

Lonnie McLeod



Lonnie is included among the facilitators and founders because he was instrumental in the formation of Exodus Transitional Community. In the early days of that organization Lonnie's history with, and knowledge of, Exodus Concepts helped to form the foundations of the reentry program. In fact, The Church of Good Hope in East Harlem, where he was pastor, housed the new organization for a number of years. Some of the tools of Exodus were implemented but ETC soon developed its own mission. Lonnie remained a mentor to ETC's organizers and countless others.

Lonnie entered prison at rock bottom in his life, but he soon began to "come to terms with life." He began his college education in prison and upon release attended seminary, achieved his Doctor of Divinity degree and proudly wore the name Rev. Dr. Lonnie McLeod, Jr. For more about Lonnie see (<https://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/McLeod/McLeod-091025.htm>)

Reentry: A Journey Not a Destination

By Rev. Dr. Lonnie McLeod, Jr.

To effectively address the trauma of reentry, all parties involved — returning citizens, their families, and their congregations and communities — must acknowledge that reentry is a journey, not a destination. This was made clear at Sing Sing Prison, where inmates were working toward a Master of Professional Studies degree through a program sponsored by New York Theological Seminary. Inmates in a Hebrew Bible class delved eagerly into the Exodus story because of its emphasis on deliverance and its focus on the Promised Land. Many saw connection between this biblical narrative and their own sense of the inmate's Journey. Prison clearly found representation in the bondage of Egypt, while reentry became associated with the Promised Land.

At the same time, however, course participants had to come to grips with the fact that the Exodus narrative did not move directly from Egypt to Canaan; rather, the experience of deliverance from bondage is followed by the wilderness. Wandering and wondering, considering the seeming security of Egypt to be superior to the march into the unknown, the Israelites stumbled and struggled with unbelief, doubt, and insecurity during their wilderness journey.