

*Remarks for the
Mission Mississippi Luncheon
January 31, 2002*

Thank you, Dolphus. I am proud to be here with you today.

I've always believed that laundry is the only thing that should be separated by color, and I believe all of you would agree with me.

I appreciate the work that Mission Mississippi has been doing, and continues to do, to bring the people of our state together.

All of us are here today to talk about two simple words – “Christian unity.” These two words work well together, and it is up to us to make sure they continue to do so.

I am tremendously blessed in my life and in my work. God has been good to me. It’s interesting to me about how some people talk about finding God – as if he could ever be lost.

My faith, my beliefs, tell me that God found me. He knew me before I was born, and he continues to walk with me every single day. He knows what is in my heart, He knows what's in your hearts, and He knows that He is the one who will bring us together.

I have watched with admiration and with happiness the work that Mission Mississippi has been doing.

People from across our state are taking the commitment they have made to Jesus Christ as their savior and they are 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.

There are 2.8 million people in Mississippi who look to me and other elected officials to help provide leadership, direction and guidance for them.

I pray every day for the strength and the wisdom to do this job, a job that I love. I would ask for your prayers as well – not just for myself, but for all in public service – that we might do work that serves our people and serves 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.

I try to do this work every day, and I challenge you to do the same. Let's live out the words we speak; let's not just talk about racial reconciliation – let's make it happen.

William Faulkner once wrote that “to live anywhere in the world today and be against equality because of race or color is like living in Alaska and being against snow.”

As we move further into the 21st century, let’s continue the commitment and the dream of so many who have come before us. Let’s live out the word of God, the word that teaches us a simple lesson – to simply love our neighbors as ourselves.

We can do this. It's happening right now.
It's helping make a better, stronger, healthier
Mississippi – and I'm thankful for it.

God bless you, and God bless our great
state.