

Onesimus Ministries, Inc.

145 Bethel Road • Oxford, PA 19363 • 610-932-4429 • <http://OnesimusMinistries.org>



November 2019 Newsletter Jottings

How You Can Help

Receive your Jottings by email - more convenient for you & it saves us on postage & materials.

Attend the Spring Banquet.

Donate anytime.

Prayer!

Chaplains

Heinrich Botes
Rhonda Soland

Executive Board

Richard Chiavetta
Andy Duncan
Andrew Leatherman
J. Vernon Myers, Chair
Phil Taylor, Secretary
Dan Turley

Our Mission

“Onesimus Ministries exists for the purpose of introducing prison inmates, ex-inmates and their families to the life-changing good news of Jesus Christ, as well as spiritually supporting and assisting anyone in becoming faithful in their daily walk as Christ’s disciples.”

In Honor of Roy Fite

Vernon Myers

As we look toward the end of 2019, we are thankful to the Lord for all the friends of Onesimus Ministries. We are so grateful for your support of the ongoing chaplaincy ministry happening at Chester County Prison for the past 41 years. We are encouraged by the favor Onesimus has earned from the CCP administration, giving us permission to provide two chaplains as part of the spiritual ministry available to the residents at CCP.



It has been a good year with the encouraging work of Chaplains Heinrich and Rhonda who continue to build on the solid foundation from those who have gone before, most recently by Peter Roomet and Lil Anthony.

But 2019 hasn’t been without its pain. The unexpected and sudden death of Roy Fite, our treasurer, on June 1 was a blow. His financial expertise was invaluable, not only for his job at Herr Foods Inc., but also for the Board of Onesimus Ministries. His loss is keenly felt among us as we continue to make adjustments while finding our way to fill his shoes.

As we pray and look for a new treasurer, the Oxford CPA firm, Woolard Krajnik Masciangelo, has been hired to do the bookkeeping. We are grateful for their services.

Whereas Roy’s sudden passing was hard for Onesimus Ministries, the loss was far greater for his wife, Becky, of seven months and his young daughter, Mattie. It seemed far too early to “give up” their young marriage and family life that had “just begun.” The pain is deep.

As a testimony to the grace of God, we honor the man of God Roy had become. He was not always sympathetic to the grace of God. When Roy’s younger brother, Bruce, found faith in Jesus through the Young Life ministry, he excitedly went to his family’s business to talk to him about his faith in Jesus. Bruce’s encounter with Roy did not go well that day. He let Bruce know, in no uncertain terms, he did not want anything to do with his Jesus.

As Bruce tells the story, he “backed out” of Roy’s office that day, while praying inside, leaving his brother in the hands of the Holy Spirit. For the next ten years, Bruce interceded for his brother. Ten years to the day he revisited Roy in the same office. Something had happened! To his amazement Roy was talking about Jesus as the answer to life’s difficulties.

Roy had found a Bible and, knowing his brother as he did, Bruce surmises that Roy read the Bible cover to cover numerous times. Somewhere along the way the Holy Spirit sparked a heart change in Roy. He declared his faith in the forgiving grace of God in the person of Jesus.

Roy and Mattie joined his brother and family in worship at Andrews Bridge Christian Fellowship. Those were wonderful years of Christian fellowship as he grew in God’s forgiving grace.

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Chaplain Jottings

Heinrich Botes

There are so many reasons to provide a chaplaincy service at Chester County Prison. Every day creates opportunities to share CHRIST as THE ANSWER to all the many and wide-ranging problems that face incarcerated men and women. This may sound overly simplistic, but I have no doubt that meaningful or lasting change will ever occur without a change of heart...a life turned over to the rule of the Jesus Christ.



Tears do flow, but if they are not tears of repentance, then they are merely an expression of frustration because of the consequences and inconveniences that sin and breaking the laws of God and society cause.

In the past year we celebrated with those who put their trust in Christ for the first time, or who confessed their luke-warmness and backsliding. We were overjoyed with those who converted to Christianity from other faiths, including a Buddhist and a Jew. Baptizing them in the Name of Christ with water from a foam cup in the chapel creates memories that cannot be erased.

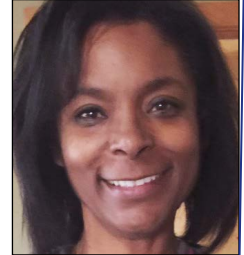
I am especially excited about what God is doing in the Maximum Security Section where I present Behold Your God every Monday morning. This is a new slot on the Chaplaincy Schedule which was allowed by the Prison. These men meet every night like a small congregation, pray and prepare their lessons whilst occasionally sharing communion on Sundays. While this may be waved-off as "jailhouse religion," I believe we have no other option but to support them and to leave the results/fruit to the Lord of the Harvest.

Rhonda and I have been placed in the front-row seats by you (our supporters) to see how God Himself saves and comforts those who are broken, those who are lost. It is a team-effort and like Paul says in I Cor. 3, I realize that some plow, some sow, some water, and some reap. Thank you and may God bless every tear, every prayer, and every dollar!

Chaplain Jottings

Rhonda Soland

The time has flown by! It's been just over 10 months since I took on the mantle of chaplain for the females at Chester County Prison. It has gone by in a whirlwind, but being there has been so satisfying and fulfilling. I am so blessed to see the number of women increasing who regularly come to our church services and Bible studies. More and more of them seem to be coming to hear God's Word taught and to learn about Him, rather than coming just as an opportunity to get off "the block." They are reading their Bibles and devotional books, sitting together to study, and helping to build each other up in their faith.



God is on the move in Chester County Prison. Even the woman I meet with each week on Maximum security, after initially being cold and distant towards God, is now responding with interest and is diligently working in her Bible study book. I can see her faith growing, and it's been so exciting to sit with her and have her ask questions about God or read to me Bible passages that are meaningful or comforting to her.

God in His sovereignty moves when He is ready to move. Please continue to pray for Him to do a mighty work among the men and women of the prison. We are grateful that you share in the work with us. As you pray and give, remember the Lord's invitation, "*Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink.*" (John 7:37)

The residents of Chester County Prison have had life experiences of addiction, abuse, neglect, rejection, suffering, etc; lives that have left them desperately thirsty for something more, something better. You are enabling us to offer Living Water to the men and women of the prison everyday, and increasing numbers of them are coming and drinking deeply, finding the refreshment, hope, and transformation that only God can provide. Thank you for your faithfulness. We can only guess at the eternal impact we may be having.

Visit us on the internet!
www.OnesimusMinistries.org

Reflections on Roy Fite's Life

Phil Taylor

In Isaiah 55:8 we're assured: *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.* We can easily nod in agreement when things are going our way, but that's so difficult to accept when tragedy strikes as in the sudden death of our beloved treasurer, Roy Fite, in June. How could a loving God take a dad from his dear daughter, Mattie, who had already endured the loss of her mom in her young life? How could he steal Becky's husband from her so soon after they were married? You'll not find any answers here, but having suddenly lost one of my treasured daughters, Devan, 3.5 years ago, there is hope, and there is comfort because of a decision both she and Roy made some years ago...to accept God's ultimate act of love in sacrificing His Son Jesus on The Cross as their one and only hope for all eternity.

So Roy is not dead...he is merely "asleep," and Mattie, Becky, and all those who've made that same decision will yet see him with the certitude of never again being separated from him forever. At the judgment of rewards, we've no doubt that Roy will indeed be surrounded by a "huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith" he lived. Roy never set foot in CCP, yet the men and women he impacted by his faithful service to Onesimus via our chaplains, whose salaries he dutifully paid with the offerings he stewarded from our generous benefactors, might well be among that throng testifying to the impact that Roy's faithfulness played in the eternal destiny of themselves and their descendants for generations. Or perhaps his legacy will be trumpeted by the accomplishments of Becky, or Mattie, or one of his yet-to-be-born grandchildren in adding to those whose "citizenship is in heaven."

On May 31st, Roy sent me the balance sheet (for distribution at our bi-monthly meeting to be held at his and Becky's home four days later) with the note, "Have a great weekend!" The very next day that weekend would be ruined by news of his heart attack and death. To a lost world that would seem to have been the tragic end for Roy. Yet to those whose hope is in Jesus Christ, June 1st will mark the day that Roy overcame this fallen world.

In the words of the beautiful tribute song, "Brother," written by his brother, Bruce Fite, after Roy's conversion:

"Your new life has just begun
One thing's for sure – the victory's won."

Monday Night Fellowship

Andy Duncan

It's hard to believe that it has been almost a year since Jim Kreider stepped down as leader of the Monday Night Prison Fellowship service. He has been a faithful and humble servant and there is much to be learned from him. I look forward to seeing him receive his crown!!

We have been so blessed to have a team of men who are devoted to this ministry, have the heart for the inmates, and the ability to effectively communicate the Gospel every week. God has grown our Ministry over this past year and I am humbled and amazed at His faithfulness. We are currently a team of 6 men including: Keith Raport, who also has a ministry in the facility in Chester. He always brings a straightforward Gospel message that is appreciated by the men. Alan Bradford, who has been coming out faithfully with Jim for several years, is our lead prayer warrior. Gabe Mahalik is a gifted speaker who also writes some amazing Christian rap that has great impact on the guys. Max Bentley shares God's Word with great passion and compassion. And, our newest addition last Spring, Barry Brown, who is a pastor at Evangel Assembly of God Church in Glenolden. Barry is committed to traveling the distance from Delaware County to share God's Word, which he does with great insight.

God has so blessed us in every sense as we also have our two outstanding chaplains in Heinrich and Rhonda, who continue to provide support, encouragement, and wisdom to guide us. I am looking forward to next year, serving alongside these wonderful folks and experiencing the Lord's grace and kindness. It is indeed by His grace that we make a difference in the lives of so many!

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During the years of waiting and praying for Roy, Bruce wrote a song he hoped to sing for his brother when the time was right. Little did he know, the “right time” would be at his brother’s funeral. Following are the lyrics:

Chorus:

Brother where have you been
I've been waiting here for you
Brother we meet here again
Now you're a wounded healer, too.

It's okay to be afraid
I know it seems so hard
This is why you have been made
But even a river needs a place to start.

For so long your beat was your own
The soil of your heart so bare
Little known the seed was sown
And now the fountain overflowing you share.

(Bridge)

You'll never know the battles you'll see
With our common new friend true brothers we'll be
Your new life has just begun
One thing's for sure—the victory's won.

2nd Chorus:

Brother wherever you go
I'll be walking here with you
Brother let your light show
Walking free in the Truth.

We honor the life of Roy Fite and his contribution to all of us. We face life's difficult challenges as the Old Testament man of God, Job, did. From the Book of Job 1:20-22

I. In the face of deep loss—Embrace the truth God is still Sovereign.

“Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart.”

God has the first word and He will have the last word of life. We cannot change the formula.

II. In the face of deep loss—Embrace the truth of God's Provision.

“The Lord gives and the Lord takes away.”

Their marriage was far too short, but we are grateful Roy and Becky had each other and Mattie had both.

III. In the face of deep loss—Embrace the truth of God's worthiness of worship.

“May the Name of the Lord be praised.”

We are the most open to Jesus' healing grace in our moments of worship—pulling Jesus into our deepest wound.

Thank you again, Roy, for all you did to bless Onesimus Ministries!