



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: Minister Raymond E. Greene, Jr.

Biography



Min. Raymond E. Greene Jr. who is also the founder of My Brother's Keeper NEO. Born and raised in Akron, Ohio to Gwendolyn Haslem and Raymond E. Greene Sr., he learned very early how the streets could lead a youth astray.

Grounded with an incredible set of family values, Raymond began his journey on the road to success. Fully understanding the importance of family and hard work, Raymond began working at the age of 11. However, by age 13, life began to take a drastic turn for him. Allowing the temptation and allure of the "street life" to penetrate him, Raymond was arrested and incurred his first criminal charge by age 15. His struggles continued. Within himself he tried to find balance and purpose. Like most adolescents of that age, his negative behavior would give him more street credibility, which he enjoyed but by which he was not fully satisfied.

Though a troubled teenager, he found positivity and structure in sports. In high school he was afforded the opportunity to play football. A promising athlete he was indeed. While this was a welcome distraction and motivation to forever abandon the street life he was introduced to, he couldn't seem to escape his recent past. Unfortunately, like many promising athletes in the inner city, his past indiscretions became a hindrance when colleges wanted to recruit. His dreams of playing football for a college of his choice were gone due to terrible choices during his childhood years.

As a Senior at Kenmore High School, in Akron, Raymond became a father for the first time. While the responsibilities of parenthood brought more struggles, he persevered and graduated. The two years later he fathered a second child. Giving in to the mounting pressures in his life, he fell victim to his previous mind and went back to a life of crime that he had become accustomed to. The struggles continued. His life seemed to spiral out of control, leading to incarceration. But Glory to God, his story did not end there. Instead it led to a rebirth!

Raymond knew it was time to make some changes, not just for himself, but also for the sake of his children; his family who he held so very dear. He resolved that, upon his release from the Akron Community Based Correctional Facility instead of contributing to negativity in the community, he would become a catalyst for positivity. He wanted to become a role model to the youth in the community so they would not make the same life choices and find the same struggles as he had.

In 2006, his love of and dedication to the youth in his community was seen in his active involvement in a variety of youth activities. He served as football coach, worked with several basketball leagues, and even personally sponsored field trips with the aim of exposing youth to more; more opportunities to prosper, more



activities to serve, more activities to enjoy life. Raymond purposed that he would show them as much as he could to instill in them knowledge of the many opportunities present when making positive life choices. He later rededicated his life to Christ, joined Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, and became a member of their youth department. Raymond accepted his call into the ministry in 2010, under the tutelage of Pastor Curtis A. Minter. He currently attends Ohio Christian University, where he graduated with his Associates Degree in Pastoral Studies and is also pursuing his Bachelors Degree in Substance Abuse Counseling. He was officially licensed on July 15, 2012 in front of his home church, Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church with the title sermon, *“Get right Church and let’s go Home.”* He then moved to St. Paul AME Church in pursuit of Social Justice Ministry where he was re-licensed in the AME Faith under Rev. Bruce Butcher in February of 2016. He encourages people to build an intimate relationship with God through morning devotions he sends daily through email. He looks to introduce as many people around the world to God. Every activity he endeavors in ministry is to fulfill one purpose: Obedient servitude to the glory of God.

He is Founder of My Brother’s Keeper NEO Inc. (MBK) At MBK he works with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated men and with young men of formerly incarcerated parents. He teaches a curriculum called Thinking 4a Change where he helps change the way our incarcerated brothers think. MBK provide them with well-needed critical thinking skills, job training and fatherhood training. They work with the youth on entrepreneurship training; they run a second grade reading program and also teach them manhood training skills. MBK was birthed out of his experience with the criminal justice system and the fact that he was out of jail and off of community control for thirteen years and still couldn’t get into a career that would take care of his family. Mr. Greene knew he wasn’t the only one going through this so he formed MBK to address, advocate and make changes in the system that would allow Returning Citizens a fair shot at life upon their release. This is what led him to The Akron Organizing Collaborative (AOC), where he is the Northeast Ohio Civic Engagement Deputy, which allow him to successfully work on community issues such as Ending Mass Incarceration and Ending The School to Prison Pipeline. Since his joining the AOC he has been responsible for passing Fair Hiring Policies in the city of Akron, Canton, Dayton, Youngstown, Warren and is responsible for House Bill 56 being introduced and passed in the House of Reps. And changes to Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority policy allowing Returning Citizens the right to live in subsidized housing. MBK and AOC are constantly in the community looking to make improvements for the future of Akron and ultimately our nation as a whole.