

Remembering Harwood's Campaign...

[Continued from page 3]

at this son's wedding. He became enthusiastic about our work and when the financial crisis hit our ministry a few months later, Harwood took it upon himself to raise the \$10,000 we needed.

He did it with a letter to the editor of the Cecil Whig and by contacting all of his friends and neighbors. This is an excerpt from his letter to the editor on November 21, 1994:

"I've been writing in the Whig for 15 years. I would hope that with 16,000 to 17,000 readers, I should have 200 people, friends and neighbors who will 'show they care' for the county's homeless, deserted men, women and children.

In my humble way, I wish to light one more candle to try to raise \$10,000 for them to use to buy many needed items, capital improvements, etc. To do this I need the help of at least 200 people to give \$25, and ask one more person to do the same. This will give Meeting Ground at least \$10,000 that is very badly needed.

Thus we call it 'Meeting Ground—400 Campaign'. Remember, it's all tax-deductible!"

And Harwood Strange, at the age of 77, made it work. One of the donors recalls, *"I remember him being a nice man. He knew my husband because they ate lunch over at the Baker's. He used to do things when my husband was sick. He came over and brought us things. My husband wasn't that close to him—they weren't close friends—and I thought that was kind of special."*

These folks were a part of the Meeting Ground 400 Campaign in 1994 and, as a result, she has continued to give to Meeting Ground each year since.

So Harwood modeled his vision of asking others to join in giving to Meeting Ground, including one of the men he knew from the restaurant where they had lunch. Nelson Stubbs was a neighbor in Chesapeake City. *"He was a man who lived on this side of town. He was just a go-getter. I gave to it. Then he asked me to be the treasurer of it and I've been treasurer ever since."*

One of Harwood's friends sent in a check for \$1,000. But the contribution that meant the most was from a 6-year-old girl. She handed him a

dollar and explained it was her weekly allowance and she asked him to give to another girl who was homeless for her allowance.

Harwood's goal was to raise the \$10,000 in 90 days. With a few days left he was short \$150. So, while watching a Pebble Beach golf tournament on television, he prayed and asked God to send another donation. A while later his phone rang and a man he had contacted earlier, who was sitting at home watching the Pebble Beach gold tournament on television, suddenly remembered he had not yet sent in his contribution to Meeting Ground, so he picked up the phone to tell Harwood Strange that another donation was on the way.

One of the valuable lessons in this story is the unrecognized compassion that exists in our friends and neighbors. Many people would enjoy giving to something worthwhile like Meeting Ground's ministry to the homeless, but never give because they are never asked to. Their compassion goes unrecognized by us because we never get around to telling others about our own good works and our own compassion for the homeless. Harwood's vision for Meeting Ground 400 was not to reach 400 people with his appeal. His vision was to reach 200 people—and have those donors each talk to a friend about making the same \$25 contribution.

My son's orthodontist has put up this sign in the waiting area:

7 out of 10 new patients come from patient referrals. The referral of your friends and family is the highest compliment we can receive. Thank you for your trust.

Meeting Ground also needs new referrals. We can't count on the weddings Carl Mazza performs to bring new people into the Meeting Ground family. We need today's supporters to introduce us to their friends and neighbors so that we can continue to have new donors and new volunteers to help us to grow.

A second lesson is the one Pat Robertson acted on before Harwood Strange: the power of collective giving. What none of us could do by ourselves we are able to do as a part of a team.

In the decade since the "Meeting Ground 400" was established the donors to this fund have continued to support it, most by giving annually in

Soul Food for Mission Trips

The power of love & justice
in ending homelessness



*Start by doing what's necessary, then do what's possible,
and suddenly you are doing the impossible.*
-- Saint Francis of Assisi

Published by Meeting Ground

Our new publication, **Soul Food for Mission Trips**, a devotional and discussion reader for volunteer groups and work camps at Meeting Ground, is now available. It is a seven day guide to our community's perspective on mission and means of power within a community to end homelessness. Most of the content is written by persons who have been homeless who share their insight into what was most helpful in their journey to overcome. Copies are available by email: info@meetingground.org or phone: 410-275-2936. The cost is \$5.00 per copy, or \$30. in packs of 10.

the fall. "Meeting Ground 400" still has its own treasurer and its own post office box: P.O. Box 345, Chesapeake City, MD 21915.

Today our greatest need in raising funds for Meeting Ground is for monthly contributors. This was Pat Robertson's appeal for "The 700 Club"—people who, in 1963, would give \$10 a month. If Meeting Ground today discovered 700 people who would give \$10 a month—beyond our current support—that \$7,000 a month would go a long way to meeting our on-going financial needs.

I asked another person who contributes monthly how she remembers to do that. She said, *"Because there are a certain set of checks that go to church, BorderLinks and Meeting Ground, so they are always there. It's something we actually do at the first of the month."* She added that Meeting Ground "is one of the mission things we feel is really important to support."

Another couple who contributes each month spend the winter in Florida. In a letter which arrived from Florida with her latest contribution they wrote:

"We feel so good about what you all are doing there. We would like to come down to Maryland and see all of the facilities. Maybe we can do that this summer while we are up there. We always enjoy the Loaves and Fishes."

Ten years after Harwood Strange began "Meeting Ground 400" to raise \$10,000 we are now asking people to contribute to a campaign to raise \$355,000. Just as God helped us reach our goal in 1994, I believe he will help us reach this new goal in 2005. For many of us this will involve becoming monthly givers. By joining together with our financial contributions we can multiply the impact and effectiveness of our compassion.

[Jeff Dandoy is President of Meeting Ground's Board of Directors.]