

is hope! Our lives can be changed, and our world can be changed. The Scripture says, "You must be born again." You could have a spiritual rebirth right here today.

What must be done? Let me briefly suggest three things.

First, we must repent. In the depths of the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln called for special days of public repentance and prayer. Our need for repentance is no less today. What does repentance mean? Repentance means to change our thinking and our way of living. It means to turn from our sins and to commit ourselves to God and His will. Over 2700 years ago the Old Testament prophet Isaiah declared: "Seek the Lord while he may be found: call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7, NIV). Those words are as true today as they were over two and a half millennia ago.

Second, we must commit our lives to God, and to the moral and spiritual truths that have made this nation great. Think how different our nation would be if we sought to follow the simple and yet profound injunctions of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. But we must respond to God, Who is offering us forgiveness, mercy, supernatural help, and the power to change.

Third, our commitment must be translated into action—in our homes, in our neighborhoods, and in our society.

Jesus taught there are only two roads in life. One is the broad road that is easy and well-traveled, but which leads to destruction. The other, He said, is the narrow road of truth and faith that at times is hard and lonely, but which leads to life and salvation.

As we face a new millennium, I believe America has gone a long way down the wrong road. We must turn around and go back and change roads. If ever we needed God's help, it is now. If ever we needed spiritual renewal, it is now. And it can begin today in each one of our lives, as we repent before God and yield ourselves to Him and His Word.

What are YOU going to do?

The other day I heard the story of a high school principal who held an assembly for graduating seniors, inviting a recruiter from each branch of the service: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines to each give a twelve minutes presentation on career opportunities they offered to the students. He stressed the importance of each staying within their allocated time.

The Army representative went first, and was so eloquent that he got a standing ovation, but went eighteen minutes. Not to be outdone, the Navy presentation was equally superb, but took nineteen minutes. Air Force then gave a sterling presentation, which lasted twenty minutes. By now, the principal was irate, and admonished the Marine recruiter that he had only three minutes before the students had to leave for the next class!

During the first two minutes of his shortened time, the Marine didn't say a word, but individually and carefully studied the faces of each student. Finally, he said, "I've looked across this crowd and I see three or four individuals who have what it takes to be a United States Marine. If you think you are one of them, I want to see you down front immediately after the assembly."

Who do you think drew the biggest crowd!

This afternoon, as I look out across this distinguished group gathered here, I see

more than a few men and women who have what it takes, under God to lead our country forward "through the night" into the next millenium—individuals who represent civic and governmental authority—as well as doctors, lawyers, clergy, artists and media.

Again, Ruth and I are deeply humbled by this award, and we thank you for all that it represents.

We pledge to continue the work that God has called us to do as long as we live.

Thank you.

HONORING THE FLYNN'S LICK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Flynn's Lick Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These firemen must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in fire-fighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee fire training school in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

IN CELEBRATION OF NFPA'S CENTENNIAL

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 1996

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] as it celebrates its 100th anniversary. Organized in 1896, the NFPA is an international nonprofit organization with headquarters in Quincy, MA. Over 68,000 members and 300 employees are dedicated to helping all Americans reduce the burden of fire on the quality of life by advocating scientifically based consensus codes and standards, research and education for fire and related safety issues.

The NFPA's national consensus codes and standards are respected worldwide. Over 5,300 individuals serve voluntarily on technical committees that develop over 300 safety codes and standards which are widely adopted and enforced throughout the land. Among the most widely used codes are the "National Electric Code," the "Life Safety Code," the "Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code," the "Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems," the "Standard for the Storage and Handling of Liquefied Petroleum Gases," "National Fire Alarm Code," and the "Standard for Health Care Facilities." These documents, when adopted by Federal, State, or local government make our daily lives safer. From the buildings we live in to the training of the firefighters who dedicate themselves to protecting lives and preserving property, the NFPA has been the leader in advocating fire safety throughout its 100 years.

NFPA presents its public education programs about fire safety in a positive, non-threatening manner to children. The "Learn Not to Burn [LNTB]" curriculum stresses how to prevent fires and teaches basic fire safety behavior. This successful program is used by schools in all 50 States and is credited with saving over 300 lives.

At the Eighth Annual Fire and Emergency Services Dinner on April 30, NFPA was honored with the Congressional Fire Services Institute's Partnership Award. This award recognizes NFPA's outstanding commitment to the fire service community and its many contributions to fire safety.

I would like to invite the U.S. Congress to join me in congratulating NFPA on this historic anniversary. As the association enters its second century, its dedicated membership will continue to make the United States a safe place for all Americans.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating NFPA on its 100th anniversary.

ALICESON ROBINSON, LEGRAND SMITH SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 1996

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, let it be known that it is with great respect for the outstanding record of excellence she has compiled in academics, leadership, and community service, that I am proud to salute Aliceson Robinson, winner of the 1996 LeGrand Smith Scholarship. This award is made to young adults who have demonstrated that they are truly committed to playing important roles in our Nation's future.

As a winner of the LeGrand Smith Scholarship, Aliceson is being honored for demonstrating that same generosity of spirit, intelligence, responsible citizenship, and capacity for human service that distinguished the late LeGrand Smith of Somerset, MI.

Aliceson Robinson is an outstanding student at Homer High School and her high school

record is exceptional. President of the National Honor Society, Aliceson has also earned the Jackson Citizen Patriot Class Act Award, the Albion College Sleight Leadership Award, and was listed in "Who's Who Among American High School Students." As captain of the Quiz Bowl Team, a science olympiad participant, she has excelled academically. Aliceson has also been involved with student government and a member of SADD and other community organizations.

In special tribute, therefore, I am proud to join with her many admirers in extending my highest praise and congratulations to Aliceson Robinson for her selection as a winner of a LeGrand Smith Scholarship. This honor is also a testament to the parents, teachers, and others whose personal interest, strong support, and active participation contributed to her success. To this remarkable young woman, I extend my most heartfelt good wishes for all her future endeavors.

HONORING THE FAIRGROUNDS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Fairgrounds Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These fireman must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in firefighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee fire training school in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

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U.S. HOUSING ACT OF 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2406) to repeal

the United States Housing Act of 1937, deregulate the public housing program and the program for rental housing assistance for low-income families, and increase community control over such programs, and for other purposes.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2406, the United States Housing Act of 1996. Let me say at the outset that, while I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to improve the Federal housing stock in this Nation, these reforms come at the expense of the most vulnerable in our society—the poor, elderly, and disabled.

The most revealing element of this measure can be found in the opening section entitled "Declaration of Policy to Renew American Neighborhoods". This policy statement includes a declaration that "the Federal Government cannot through its direct action or involvement provide for the housing of every American citizen, or even a majority of its citizens, but it is the responsibility of the Government to promote and protect the independent and collective actions of private citizens to develop housing and strengthen their own neighborhoods".

This declaration reverses a longstanding policy of nearly 60 years which expresses a goal of our Nation that all citizens have decent and affordable housing. What follows in H.R. 2406 substantiates this reversal from a moral obligation the United States as a world leader once advocated on behalf of its citizens.

For example, take the provision that retreats on the Brooke amendment which protects people from paying excessive and disproportionate amounts of their income on housing. The bill before us would only apply the Brooke amendment to current residents of public housing with incomes below 30 percent of median income, and for current elderly and disabled residents. No future elderly or disabled recipients would get the protection of the Brooke amendment if they are under 30 percent of median income.

This bill would also diminish the percentage of housing units available to the very lowest income families; causing irreparable harm to those in need. Current law provides that 85 percent of public housing units be provided to families with incomes at or below 30 percent of median income. H.R. 2406 requires only 25 percent of these units be set aside for these families. While a local housing authority can provide more units to the very poor, they will be losing Federal assistance—and will likely be desperate to rent to higher income families in order to make up the deficit from the dwindling Federal revenues. This situation comes at the expense of the very poor.

Mr. Chairman, this measure takes housing reform to new heights by including a provision that creates tenant self sufficiency contracts. We expect a person—who is often uneducated, unskilled and without work—to negotiate a contract with a housing authority that states how long they think they will need this assistance. What is so damaging about this contract is that when it ends, the resident graduates or, simply put, loses assistance.

Like many other Members of Congress, I recognize the need to examine and reassess our public and section 8 housing programs because of the many changes that have occurred since these programs were first established. During the 103d Congress, similar re-

forms as those proposed in H.R. 2406 were passed by the House in a bipartisan vote. H.R. 2406 includes most of these reforms. Unfortunately, as we have seen with most of the legislation promulgated by our colleagues on the majority side of the House, this bill goes too far and will cause irreparable harm to thousands of the poorest, the most vulnerable, the most needy of our citizens.

Mr. Chairman, not every community in this Nation can boast the leadership of a top-notch and experienced Public Housing Authority director as we do in Cleveland. If we had the absolute knowledge that this would be the case, few of us would argue against much of what is in this bill. But that is not the situation. As proposed in this bill, the future of thousands of Americans would be left to local authorities without Federal regulation. Reasonable reform is one thing; indifference to the plight of the poor is another. I urge my colleagues to vote no "on" H.R. 2406.

HONORING THE FAIRVIEW VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Fairview Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

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U.S. HOUSING ACT OF 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. JACK REED

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

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