



Bishop C. JAMES KING, Jr.

*Bishop
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*

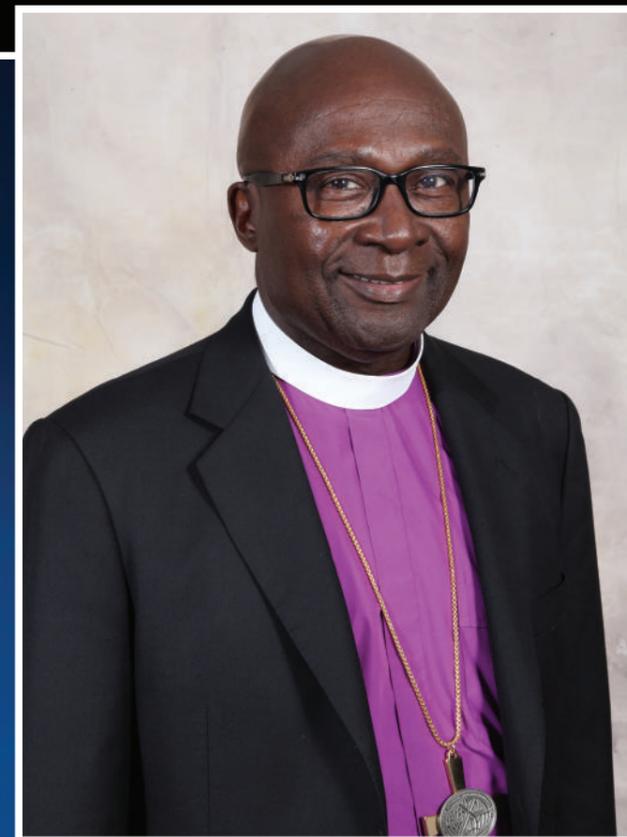
by Michael L. Jones

Bishop C. James King, Jr. founded Project One, an organization dedicated to teen job training and placement, in 1985. King was inspired to start Project One after he noticed some children with summer jobs cleaning the downtown streets. He thought they would be better served working in an office or daycare center, something that might lead to career opportunities in the future.

"I said to myself, 'Someone ought to do something,'" King remembered. "When you make that statement that means God is calling on you. I immediately felt the urge to place one kid. Once I placed that kid I said, 'Wouldn't it be good if some of these other companies would do the same thing.' Then all the banks stepped up. Humana and the hospitals stepped up. With the support of local businesses, we've placed more than 17,000 kids over the last 30 years."

Project One has expanded to include afterschool education throughout the year. The organization also sponsors several other community initiatives that assist students and their families and hands out annual college scholarships. But King said the group's main focus will always be helping at-risk youth find a meaningful career path. "I am not a person that majors in five or six things at one time," he confessed. "I do one thing and I try to do it well. These summer jobs are the proverbial carrot to encourage kids to go back to school and do well. Education is the greatest destroyer of poverty. It really did destroy my poverty."

Bishop C. JAMES KING, Jr.



King, the oldest child in a family with nine girls and three boys, was born in rural Georgia. He was raised by his grandmother, a maid who recognized the importance of education. She encouraged King to finish high school and go to college. He started at Paine College, a historically black institution in Augusta. Then it was on to Atlanta University's Interdenominational Theological Center, where he was president of the student body. He graduated in 1979 with a doctorate in Divinity.

King's first stop was Washington, D.C., where he was a pastor for three years. In 1982, he jumped at the opportunity to come to Louisville to take over the historic Brown Memorial CME Church at 809 W. Chestnut. Brown Memorial is one of the oldest black institutions in Louisville. The church celebrated its 160th anniversary in 2014.

King stayed at Brown Memorial for 16 years. But he left Louisville to become the presiding elder of the Cincinnati-Dayton-Indianapolis District, which involved overseeing about 46 churches. But after longtime Lincoln Foundation President Sam Robinson retired in 2000, King returned to the River City to run that organization for nearly two years.

King is a divorced father of one daughter and has three grandchildren who all live in Georgia. He maintains his home in Louisville, but he travels extensively throughout Africa. On July 1, 2014, he was elected as a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church's 11th District. He oversees 1,000 congregations in 14 African countries including Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

"I never thought I'd be a Bishop," King admitted. "It is an international election, including Europe and Africa. My little grandbaby was there when they elected me. In my church, when you are elected they hoist you up on everyone's shoulders; they pick you up and carry you to the stage. The next day someone asked my grandson, 'What do you want to be when you grow up.' He said, 'I want to be a Bishop, so they can pick me.' He saw it as an opportunity to be carried. That still tickles me."