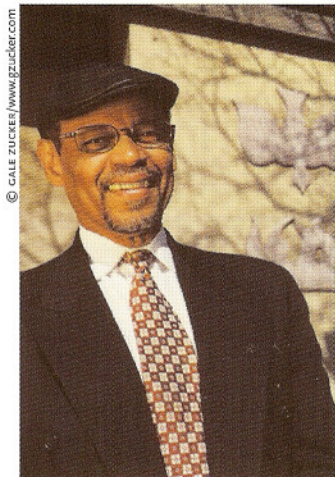


## *Leadership in Developing Permanent Housing*



Ten years ago, when people at Beulah Heights First Pentecostal Church were lying on the floor during prayer services for fear of the shooting outside, Bishop Theodore L. Brooks began to feel a responsibility to work outside those four walls. Since then he has been a leader of not just a church but also a community.

“It’s important to me that we don’t just worry about our little entity here and forget about the rest of the neighborhood,” he says. “The church cannot sit in there and wait for people to come in, because our job here is not just serving the members of the church but building community. We have an obligation to everyone.”

One way to work for the community surrounding the church, Bishop Brooks decided, was to help increase homeownership on Orchard Street. “I decided that, God be my helper, I would buy every strip of housing on this block and we would make it safe,” he says.

He founded the Beulah Land Development Corporation and today there are 20 families living in the new Orchard Street Townhomes and forming their own homeowners’ association. Beulah Land is also developing a senior center and a retail property on the block.

Bishop Brooks insists that if he hadn’t lead the drive to build those 20 new owner-occupied homes on Orchard Street, it might have gotten done anyway, but that doesn’t matter to him. He still felt a responsibility to do what he could.

“I know I am a blessed man, and I believe in giving back,” he says. “If we are in here in Sunday clothes and just outside the door not 50 feet away people are destitute, then that’s not worshiping God. And whether you’re 50 feet away or 15 miles away, and you know you are blessed, you have a responsibility to give back.”