



Pastor J.C. Smith is a native of Montgomery, Alabama. At age 18, he moved to the city of Montgomery where he worked for three years for the Atlas Glass Company. At age 21, he entered the military service and served his country for two years (1951-1953). After an honorable discharge, he continued his education and graduated from the Weavers School of Real Estate in 1958. While in Montgomery, Alabama he worked along with Dr's. M. L. King and Ralph Abernathy from 1955-1957, in the Montgomery Improvement Association during the Bus Boycott. He also worked as an insurance salesman for North Carolina Mutual from 1958-1962. He also was the owner and operator of Smith's Clothing Store for one and half years

In 1963, he moved to Harvey, Illinois and became a licensed Real Estate salesman with Blake Realty Company. He also became a journeyman carpenter. He worked for about ten years for several general contractors before forming his own remodeling business. In 1964, he enrolled in the Chicago Baptist Institute Seminary and graduated in 1972.

Presently he is pastor of the Bethlehem Temple Baptist Church in Harvey, Illinois, which he organized in 1969 with five members. He has served as Pastor since its inception. In June 2001, he extended the ministry of Bethlehem Temple to the Northwest suburbs in Elk Grove and Itasca, Illinois. In October 2003, we moved into our own building. In the spring of 2002, he received special recognition from

the YMCA for community service at their annual "Night Under the Stars" and in July 2002 Pastor Smith was presented with an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Mt. Carmel Theological Seminary in Fresno, California. Pastor Smith and the church have operated a Summer Day Camp for children ages 4-15 for the past eight years. In 2001, the first Summer Basketball Camp was held under the direction of Rod Higgins from the office of the Wizards of Washington, D. C.

The Bethlehem Temple M.B. Church also operates a Christian Book and Music Store in Harvey, Illinois.

In 1995, Bethlehem Community Development Corporation was organized with J.C. Smith as Executive Director, and under BCDC, the Bethlehem Village Housing Complex, a 72-unit building (which is now 100% occupied), was built across the street from the church. Presently, there are 120 units now being rehabbed in Gary, Indiana under the Bethlehem Community Development Corporation. There are also two more projects on the drawing board at this time. He served as President of the Progressive Baptist State Congress from 1996-1999. At the same time, he was also Vice President of the South Suburban Ministers Fellowship. Pastor Smith served as President of Progressive National Baptist Convention Moderators Council for four years (1992-1996). For 32 years, Pastor Smith served his community as a school board member (Dist. #147). Eight of these years, he served as President. He is currently serving as President of the Board. He also served two years as Vice-President of the National Caucus of Black School Board Members (1980-1982). In August 2000, he served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, California. In 2003, he was elected and served as President of the Progressive Baptist State Convention of Illinois. Pastor J.C. Smith has been listed in Who's Who Among Black American (1977-1978) (1980-1981) and Smith has received numerous awards for his service to his country, community and Church. Pastor J.C. Smith is married to Willie M. Myricks-Smith. On June 3, 2011, they celebrated their 55th year of marriage. He is the father of five children (Jennifer, Jonathan, Jeffrey, Jerrold, and Jacques). He is the grandfather of 14. He is devoted to his family and it is the place where his service began.