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The Potter's House of Dallas Dallas, Texas

Facts at a Glance

The Potter's House is the voice and the hand that encourages people to change their lives with hope, comfort and peace. Multiracial, nondenominational and operating 60-plus active outreach ministries, the organization has dominated church growth records since its inception in 1996, growing dramatically from the 50 families relocating from West Virginia with the Jakes family to more than 30,000 members to date. Bishop T. D. Jakes is the CEO of The Potter's House, which has been labeled "one of America's fastest growing mega-churches" by *Christianity Today*. Rivaling many corporations, the ministry employs nearly 400 staff members, including full-time finance, human resources, information technology, materials distribution, public relations, publications, and television production departments. The Potter's House, a non-profit organization, is fiscally sound, retiring within four years the financial debt incurred by the 191,000 square feet, \$45 million sanctuary construction. For more information about Bishop Jakes and the ministry, visit www.thepottershouse.org. (See *The Potter's House Ministry Facts* for individual ministry descriptions.)

Local Ministry Initiatives

The *Metroplex Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)* is the most immediate example of the ministry's impact on community business development. Endeavoring to remedy social and economic disparities, Bishop Jakes founded the *MEDC* in 1998 to bridge socio-economic voids existing in urban America. A nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, *MEDC* works to impact the lives of individuals and families residing in historically underserved communities through the implementation of programs established under the umbrella of its core initiatives. The *MEDC* has sponsored home ownership conferences, a credit and money management course, youth mentorship programs, and an entrepreneurial training series. More information about the *MEDC* can be found at www.medc-dallas.org.

Clay Academy was founded in 1998 by Bishop Jakes, and has since grown from its small beginnings to its new 70,000 square-foot campus in the heart of Southwest Dallas. On October 10, 2006, Bishop and Mrs. Jakes and The Potter's House church family formally dedicated the school's \$14 million learning facility to the memory of his late mother, Mrs. Odith P. Jakes, an educator and mentor. The first of seven structures in a planned \$80 million campus, the white-columned, red-brick school building sits atop a hill at 3303 Potter's House Way about half a mile west of The Potter's House church. *Clay Academy* is the crown jewel of an advanced "new urbanism" model, *Capella Park*, which when complete will offer single family housing, senior housing and parks. More information about *Clay Academy* or *Capella Park* can be found at www.clayacademy.org or www.medc-dallas.org.

The Potter's House, working in tandem with a federally sponsored government program, currently administers *The Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative (TORI)* program, operating in Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston. These cities were chosen because they are Texas' five primary "reentry points," cities where former offenders reenter society after serving their sentences in Texas prisons. *TORI* is the ministry's after-care reentry program providing intensive case management services, including HIV/AIDS awareness and substance abuse recovery counseling and education, and other wrap-around services such as family and marriage counseling and pre-employment counseling.

Bishop Jakes and The Potter's House have also invested more than \$500,000 in outreach to prison inmates. The church's *New Creation Prison & Jail Ministry* develops programs and services that equip, empower, support, and restore offenders and former offenders. To help them with their journey, this support is also offered to families of offenders and correctional staff. Local churches are provided training to better embrace and support former and current prisoners and their family members. The ministry's *Adopt-a-Prison* program has meaningfully impacted the day-to-day lives of inmates, and contributes significantly in reducing the recidivism rate of program participants through spiritual support and a network of churches sympathetic to the plight of inmates re-entering the system. Every major ministry conference, including *MegaFest*, is broadcast live into prisons around the country.

International Ministry Initiatives

The outreach efforts of Bishop Jakes and The Potter's House do not tarry at the doors of the church, or even on the shores of the nation. The ministry is responsible for contributing to the construction of a much-needed hospital in Belize, Central America, and has sent missionaries to northern Mexico, the Republic of Guyana, and other areas of the world where people are living under perilous physical and spiritual conditions. Additional efforts to contribute positively to society include finance and/or construct three *Habitat for Humanity* homes in conjunction with the 2003 *ManPower* conference and the 2007 *God's Leading Ladies* class, and making a \$107,000 donation to relocate Dallas citizens from an economically and environmentally disadvantaged area in 2003. The ministry assisted children and teenagers in their return to school by supplying backpacks and free immunization shots at the Back to School Fair. During the holidays, Clay Academy students and Terra Cotta International—the ministry's outreach missions arm—distributed Thanksgiving food baskets and toys to needy families.

Very mindful of *Africa* and passionate about doing what he can to contribute to the well being of the continent's people, Bishop Jakes, his partners, and The Potter's House church family established an ongoing humanitarian outreach to Africa. Mission projects included: sponsoring the construction of thirteen water wells; establishment of the T. D. Jakes Wing at Melchizedek Hospital, which includes a maternity ward, intensive care units and an operating room; and opening the Odith P. Jakes Learning Center in Nairobi, where its computer lab was the first of its kind in a "slum" school.

From September 26 – October 2, 2005, Bishop Jakes led a missionary trip that included more than 300 African Americans, including a skilled team of medical professionals, and The Potter's House's 140-member mass choir. More than 6,000 Kenyans received medical care from organized teams of doctors and nurses. Medicines valued at more than \$200,000 U. S. dollars, as well as 7,000 pairs of eyeglasses, were distributed.

While in Kenya, Bishop Jakes and his team served alongside the healing team of Melchizedek Hospital, located in an impoverished area called Kawangware, and conducted worship services in Nairobi's Uhuru Park.

International Ministry Conferences

The Potter's House has produced several major international conferences – *The Pastors' and Leadership Conference, ManPower, Woman, Thou Art Loosed (WTAL)*, and *MegaFest*. A powerful and popular symposium, *WTAL* addresses the spiritual needs of women, speaks to their strengths, rather than their weaknesses, and empowers many to go from welfare to work, and from prison inmate to productive citizen. The 1999 *WTAL* conference set national indoor attendance records at the Atlanta Georgia Dome with an average 84,500 attendees per day. *ManPower* seeks to equip and encourage men to build strong marriages, increase their confidence, and take on more responsibility within their community. *The Pastors' and Leadership Conference* is designed for individuals in church leadership positions and for those seeking to further develop their leadership skills.

MegaFest, inaugurated in 2004, is a family-oriented Christian festival that combines *Woman, Thou Art Loosed*, *ManPower* and new components for children, teenagers, and young adults. *The Mega Youth Experience (MYE)*, a component added to the conference in 2005, was created for young people ages 13 to 21, and is designed to inspire, inform, prepare, and empower Christian youth for today's world. *MegaKidz* offers fun-filled and interactive sessions throughout the day, presenting the Christian gospel to children ages 5 to 12 in an easily understandable format.

In 2005, Bishop and Mrs. Serita Jakes were honored by Georgia Dome officials for breaking their 1999 attendance record during *MegaFest 2004* when more than 140,000 people attended a single service – over the four-day period the couple hosted 560,000 men, women, young adults, and children. *MegaFest 2005* was broadcast internationally to more than 2/3 of the world's population, broadcast live via satellite into 350 U. S. prisons, and into each prison in the country of Bermuda, with live dialogues in Chicago, Memphis, and Glennville, Georgia. In October 2006, Bishop Jakes announced that the ministry would not host a *MegaFest 2007* conference, and would instead take a year-long sabbatical to strategically evaluate the focus of *MegaFest*. In October 2007, *MegaFest International* was announced. Some of the original components of *MegaFest* will be presented in Johannesburg, South Africa in October 2008, with the added promise of outreach missions, excursions and an entrepreneurial exchange.

In 2006, Bishop introduced and hosted the first *For Men Only* conference, and in 2007, he and Mrs. Jakes hosted the first-ever *For Ladies Only* conference. Both conferences were held at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. In previous years, Bishop Jakes has also hosted both the *God's Leading Ladies* and *Into the Hearts of Men* national speaking tours. Each of these conferences was conceived by Bishop and Mrs. Jakes' desire to assist men and women in their efforts to become and achieve their personal best, and to allow themselves the opportunity to intimately speak and teach into the lives of conference attendees.

International and National Crisis Intervention

In February 2005, Bishop Jakes presented checks to the U. S. Fund for UNICEF from The Potter's House and Clay Academy totaling \$100,606.11. The contribution represented the largest tsunami relief donation received by *UNICEF* from a faith-based organization.

In September 2005, Bishop Jakes placed in motion the full force of the ministry's resources to actively assist families displaced by *Hurricane Katrina*. Only two days after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, The Potter's House created a telephone bank to receive calls from survivors of the hurricane who were now residing in the North Texas region. The church then matched the needs of survivors with calls from Good Samaritans who made offers of housing, employment and non-perishable items such as clothing, shoes, bed linens, diapers, toiletries and school supplies. The church's medical ministry filled prescriptions and provided blood pressure, heart and diabetic medication. Clay Academy also opened its enrollment to displaced students. In December 2005, Bishop Jakes was asked to serve with the Rev. William H. Gray, III as co-chair of the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund's Interfaith Coalition.

The Potter's House Event Center

The Potter's House makes its physical facilities available to the public as *The Potter's House Event Center*. Completed in August 2000 and located within easy driving distance from anywhere in the metroplex, the main auditorium seats 7,600 people and is a great venue for general sessions, meetings, graduations, musical concerts, and corporate presentations. Cascade seating makes the main floor accessible from the balcony without exiting the room.

The main auditorium also features a concert quality sound system with completely digital signal processing. Two 20 foot x 26'-6" video screens provide optimal visibility for image magnification and video

presentations. The facility offers pre-wired camera positions for IMAG, recording, and satellite uplink capability for live video feeds. Wide catwalks and state-of-the-art lighting provide staging flexibility.

The choir loft provides seating for 450. The stage is more than 150 feet wide and offers easy walk up from all sides and is wheelchair accessible from an elevator backstage. The backstage area includes support spaces, i.e., dressing rooms, green rooms, and secure VIP access.

A separate chapel can be used as a small meeting room, which seats 500 and is ideal for breakout sessions, presentations and weddings. The room has a quality sound system and lighting suitable for video from the platform in the main auditorium. There are adjacent dressing rooms which can be used for bridal parties or presenters.

The lobby of the Event Center offers easy flow of foot traffic with ample space for conference registration areas and sales of promotional materials. Video capability allows this space to be used as a stand-alone meeting room or in conjunction with the main auditorium for overflow. More information about The Potter's House Event Center can be found by visiting www.thepottershouse.org.