

Bishop T.D. Jakes Biography

Business and political leader, philanthropist, and pastor to millions, Bishop Thomas D. Jakes, Sr. began fulfilling his call to the ministry by founding and serving as pastor of Greater Emmanuel Temple of Faith in 1979 in a small church in a Montgomery, W.Va. with only 10 members.

More than 20 years later, he pastors what *Christianity Today* calls “one of America’s fastest growing mega-churches.” The Potter’s House, a multiracial nondenominational church with 59 active outreach ministries, has dominated church growth records since 1996. In only eight years since relocating the church from West Virginia to Dallas, The Potter’s House has grown from 50 families to more than 28,000 members to date. Rivaling many corporations, The Potter’s House employs more than 300 staff members including full-time finance, human relations, information technology, materials distribution, public relations and television production departments. The Potter’s House is fiscally sound, having recently paid off its newest \$45 million, 191,000 sq. ft. structure that was completed less than four years ago.

Bishop Jakes was born on June 9, 1957 in South Charleston, W.Va. His parents, businessman and entrepreneur Ernest Sr. and educator Odith, were charitable benefactors in their community and to whom their son credits for his own integrity, discipline and self-reliance.

Bishop Jakes is the CEO of The Potter’s House, a nonprofit organization that produces three major national conferences – “The Pastor’s and Leadership Conference,” “ManPower” and “Woman, Thou Art Loosed.” WTAL, a powerful and popular symposium, addresses specific needs of all women and has helped many go from welfare to work. The conference has set national indoor attendance records with an average of 84,500 attendees per day at the Georgia Dome in 1999. “ManPower,” equips and encourages men to build strong marriages, increase their confidence and take on more responsibility in their community. “Mega Fest” is a family affair combining “Woman, Thou Art Loosed,” “ManPower” and the “Youth 3-D Experience,” a new youth conference. This summer, Mega Fest attracted more than 140,000 people from 55 countries and set a cumulative record attendance of 560,000 over the four-day period. Through broadcasting efforts, Mega Fest impacted more than 314 million homes in 235 countries and territories outside of the U.S. Mega Fest 2005 is scheduled August 3 – 6 in Atlanta, Georgia.

“He is a virtuoso, a prodigy. The only thing more exhilarating than the style of T.D. Jakes’ sermons is their rigor and compassion.”

Time Magazine
Cover Issue
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In addition to the major conferences, Bishop Jakes hosts the God's Leading Ladies conference, which is designed to help women in leadership positions to develop financial, relationship and balancing skills.

In an effort to remedy social and economic voids in Urban America, Bishop Jakes founded the Metroplex Economic Development Corporation in 1998. The nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation has sponsored home ownership conferences and youth mentorship programs. Currently, MEDC is developing a job placement center, a skills training center, a small business counseling hotline and a housing development that will include affordable homes for senior citizens and single-parent families.

Additional endeavors to improve society include building two Habitat for Humanity homes in conjunction with the 2003 ManPower conference and making a \$107,000 donation to relocate Dallas citizens from an economically and environmentally disadvantaged area. The Potter's House was also responsible for building a hospital in Belize, Central America, named Belmopan to whom they later sent \$400,000 for medical supplies. Bishop Jakes and The Potter's House invested over \$500,000 in outreach to prison inmates. Their "Adopt A Prison" program has impacted inmates giving them a way to reduce the rate of recidivism through spiritual support and a network of churches who have awareness to the plight of inmates reentering the system.

He is also the founder of T.D. Jakes Enterprises, through which he employs his other aptitudes as author, songwriter and playwright. A renowned religious author with 30 books to his credit; Bishop Jakes' works have been featured on Christian, secular and business best-seller lists. His top five nonfiction bestsellers are: *Maximize the Moment*; *Woman, Thou Art Loosed*; *The Lady, Her Lover and Her Lord*; *The Great Investment: Faith, Family and Finance* and *God's Leading Lady*, which has peaked at #4 on the *New York Times Hardcover Advice List*. He released his first novel, *Cover Girls*, in the summer of 2003, and later that year; he released *Follow the Star*, a compilation of Bishop Jakes' personal Christmas stories. His latest book *He-Motions*, which is currently #10 on the New York Times Bestseller List, is a tool for both men and women written with intimate personal stories and painful lessons he learned through life. His best-selling book, *Woman Thou Art Loosed*, has finally come to the big screen debuting in 400 theaters across the nation and winning the 2004 Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

Bishop Jakes has developed business partnerships with Sony, EMI, Time Warner, Warner, Rueben Cannon Productions, Clear Channel, Thomas Nelson Publishing and a host of other highly respected companies. His theatre production company, Touchdown Concepts, created and produced the Christian plays "Woman, Thou Art Loosed" and "Behind Closed Doors." Both became number one gospel plays in the United States. Recently his advocacy for women's rights enabled him to develop the cinema production "Woman, Thou Art Loosed," with Rueben Cannon Productions. The movie is based on his book "*Woman, Thou Art Loosed*," and speaks out against domestic violence while encouraging women to rise above injustices. Bishop Jakes also operates Dexterity Sounds, a music label in collaboration with EMI Gospel Music that develops music with a divine message. The label has produced eight albums, five of which have received Grammy nominations. The album, "A Wing and a Prayer" featuring Bishop Jakes and The Potter's House Mass Choir, received a 2004 Grammy award in the "Best Gospel Choir or Chorus Album" category. His album "T.D. Jakes presents Follow the Star" also received a nomination in the category of "Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album."

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Bishop Jakes periodically contributes to the nationally circulated magazine *Gospel Today* and previously contributed articles to *Christianity Today* and *Ministries Today* as well. In addition, he heads two of the most widely accessed ministry Internet sites today, www.tdjakes.org and www.thepottershouse.org.

He has been a guest on national news programs as a source of spiritual advice. Presidents and statesmen have frequently asked for his wisdom and counsel. He received invitations to the White House during both the current presidential administration and the former administration to give spiritual advice to President George W. Bush and former President Bill Clinton. He has given spiritual insight to President Rawlings of Ghana and President Obasanjo of Nigeria. He was guest to the King of Jordan, King Abdullah I and the President of Trinidad, George Maxwell Richards. He was the keynote speaker for the Congressional Black Caucus in 2000. Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, Bishop Jakes was asked by President Bush to meet with 35 other religious leaders to discuss the tragedy and how to recuperate from it. Most recently, he met with a coalition of ministers at the White House to discuss the faith-based initiative.

Bishop Jakes lives in Dallas with his wife Serita and their five children.

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