



PAYNE THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

ANDERSON ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

BEYOND THE WALLS

A Symposium on Mass Incarceration, Public Policy, and Reentry

Trinity Lutheran Seminary

April 20, 2016

3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

PANELIST: **Damian Calvert**

Biography



Damian Calvert born and raised in Akron, Ohio has made Cleveland his home for the past three years. He is currently pursuing his B.S in Non-Profit Administration from Cleveland State University. In addition to pursuing his current degree, Damian holds a number of collegiate level program certificates in Business, Hospitality, and Retail Administration from Ashland University. Damian has served as a Movement Builder Organizer for Stand Up for Ohio (Ohio Organizing Collaborative). In that capacity, he identified and developed community members who sought to lift their voices around economic and social justice issues and taught those leaders how to isolate an issue-cut out of a problem and make it actionable; encouraged and facilitated leadership

development through story of self creation/reclaiming their narratives; and, organized and facilitated trainings which all laid the foundation for sustainable movement building.

In addition, Damian facilitates reentry-preparation programs in several different facilities on behalf of various agencies such as the Collaboration Station, where he facilitates the Entrepreneurialship program in Trumbull Correctional Institution; Reentry Bridge Network, where he oversees and facilitates the Mentoring Through Empowerment (MTE) Program in the Northeast Pre Release Center; and, most recently, Case Western Reserve's Social Justice Institute where he is employed as a Research Associate doing a Participant Observation of the Fatherhood Program in a Community Based Correction Facility (CBCF) and in North Star Community Resource Center. Moreover, Damian sits on numerous committees including The Greater Cleveland Community Engagement & Awareness Committee, Citizen Circle Committee, and, proudly, the Juvenile Detention Inspection Committee, on which he chairs the Environment Committee and serves on the Program Committee. As a dedicated, focused and resilient advocate and activist Damian can relate to the struggles of those less fortunate members of our society. Damian's drive and story of self-narrative is drawn from his 18 & 1/2 years of true life experience while serving time in prison. While some may shy away from revealing this fact about their life, Damian highlights it as a lesson learned for those in or on the cusp of facing the same fate. During his time incarcerated, Damian founded and was the inaugural president of the prison's NAACP chapter; became a certified American Red Cross instructor; served as Management Director of the Junior Chamber of Commerce; facilitated various educational workshops; mentored at-risk adolescents who came into

the facility from surrounding counties through the Heart-to-Heart Program; and, most notably, wrote, proposed and received authorization to facilitate the Reentry Premier Program which helped men prepare for successful transition back into their respective communities.

Damian believes that we all tell stories in the way we live our lives... and that these stories can serve as tools to connect, to heal, and transmit our truths in ways that add dignity and value to ourselves, to others, and our communities. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp1VXsNW8uo>