



community success initiative

HELPING INDIVIDUALS & COMMUNITIES MOVE FROM WHERE THEY ARE TO WHERE THEY WANT TO BE

## "From Disgrace to Dignity"

by Rev. Reggie Longcrier

Now available online for purchase!

Rev. Reggie Longcrier has been the Chaplain of Catawba Correctional Center in Newton, N.C. For 22 years, and it's hard to believe that one of the most respected community leaders in this area spent 25 years going in and out of prison while addicted to heroin and cocaine. In "From Disgrace to Dignity" his journey begins on the street corners of Atlantic City, N.J. where he began his life of crime as a young boy with purse snatching, shoplifting, and breaking and entering. He began serving time in reformatories at age eleven and graduated as an adult to some of the roughest prisons in the country including Rahway and Rikers Island.



His adventures take readers back in time to the 60's and 70's in Atlantic City to places like Bruce's Pool Room, Stanley's Restaurant, Club Harlem, the Boardwalk, Carver Hotel, New Orleans and Bala Bars to name just a few. When things got too hot he left for New York, or played Three Card Monte up and down the East coast while selling fake jewelry, playing craps, hustling pool, and perpetrating other ingenious schemes to make fast money.

After being crowned Atlantic City King of the Nightlife in 1980, he winds up down south, in and out of N.C. prisons. He describes spending time in Hickory honky tonks like Talk of the Town where colorful characters with names like Snow Ball and Big Rosie were his friends. He even describes opening his own after-hours night spot in Hickory to earn a legal living while on probation for a five year suspended sentence.

Despite all his dedication to "the game", his addiction continues to rob him of success, and takes him back to prison again and again. The story turns when he reaches the crossroads of his life in a N.C. prison after facing a 14 year to life sentence for the Habitual Felon Act. His remarkable spiritual transformation is inspiring, and a powerful testimony to the great work of dedicated prison ministry volunteers who mentored him and helped him get back on his feet the last time he left prison.

In the book's dramatic conclusion, against all odds Longcrier beats out many other pastoral candidates with degrees and experience to win the job of Chaplain at Catawba Correctional Center in 1985. He is pictured on the book cover smiling in front of the prison with the keys to the gate where he was once an inmate.

Longcrier explains why he wrote the book, saying, "The intent of this book is not to glorify the lifestyle of crime and drugs, but to pull back the curtain to reveal the slippery slopes and tender traps that lead to a life of incarceration and addiction. I want to give the reader a bird's eye view of the criminal subculture. It is a baffling, cunning, seductive, tangled web of deceit, greed and drugs. The citizens of this subculture are driven like cattle to be slaughtered mentally, spiritually, and emotionally in prisons throughout the country. I wanted to show that God provides a way out. There can be hope after dope. There can be salvation after incarceration. People can go from disgrace to dignity.

I had never dreamed I would be a prison Chaplain. Only God could take a crooked road and make it straight. Only God could take a convict, and transform him into a prison chaplain. God took my failure and gave me amazing grace. I had a new life with a loving God who made it possible for me to hold my foot in the door for so many others who need another chance to live again." To learn more about the book, you can visit

<http://www.fromdisgracetodignity.com>

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**PERSONAL**

Married to Audrey Longcrier, with one daughter, Adrienne

**EDUCATION**

Mercer County College - Trenton New Jersey  
Milligan College - Johnson City, Tennessee  
Emmanuel School of Religion - Johnson City, Tennessee  
Winston Salem Bible College - Winston Salem, North Carolina  
Hood Theological Seminary - Salisbury, North Carolina  
Ordained in AME Zion 1989

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

**1987 - Present      Chaplain, Catawba Prison Ministries, Chaplain, Catawba  
Correctional Center      Newton, North Carolina**

Responsible to coordinate all religious services. Conduct weekly Christian services as chaplain, and facilitate inmates' serving in the ministry with their gifts and talents. Provide pastoral counseling to inmates and their families, including aftercare planning. Recruit and train all prison ministry volunteers. Conduct life skills, Nurturing Fathers, and ethics workshops for inmates. Serve as national public speaker in correctional institutions (including death row), churches, human service agencies, and other settings as requested. **Author of "From Disgrace to Dignity", 2010.**      [www.catawbaprisonministries.org](http://www.catawbaprisonministries.org)

**1997 - Present      Senior Pastor, Exodus Missionary Outreach Church  
Hickory, North Carolina**

From 1989 - 1991, served at Davis Chapel AME Zion Church in Hickory. From 1992 - June 1997 served at Rhoney's Chapel AME Zion Church in Hickory. In July 1997, left the AME Zion denomination to pursue the God-given vision of creating a multi-ethnic inner city ministry by starting a new church - Exodus Missionary Outreach Church in Hickory. Since it's inception, Exodus has grown rapidly and has gained an outstanding reputation in the community for it's innovative approach and success in reaching people who have been marginalized and disinherited by mainstream society. Exodus outgrew it's original church home at the Dirk M. Thompson Mortuary Chapel, and was invited in November 1999 to share a church home with Holy Trinity Lutheran in Hickory for three years until sufficient building funds were available to purchase their own church home. In December 2002 church property was purchased by Exodus, and on January 26, 2003 the congregation moved to its permanent church home at 1763 Highland Ave.

[www.exodusoutreachchurch.org](http://www.exodusoutreachchurch.org)

**1998 - Present    Executive Director, Exodus Homes  
North Carolina**

**Hickory,**

Founder and CEO of award winning, nationally recognized faith based private non-profit United Way organization that provides transitional to permanent supportive housing for homeless recovering people returning to the community from treatment centers and prisons. Exodus Homes has 63 beds in eight program locations in Hickory with unique services to meet the needs of its residents.

[www.exodushomes.org](http://www.exodushomes.org)

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Hickory Ministerial Alliance, President, - present  
Community Economic Development Study - present  
Member, Hickory Area Ministerial Association - present  
Board Member, Community Resource Council - present  
Member, Frye Regional Hospital Pastoral Advisory Committee - past  
Board Member, Cooperative Christian Ministry - past  
Advisory Board Member, Faith Community Task Force On Poverty - past  
Commissioner, Hickory Housing Authority - past  
Hickory Area Minister's Association - past President

### **Awards & Recognitions**

City of Hickory All America City Team 2007\_  
25 Who Matter. Hickory Daily Record 2007  
Outstanding Community Leadership, Bennett College Alumnae Association, 2006  
Regional Prison Ministry Regional Volunteer of The Year 2006  
Outstanding Community Contribution Award , Catawba Valley Community College, 2006  
Community Service Award, Lenoir Rhyne University - 2005  
Minister of the Year, Parent Child Involvement - 2003  
Key to the City, Hickory North Carolina - 2003  
Citizen of the Year, PSI Phi Fraternity - 2002  
Governor's Award For Volunteer Service - 2001  
Hickory Spirit of Martin Luther King Award -2000  
Outstanding Service, Pastoral Care Advisory Committee, Frye Regional Hospital - 1999  
Outstanding Service Award, Hickory Public Housing - 1998