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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT SDA CHURCH'S
ATLANTIC YOUTH MINISTRIES FACEBOOK LIVE EVENT**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you so much, Dr. Knight. Thank you for such a heartfelt introduction and it has been my honor to know you over these years and work with you and thank you so much for your leadership. Thank you to all who are gathered today, everyone who makes the work of the Atlantic Union, so powerful, so important for so many people in our city and well beyond. I want to wish everyone a happy Sabbath, this day we gathered together. I have to tell you that I have had the honor of being in so many Adventist churches over the years and what I have felt is an extraordinary sense of leadership, ownership, a sense that community is not just a vague phrase, but a living, breathing reality in the church and community in terms of faith, but also extraordinary commitment to the broader community surrounding. I have learned, and you know, I always like to acknowledge my own journey. I knew little about the SDA world, and I've had many great teachers, a lot of whom are here gathered, but to see the commitment to health care, so pertinent in this moment in history, SDA Churches were leading the way in terms of teaching and encouraging and supporting health care in communities, I would dare say long before it might be considered fashionable, you were trailblazing in the way that faith communities could help create a deeper connection and availability of health care for the people.

Education, one thing if you know the SDA world, you know the extraordinary commitment to the power of education, and I've seen it play out. When I called for very early on, way back when just a longshot guy running for Mayor, and I said pre-K for every child in New York City for free, I didn't find any place where there was more passion for that idea than in the SDA churches. So, you know, I know the people that I can relate to because we share the same deep commitment, deep in our hearts kind of commitment to ensuring there's something for everyone. That's what I have encountered every time, an incredible sense of citizenship and an incredible sense of community. I want to thank all of you for what you have done to foster that in your congregations and in the neighborhoods of our city.

I'll be very brief and say, you know, we gather at a time we could be depressed about it, if we chose to be, I don't think anyone in this conference is that kind of person. I don't think people of faith fall into what can't be. I think you think about what can be. We could be depressed by these times, but I see the pain, and I see the anger, and I see the challenges that are almost inestimable. Some families have been through so much in recent months. Some families lost not one person, but a lot of people. Some families are suffering right now. So many people right now are going through the painful acknowledgement of injustices that everyone here has known about for a long time, but it's becoming clearer and clearer, that our whole society, how broken the realities are, how structurally deep racism is in our country and in our police forces. There is so much that

it's happening simultaneously, and it almost seems like one pain, one scar is being piled upon the next, and that could make you feel hopeless. I don't feel helpless and I believe I'm right in saying you don't feel hopeless either because we have faith and we know our history. History teaches us that we don't wish for crisis, we don't wish for pain, but out of it often comes progress and change.

I always try and make the analogy that the worst before this one, the worst crisis this country faced in terms of deprivation and poverty descending upon families with almost no warning, that was the Great Depression. I know from the stories of my own family, how much dislocation occurred, how much of a shock it was. But I also know that each and every one of us could reach into our wallet and find a Social Security Card and that Social Security Card comes from the realization in that moment 90 years ago, that something had to change and something had to be better to give people a fairer share. That decision was made in the 1930's and it's still helps us today. What will our generation do? Who are we the leaders of today? What will we envision and do that will be remembered 90 years from now because we made a change? That was that lasting. That's what I think we are called to.

So, I want to affirm to you because I consider the people in this conference true friends and allies in the fight for justice, not just racial and ethnic justice, but also economic justice. I affirmed to you that for the next year and a half, we're going to use every tool in the City of New York to bring change and bring it rapidly and energetically. We have to. That's what we're called to do in this moment. We have to change the way we police. I know we – I know we have proven it can change. If any Doubting Thomas comes along and says things don't change, I remind you what stop and frisk used to be like and that's gone. I remind you of what the reality that policing was like before neighborhood policing, before de-escalation strategies, when arrest was the only solution, when people are incarcerated for literally no reason.

We still have a long way to go, but in this city, incarceration is a third of what it was when I took office, arrests are down to the tune of hundreds of thousands a year. You can see and feel the de-escalation even though we have so much more to go, and I have young people have come up to me to this day saying what it's like to be able to finally go about their lives without being stopped for no reason whatsoever and what a change that has made. And the events last week has been painful and revealing, and there are many instances where police did what we needed them to do, but there were also instances where police did the wrong thing, and the answer to that is accountability, discipline, transparency, consequences that people can see in real time. That is what breeds faith, when people see that, regardless of whether you wear a uniform, you're held to the same standards as everyone else. We have to do more of that and we have to do that more quickly in New York City and I commit to doing that, I guarantee we can because we've shown we can make changes.

So, everyone, look, we're going to now in this moment, take crisis and turn it into deeper meaning. We're going to take money from the NYPD budget and put it into initiatives that help young people, go at the root causes of so many of the challenges of social services we need, we're going to speed up that discipline process. We're going to support community-based solutions to violence, like the Cure Violence Movement and the crisis management system to stop violence before it happens. This is just some of the things we can and will do, but I want to

conclude with my appreciation for all of you and my belief that together, we can go a lot farther. The only way change happens in the city is from the grassroots up. It's important what we're going to do with City Hall, what the City Council will do, what the State Legislature has done, but the most important change will happen from the grassroots up. We're seeing this time and again. We've seen this with all the work we've done on mental health with my wife, Chirlane, as our First Lady. We've seen how faith communities have embraced that and make it come alive. We've seen all the amazing work that faith communities have done to heal and bring police and community into dialogue and bringing them closer together. The amazing work, that faith communities, and none more than the SDA communities, have done to uplift our young people, help them turn from negative influences to positive influences.

You will be agents of change and progress. I have no doubt. I know you. I know you'll lead the way and I want to be your partner. It's a moment of tremendous urgency, and I know that urgency lives in each and every one of you, and I know you have the leadership and the skill to turn it into action. And I will be right there beside you, as we transform this city in this moment where that transformation is deeply, deeply needed. So, God bless you all. Thank you for this opportunity to share this moment with you. I feel strengthened just being in your presence, and I mean, it, I feel uplifted. I thank you and I say, God bless you all for all you have done and all you will do. Thank you.

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