

Rev. Page preaches with a passion

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The Durham VOICE

Page's Opening Hymn

Smiling faces anxiously greet one another as uplifting music plays and shouts of praises are heard all across the building. The Sunday morning worship service at Antioch Baptist Church has just begun.

The Rev. Michael Delano Page has led these services at Antioch Baptist Church on Holloway Street for more than 11 years. With his passion for service and an emphasis on its role in helping the community, Page has proven to be an important addition to Northeast Central Durham.

As the background music and praises continue, Page's powerful voice can be heard driving home the foundation of the reverend and congregation's belief in community service: "We don't do it for no fame or fortune — we do it for the Lord because we love God's people!"

Page's Sermon of Service

This love for God's people and community service can be found in almost everything Page does, from creating Antioch Builds Community, a non-profit organization focusing on the quality of life, to being the director of United Christian Campus Ministry at North Carolina Central University, to being the chairman of the Durham County Board of Commissioners.

Out of all of his work and contributions to Durham, Page's ministry is his true passion.

"I really have gotten so connected with my ministry, you know. It's my life," said Page. "It's what I enjoy most."

Page said he has known he wanted to be in ministry since he was 10 years old. However, it was not until his college years that he began to actively pursue this career.

Page said he became involved in church administration and became excited about what he was doing there. It was then that he realized ministry was something he felt strongly about and wanted to continue to pursue.

"If it's on your mind, that's probably the area you've been called for," he said.

Page believes his ability to serve is



The Rev. Michael Delano Page of Antioch Baptist Church shares his favorite Bible verse, Job 14:14, while eating dinner at Durham's Panera Bread on Sunday evening. (Staff photo by Lauren Miller)

one of the most valuable aspects of his life. "That's really important to me," said Page. "I like to see people happy. I like to see people satisfied. I like to see people able to take the bad and make it really great, and that's important."

Page uses this ability in his sermons, often focusing on the needs of the church and helping people deal with those needs.

"It is a blessing to be there. We have a small intimate congregation where we are able to learn from each other, grow around each other and learn from mistakes and I think that's the plus for us," Page said. "I absolutely love selecting a message and trying to work through it, so it's informing for the congregation."

Page's motivational saying for the community is "keep at it." He believes too often people decide to give up when the best part is just starting to happen. "If we give more we improve more, but if we give up then we just don't really... we're just not able to achieve because we didn't get to experience the fullness of our situation—the potential that God could give us," said Page.

When Page came to Durham in 1979, he found a progressive community filled with opportunities for service.

"That's what challenged me to say this is a community I could live in for a really long time," added Page.

Also with this passion for service and preaching, Page continues to have a vision to "return the community to its ownership of its people." He wants to have them become neighbors again, to become family again and to work together for the common good of the community. "If we could do that, I just think life would be so much better for everybody involved," said Page.

Page's Benediction

One of Page's favorite verses, Job 14:14, reads, "All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come." All the days of Page's service — 32 years' worth — he has worked for the renewal of Durham.

As the service concludes with Page's last words of prayer, the congregation gathers at the altar. Arms reach out until everyone is holding hands—everyone has come together as one. One feels an overwhelming sense of love and community.

A grin crosses Page's face as he reflects on his years of ministry. "I think this is where I really wanted to be...yeah, where I am now. I love it."