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In emotional speech, Kasich talks of faith, civil rights

By Joe Vardon

WILBERFORCE, Ohio — Tears rolled down Gov. John Kasich's cheeks yesterday while the choir belted out *Amazing Grace*. As *How Great Thou Art* wound to a close, he urged the mostly African-American crowd at historically black Central State University to its feet.

Wiping away tears and humbly telling the audience, "I don't really know what I'm going to be talking about today," Kasich launched a nearly 30-minute speech delving into issues of faith and perseverance and how they related to him, Martin Luther King Jr., the students in the audience, and his approach to governing.

"As we say, he's 'bout it 'bout it when it comes to doing something," said Zhelma Kendrick, 52, of Xenia, a sophomore at Central State. Kendrick said she typically leans Democratic "when it comes to politics," but Kasich "just came across as being caring and concerned about change."

"After listening to him, I have a different perspective on some of these politics issues," she said.

The setting for Kasich's speech was a Central State convocation. University President John W. Garland said Kasich was the first sitting governor to speak at such an engagement during Garland's leadership tenure, nearly 15 years.

Kasich has discussed his own faith before, and at times during yesterday's speech he returned to familiar themes of job creation and policy initiatives, but perhaps never before as governor has he stitched those themes together like he did yesterday.

Story continued here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/01/18/in-emotional-speech-kasich-talks-of-faith-civil-rights.html>

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