



I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word - Martin Luther King, Jr

Loaves & Fishes

Published in the present hope & dream of the Beloved Community
by the people of Meeting Ground and BorderLinks

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A Bittersweet Milestone

The partnership between BorderLinks and Meeting Ground in the publication of *Loaves & Fishes* began ten years ago with these words which Rick Ufford-Chase wrote for the first edition in which we joined together:

"In 1985 Meeting Ground and CASA of Delaware sent two volunteers to the U.S. border with Mexico to work in the Sanctuary Movement. These volunteers became convinced that there was a need to help church people visit the border in order to educate them about Central American Refugees and their concerns. The result was BorderLinks, a joint effort between people of faith in Tucson and in the Mid-Atlantic region of the country..."

What better way to help our participants make the connection than by joining forces with Meeting Ground. Problems of homelessness and urban and rural poverty in Maryland or Delaware are no different from border problems..."

Our journey over the years has been so satisfying to us at Meeting Ground, especially as it has kept us tied together in mutual work. When Rick Ufford-Chase began to organize the project, the starting point was in the northeast, as it had been a base for the original *Border Outreach Project* initiated during the time of the Sanctuary Movement trials in Tucson. Rick worked closely with Meeting Ground and we got to see him a lot. He was a part of our meetings and our community life. We all felt the sadness of separation when he made the inevitable move to Tucson, which properly became the main office and locus of the Board of Directors.

With so much distance between Maryland and Arizona, we had begun to just accept the foregone conclusion that we would have less and less of the joy of working closely together. Meeting Ground continued to join in BorderLinks trips, including some memorable delegations of homeless and formerly homeless folks who engaged in some matchless interac-

**See also:
Lerry Chase's article, 620 S. 6th Avenue, on page 5 . . .**

tion with persons from the borderlands who wrestled with similar issues of poverty and marginalization. Members of the old northeast Board of Directors made trips to Tucson to join in discussions with their new Arizona counterparts. It was in one of these meetings that the idea was raised to join in the publication of *Loaves & Fishes*.

Now, a decade later, we sadly let go of a mutual work which has been a help and joy to us both. The timing is right, and the time for change is clear. BorderLinks expansion calls for the development of a separate publication. We have all seen it coming, but there is a lot of satisfaction in knowing that it is the prosperity of the work which has brought on this change.

We have learned together over the years the importance of emphasizing the unity of our "cause." In work which focuses on justice and peace, there is always the pitfall of the inward focus – the passion for one's own work being so intense that it fails to fully recognize that others, engaged in unique and distant communities, are joined in similar struggles. Though the people, place, and language may differ, the soul of our endeavors are very much the same. We indeed wrestle with the same principalities and powers, and the commitment of the work of our hands is energized by the faith in our hearts.

Sadly, with this issue we part ways. Our prayer is that we may quickly discover a new means to remain as connected as possible, in ways even more helpful than this former partnership. Whatever comes, we still hold to the promised so well expressed by the late Jim Corbett, quoted in that first issue: *"Covenanting is concerned with interweaving persons and groups into a communion, not with drawing organizational boundaries that segregate one kind of association from another."* So has it been between us all this past decade!

A Study and Analysis of Homelessness in Cecil County, MD

Meeting Ground is announcing that the first comprehensive study of homelessness in Cecil County, Maryland, will be released this summer. It is also the first major study of rural homelessness in the United States in the last 13 years.

From November 2004 through March 2005, the Center for Family and Community Life of Salisbury University (Salisbury, Maryland) collected data from homeless services providers, community stake holders, and in extensive interviews with persons experiencing homelessness. It also reviewed all the available data on housing and homelessness which is available for Cecil County and the State of Maryland from public and private state and national organizations.

A preview of some of the data compiled in the study is on page 11. When the study is officially released, it will be available for download on Meeting Ground's web site: www.meetingground.org

The study was funded by a grant from the Citigroup Foundation. Meeting Ground organized a number of advocates and service providers to define the study working with Dr. Marvin Tossey, Chair of the Sociology Department at Salisbury University and leader of the study team.



SUMMER MISSION-TRIP SEASON IS WELL UNDERWAY! We have been hosting Mission Trips and Work Camps year round, but summer is the very busy season! Pictured above are Ron Serino and Courtney from 1st Congregational Church, St. Louis, MO. Becky Wegener [right] is one of our summer interns, a senior from Nazareth College, Rochester NY. Ron is the Associate Pastor of 1st Congregational, and a much loved friend of Meeting Ground.

**Michael Stoops to Speak at
Our 2nd Annual Fall Gathering
Saturday, October 22 11am - 1:30**
Details on page 2

