

MR. TURMAN: My name is Kevin Turman.

Good afternoon. I'm the pastor of Second Baptist Church. I'm the president of MOSES, the Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength; and I wish to commend you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Eisenhower Foundation for coming to Detroit, seeking answers to questions about race, place, and poverty. It is indicative of the signs of the times that you are seeking answers to questions which neither the current administration, neither political party, nor any of those who are running for President are even willing to ask.

I've been asked to share my perspective as pastor and as president of a faith-based community-organizing project on the progress or lack of progress that we have made since the riots of 1967 or the rebellion of '67. And I want to focus my comments this afternoon on the young people of my congregation and the young people of my community.

I have served as the pastor of Second Baptist Church now for 19 and a half years, and I can say without fear of successful contradiction that the young people of my congregation and my community are as industrious as you will find anywhere. They are as imaginative as you will find anywhere. They are as innovative and as intelligent as any that you will find anywhere. But, unfortunately, they have a number of the challenges that have been unaddressed because the recommendations of the Kerner Commission were ignored or dismissed. They find themselves and oftentimes isolated in pockets of poverty where they see themselves not having any meaningful opportunity to get out of those neighborhoods. They find themselves neglected, uncultivated in their intellect by what they find often in some of their neighborhood schools. And they're often deprived of meaningful vision of a powerful or positive future.

Consider the challenges that face so many of our young people. They do not see themselves as having access to affordable healthcare. They do not see themselves as being a part of an integrated educational opportunity. They do not see themselves often projecting into a valuable or viable employment future. They're often neglected in terms of job training opportunities. They do not often live in diverse neighborhoods nor have access to affordable and safe housing. Indeed, would that this administration saw that poverty as a weapon of mass destruction. Would that this administration saw that crime and violence often terrorize our young people far more than someone living halfway around the world.

Consider the fact that the Internet is the modern mechanism of not just information but as well the economy. Think of what happened when we were an agricultural nation and the sacrifice of an entire generation made the interstate highway accessible to anyone who had employment -- who had employment and transportation or, simply, transportation to obtain the employment.

But today, instead of agriculture, information is the new commodity. And rather than making it possible for the maximized number of people to access this new medium, the

Internet is now only accessible through electronics to some and usually at a very high price, meaning that many of our young people who might otherwise be able to establish businesses, be able to establish better education, be able to open doors of opportunity often have those doors of opportunity closed to them.

To ask Detroiters, particularly our young people to thrive in these kinds of circumstances is akin to asking Hebrews to make bricks without straw.

The result of the lack of transit in order to get to where jobs are, the result of depressed opportunities has led to, at least in my circle of young people, a sense of despair and often a decline of hope. Are there exceptions to those rules? Absolutely. Because, Detroiters have some exceptional people. But the truth is that many of those who protested Apartheid in the '70s and the '80s are practicing it in the '90s and 2000.

I agree with what I've heard from Mr. Scott and Ms. Taylor regarding the fact that much of what needs to be done is going to be done by grass roots. It's going to be done as self-help rather than looking to Washington for our assistance. But the truth is that the largest bite out of my dollar is still federal taxes and to whom much is given, much shall be required.

MOSES is a coalition of congregations and institutions who are working to bring about an inter-religious, interdenominational, interracial, suburban and urban coalition to help bring meaningful organization amongst those who are trying to make effective differences within Detroit, within the Metropolitan area, and across Michigan. We do not, Members of the Foundation -- we do not lack ideas.

What we lack is implementation. We do not lack laws in many of our communities. We simply lack law enforcement.

It is repugnant that resources for our cities are always claimed to have dried up while we always find the money to fight the next war. If we are ever going to make real the promise of America, which is equity, which is equality, which is fairness, particularly for our urban centers, it is going to require a determination of national will unlike we have seen heretofore. It is going to require an investment of national resources unlike anything we have seen heretofore, and it is going to require a commitment reflecting that the very soul and character of our nation hangs in the balance.

Our member congregations, our member institutions are determined to help join in that fight; and we welcome you, Eisenhower Foundation, to Detroit, and we welcome your assistance in this battle.