

# The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

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analysis and investigations on issues affecting  
African Americans and the African world.

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## **Son's Sex Arrest Resurfaces Queries About Bishop T. D. Jakes's Sexuality Inclusion**

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BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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When preachers pontificate too much from on High about the sins of homosexual sex, the cautionary tale is to be careful of what you say, because your words invariable will come back to bite you, as we have seen with fallen evangelical star Pastor Ted Haggard.

The rantings against homosexuality by Bishop T. D. Jakes, the internationally known African American evangelical luminary, dubbed the black Billy Graham, have come back to bite him in the form of his oldest son's recent arrest.

On January 3 Jermaine Jakes was arrested in a sex sting for openly soliciting gay sex from an undercover vice detective in a public park. The park is located only a few blocks from his father's church, The Potter's House, a 30,000 member megachurch in Dallas, Texas.

The arrest warrant affidavit filed by Dallas Police detectives on Jermaine Jakes stated the following:

"Suspect Jakes walked directly over to where Detective X was, and stood next to Detective X with his penis exposed through his unzipped pants...Suspect Jakes committed the offense of indecent exposure by exposing his erect penis in a public place with his intent to gratify or arouse the sexual desire of himself. Suspect Jakes was reckless about whether another was present who would be offended or alarmed by his actions."

While Bishop Jakes is tight-lipped on the topic of his son's homosexuality, the African American LGBTQ community isn't. As a matter of fact, the son's arrest has the African American LGBTQ community abuzz about Bishop Jake's sexuality.

In September 2005 activists Keith Boykin and Jasmyne Cannick kicked off a five-part series, "Outing Black Pastors," on their respective websites querying publicly whether prominent pastors in the black community, like Bishops T.D. Jakes and Eddie Long, who constantly rail against LGBTQ people, were actually struggling with their own sexual orientation.

But black ministers living on the down low (DL) is not a new phenomenon in the African-American community. Naming it publicly, however, is.

J.L. King who became the country's poster boy by exposing the behavior in his best-seller, *On The Down Low: A Journey into the Lives of "Straight" Black Men Who Sleep with Men* stated, not surprisingly, that many of his partners were churchmen. "There are gospel conventions throughout the nation for churches. There is one for ushers, Sunday school departments, music departments and ministers . . . These events allow men to meet men and to have sex while away from their hometowns. Many midnight concerts turn into affairs where brothers are cruising each other. I've been there, seen it and done it," King states in his book.

Many African-American men on the DL say there are two salient features that contribute to this subculture -- white gay culture and the Black Church. DL men deliberately segregate themselves from both black and white gay cultures as an alternative black masculinity that only wants to have sex and socialize with other black men. But class is a factor here, too. While many gay African-American men have the economic mobility to reside outside of the black community and are likely to intermingle with the dominant gay culture, most DL men don't.

"They've created a community of their own, a cultural party where whites aren't invited. Labeling yourself as DL is a way to disassociate from everything white and upper class. . . And that is a way for DL men to assert some power," George Ayala, director of education for AIDS Project Los Angeles, told the *Times* in the 2003 article.

But the Black Church's conservative gender roles and anti-gay theology also contribute to this subculture. Bishop T. D defines homosexuality in men as a spiritual "brokenness, "due to long-term imprisonment, absentee fathers, having been sexually abused or not knowing how to have healthy social relationships with men.

Poster boy for African-American ex-gay ministries, gospel mega-star Pastor Donnie McClurkin feels similarly to Jake stating he was once sexually abused by an uncle that brought about his proclivity to same-sex attraction. McClurkin said:

"There's a group that says, 'God made us this way,' but then there's another group that knows God didn't make them that way. Love is pulling you one way and lust is pulling you another, and your relationship with Jesus is tearing you."

Bishop T. D. Jakes told the Dallas Voice he would never hire a sexually active gay person to his ministry, but that's hard to believe. Why? Because there are two types of gay masculinities in the Black church. One expresses itself fairly openly in the choir with the choirmaster not surprisingly gay. Bishop Jakes is a former choirmaster.

The other conceals itself within a homosocial community of DL male clerics that finds

camaraderie at black pastors conferences or at all-male conferences like T.D. Jakes's upcoming March 6-8 "Manifest."

These clerics intentionally exploit their ecclesiastical authority by using anti-gay rhetoric and the bible as their cover-up.

"To date, I have not seen scriptural authority that allows me to stand on behalf of God and say I now pronounce you husband and husband, and wife and wife. This is an issue the government is undecided about. The Bible is not," Bishop Jakes told USA Today.

A number of gay African American brothers have said that T.D. Jakes is a little "swishy and sweet" as a way of indicating there is something suspicious about his sexuality. But Jermaine Jakes is unapologetically and unabashedly gay. Some in the African American community say Jakes is intentionally flamboyant and sexually reckless to publicly deride and embarrass his homophobic dad.

But there are others in the community who say Jermaine is just like his dad, but he is not hiding behind a stained-glass closet.


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**The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog**


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