

*Remarks for the  
Dedication of Bethel United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall  
November 24, 2002*

- (recognize Mr. Tohill, any story you may have about him as your principal)
- True blessing to be here today / honored by the invitation
  - Appreciate the chance to talk about the true guiding light for myself / MS
- Tremendously blessed in my life / my work
  - God's been good to me / work / children
  - Interesting how some people talk about finding God – as if he could ever be lost
- My faith / beliefs tell me God found me
  - He knew me before I was born / walks with me every single day
  - Knows what's in my heart / your hearts
- Every one in this room and people across MS is committed to Jesus Christ as their savior
  - Extending that commitment to their fellow man – a commitment that extends beyond color, beyond economics, beyond background
- I try to keep that commitment every day in the work of the state
- 2.8 million people in MS looking to me to help provide leadership, direction and guidance for them
- I pray every day for the strength and the wisdom to do this job
  - Ask for your prayers as well for myself and all in public service
  - Pray for our work to serve people / serve God.
- That work includes doing everything we can to come together not just as Mississippians but as creations of God
  - Made in His image, blessed by His grace, and saved by His son
- There's a lot of work still to do for Mississippi in other areas
  - Story of Jordan / 15-point buck / priorities
- Priorities for MS / jobs, security, health care, and education.

- Determined to make a difference for MS / especially in education
  - Teacher pay
  - Computers in the Classroom
- Keeping education a priority with a budget that puts Schools First / 62 percent
- Brain trust focuses on stopping flow of best and brightest out of MS
  - 10 year commitment of \$200M matched by universities and colleges
- *We've invested hundreds of millions of dollars in buildings*
  - *Time to invest in our people*
- Creating jobs is trademark of administration
  - Building a future through quality education is personal passion
- Commitment is focused, but aim is broad
- *Bottom line: We shortchange education, we shortchange our future*
- *Book of Proverbs tells us, where there is no vision, the people perish*
  - We have a vision for MS
  - Respect life / provide education / build jobs / ensure safety
- Moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century / must continue the commitment and the dream of so many who have come before us.
  - Live out the word of God and the 2 fundamental rules he gives us
  - Love the Lord with all your heart / all your soul
  - Love your neighbor as yourself
- We can do this / it's happening right now – in this room, in this state
- Helping make a better, stronger, healthier Mississippi
  - I'm thankful for it.
- God bless you and this beautiful church, and God bless our great state