

Antoine Bennett

This young man is a tremendous public speaker (he has shared the stage with the likes of Al Gore, Marian Wright Edelman, Colin Powell, Alec Baldwin and others), he is extremely funny (he sang, to the dismay of Ms. Amelia Harris and others, *A Change is Gonna Come* at a staff Christmas party), and he is passionate about loving people and desiring justice. His name is Antoine Bennett.

Born in Baltimore in 1971, Antoine grew up in the 1400 block of School Street. He attended Kelson Elementary, Harlem Park Middle, Douglass High School and was then incarcerated in 1989. He describes prison as “school every day for me; I was determined not to be as stupid leaving prison as I was going in.” Returning to the neighborhood in 1993, he has been a constructive force ever since. He worked in YouthBuild Sandtown, New Song Family Health Center, and EDEN Jobs where he became the Executive Director in 2004.

Antoine considers himself “a lover of people; I am concerned with humanity, wanting to see people reach their goals and be happy with life, and I want to motivate people to grow in depth of character.” Having studied Islam intensively, he eventually became a Christian, a major reason in his mind being that “my grandmother prayed for me. She epitomized what Christianity was all about, thanking the Lord for everything and modeling a quiet, authentic faith.” She made sure that he and his three brothers – including his twin brother Anthony – attended church every Sunday at Sunrise Baptist in the 1500 block of Stricker Street. As a result of his faith, Antoine says “I am very concerned with leaving earth before being in the character that’s pleasing to God. I don’t see anything more important than serving him and doing his will. At the end of my life I would like to hear God say ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant!’”

Okay, some tidbits about Antoine Bennett. His favorite food is chicken, one of his favorite verses of Scripture is Psalm 133:1 (“*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!*”), he loves reading, writing, traveling, basketball and boxing. He does not like people having selfish attitudes.

He enjoys working with youth and serves as the assistant coach for the New Song Academy basketball teams. He also serves on the national YouthBuild Board of Directors and the Resident Action Committee CDC Board of Directors and is the Vice President of the Sandtown Habitat Homeowners Association. Oh, and he serves on the Boards of Sandtown Habitat, New Song Health Center, Martha’s Place, and New Song Urban Ministries...and once in awhile he sleeps!