

T.D. JAKES: Delivering the Message of Healing and Restoration

For nearly four decades, T.D. Jakes has brought that message of healing and restoration, starting in West Virginia, where he pastored a 10-member congregation. When he moved to Dallas to start Potter's House, 50 families relocated with him; today the church has more than 30,000 members.

Jakes tackles issues not normally discussed from the average pulpit: sex abuse, domestic violence, alcoholism, addictive relationships, HIV/AIDS awareness, post-traumatic stress and other hot-button topics. His powerful war cry, "Woman, thou art loosed!" has indeed loosed countless women around the world from bonds holding them back from an abundant life in Christ. In 1999, the Woman, Thou Art Loosed conference set a national indoor attendance record at the Georgia Dome with an average 84,500 attendees a day—a record broken five years later when Jakes and his wife, Serita, hosted MegaFest 2004 and more than 140,000 attended a single service.

Jakes' father was a businessman, which may be one of the reasons he sees economic development as a key to revitalizing communities. In 1998, he founded the Metroplex Economic Development Corporation, which sponsors home ownership conferences, youth mentorship programs, hands-on training to help people launch and grow businesses and more. Jakes also served as co-chair of the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund's Interfaith Coalition.

Jakes has also made the chasm-like leap from pulpit to mainstream media. He has produced a number of major films featuring the likes of Jennifer Hudson, Jordin Sparks and the late Whitney Houston.

No wonder *TIME* named him one of the 25 most influential evangelicals in America.