinity and then followed by our HPD commissioner, Mr. Carrion.

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