

October 12, 2007

Teena & Jeff Stewart

Home Address:

451 Hawthorne Lane

Benicia, CA 94510

Phone (707) 751-3703

Email: smartwords@sbcglobal.net

Teena's Cell (707) 980-0317

Jeff's Cell (707) 980-1783

Couple Answers Call to Open a Coffee Shop of a Different Flavor

Why would people cough up four-plus dollars for a cup of coffee when they could make it themselves for just a few cents in their own home? This was the question Jeff and Teena Stewart pondered. But after friends gave them gift cards to a local coffee shop, the Stewarts realized what all the hub-bub was all about. "It wasn't just about the coffee," says Jeff. "The place was filled with enticing aromas that made you want to hang out and relax. We saw people chatting, working on homework or computers, reading... It was really about a comfortable environment and small group community."

Following this epiphany, the Stewarts began to feel a tug to move from conventional church ministry that requires people to come to a location and adapt to a foreign-feeling environment, to something more akin to what they saw happening in coffee shops. After much prayer and soul searching they've made a radical decision—to sell their home in Benicia, California and use the proceeds to start a coffee shop ministry in North Carolina. The decision comes at a high price. They will have only enough for the business start up and are in the process of raising funds for living expenses, insurance, cost of moving and more to survive on until the shop gets on its feet. Though there is no guarantee of success—they have a target date for completion of employment in their current positions at the end of November and are trying to sell a home in a depressed market—they are determined to trust God's leading.

They envision a shop where delicious coffee and a warm inviting environment are the main draw and where people can linger, learn, and latch on to Christian principles. The Stewarts will be on hand to provide customers with prayer support, and small group options, including recovery groups. They also plan to offer guest musicians, plus life-equipping and spiritual formation classes to help people face life's challenges.

The Stewarts have nearly 30 years of church ministry experience. Jeff, ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church, serves as Pastor of Discipleship at Northgate Christian Fellowship a non-denominational church in Benicia. Teena works at the church as an admin assistant. Whether in the form of coffee shop ministry

or more traditional church ministry, The Stewarts are passionate about equipping people to grow to Christian maturity while helping them be more effective ministry leaders.

Teena has served as Northgate's Ministry Development Team director, educating church members regarding spiritual gifts, helping connect them with volunteer ministry opportunities; developing ministry teams; and creating systems to improve ministry. Both she and Jeff and have launched and lead multiple small groups, and have worked with small group leader equipping.

Teena's most recent endeavor, a book, *Successful Small Groups: From Concept to Practice* (Beacon Hill, Nov. 2007), segues into the coffee shop ministry/small group focus. The book is written with churches in mind to help them successfully birth small groups, provide insightful tips for managing them, and develop leaders. Even churches with few or no small groups will benefit from the book, which explains how to prepare core leadership and congregations for launching small groups.

"In today's hectic and disconnected society, people long to be part of a caring community, especially if they don't have family close by. Successful small groups not only provide that loving community but also help members learn to apply Christ's principles to their everyday lives," says Teena.

Teena's articles have appeared in secular and Christian publications including *Leadership Journal*, *Clergy Journal*, *Ministry Magazine*, *Discipleship Journal* and many other publications. Book credits for the Stewarts include co-authoring *The World's Easiest Pocket Guide to Money and Marriage* with highly respected financial counselor and best-selling author Larry Burkett.

In addition, Teena is a columnist and book reviewer for DreamBuilders Ministry in Motion a Christian leadership equipping organization. To read more about the Stewart's Java Journey or help with support, visit www.ministryinmotion.net/christians_coffee_shop.html. More information on Teena's writing and speaking can be found at http://www.ministryinmotion.net/teena_stewart.html.