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By JAMES W. WADE III
Staff Reporter

The dream of a teenage boy has been fulfilled, as the Rev. Dr. Todd C. Davidson has been called to be the new pastor of historic Antioch Baptist Church of Cleveland.

"At 19 years old my dream was to one day pastor an Antioch Church," Davidson said. Fifteen years later, looks like his prayers were answered.

Davidson, 34, comes to Cleveland from Virginia Beach, Virginia where he served as pastor of the Big Piney Grove Baptist Church. He preached his first sermon as pastor on Sunday, July 15 and also introduced the congregation to Antioch's new first lady, Laia Elizabeth Davidson.

Davidson was elected in 2006 by the citizens of Virginia Beach, Virginia to the School Board of Virginia Beach City Public Schools. As a result of his victory, Davidson became the youngest person to win an election in the history of the city of Virginia Beach.

The Rev. Dr. Todd C. Davidson holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree, in Government and Elementary Education, from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia; a Master of Divinity Degree, in Theology, (Magna Cum Laude) from The Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University; and an earned Doctoral Degree in Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, at the College of William and Mary.

Born in Norfolk, Virginia, Davidson and his wife have been married 12 years and they have three beautiful daughters Cana, Reaiah, and Ajah ages 9, 4 and 1.

This energetic preacher says he can't wait to come toClevelandand explore his life long dream of pasturing anAntiochBaptistChurch.

Davidson was licensed to preach in 1997, at the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia, and ordained by the Old Dominion General Baptist Association in 1998. He was previously employed with the Norfolk Public School System as a teacher, coach, and dean of students. He also served as the assistant to the pastor, youth director, and Christian Education director at Greater Mount Zion Baptist Church, under the leadership of Dr. Donald F. Taylor, Sr., pastor emeritus.

While pasturing at Big Piney Grove Baptist Church, the 142-year old church experienced phenomenal spiritual, numeric, and financial growth under his leadership.

"God sent over 1700 new members during their time together as pastor and people. Ministry offerings have expanded to accommodate the diversity of gifts and talents, but the church

maintains its longstanding commitment to academic preparation, social justice, and community outreach," Davidson shared.

His community service ventures include service on the WHRO Educational Advisory Board, the ACCESS College Foundation Board of Directors, the Board of Directors for the Seton Youth Shelters Inc., the Mayor's Committee for the Disabled, the Equity Council for Virginia Beach City Public Schools, the National African American School Board Member Association, The National Association for the Supervision of Curriculum and Development (ASCD), the National and Virginia School Boards Association, 200 Plus Men Inc., the Virginia Beach Interdenominational Ministers' Conference, and the Inter-faith Advisory Board.

Davidson has received numerous awards for his community service and commitment to social justice, which include, but are not limited to: The Virginia Beach Human Rights' Commission Award, the ACT-SO Award for Oratory, The Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology Award for Academic Excellence, and the Urban League of Hampton Roads' Young Professional of the Year Award.

He has published both his dissertation research and an essay in a work entitled, The Power of Belief.

He is an active member of the NAACP and Kappa Delta Pi, Inc. (a national honor society for professional educators). Davidson also holds an appointment as an assistant professor of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education in the School of Education at Norfolk State University.

Davidson will be back and forth in Cleveland preaching some Sundays between now and September, when he plans to officially take over the pulpit.

Davidson enjoys spending time with his family, exercising and serving God's people. His favorite scripture is Philippians 4:13, which states, "For I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"