



Changing Water into Coffee?

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If Jesus had come in the twenty-first century, would he have turned water into coffee to begin his ministry? I'd like to think so. This question occurred to me in 2007 at my sister's wedding feast where there was a coffee bar in lieu of the traditional wet bar.

I am not the only one who has a love affair with coffee. It's pretty trendy these days. What is it about coffee? Why do we need it? Where has our coffee culture come from?

Well, in the first place, having coffee is not pretentious. Having coffee is not doing church. It is not school. It is not going to work. There is nothing scary, threatening, or uncomfortable about enjoying a cup. In fact, community these days is spelled out with warm lights, schwarmy tunes, and sipping coffee in comfy couches. Now we're talking fellowship.

Perhaps it may be too hard to ask the real questions, too hard to say, "We need to talk about our relationship," "We need to talk about the direction of your life," or "We need to talk about abortion." But it is not too hard to ask, "Would you like to grab a cup of coffee?"

Coffee is one way our culture creates community. Community happens when people are relaxed and can be themselves with one another. Our coffee-houses, kitchen corners, and cars become the places where we can have community when we think we are just having a cup of coffee.



JFA volunteer Carson Banks serves up the love as a barista at the Credo House, a popular coffeehouse for creating community in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Next month I'll share a story from Jordan Newhouse, a JFA volunteer and intern, who took advantage of our coffee culture and her JFA training to engage in evangelism.

These thoughts are expanded in a 2007 dramatization which you can hear on my archive page: www.jfaweb.org/John-Michener.

-John Michener



Carie and Alan Swan opened Vintage Coffee in Oklahoma City where members of their local church family spend more hours in community than they do at the church's building.

Think of a time when you were in a new class, starting a new job, or placed on a new team. How did it feel to be surrounded by strangers? Conversation was likely tentative at first. But what happened when you discovered that your neighbor liked the same sport, the same music, or the same beverage?

Sometimes just holding a cup of coffee makes conversation easier. It communicates that you are a normal, approachable person. Coffee can help create community.



JFA volunteer Megan Baatz reflects on what JFA training has done for her.

When I was a junior in high school, a woman...invited me to come to an abortion clinic, just to sing worship songs with her family near the entrance...

Our little group kept on singing, trying to convey a message of hope. But my heart broke again and again each time one of these souls passed me by.

Ever since that day at the clinic, I've considered the complex circumstances that drive so many women to submit to this procedure. And ever since that day, I've asked myself, "What could I possibly do to make a positive, lasting difference to those affected by abortion?" For many years, I had no sufficient answer.

But during my freshman year at Colorado State University, a Christian classmate...invited me to JFA's "Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue" seminar. That evening, I was not only reawakened to the reality of abortion, but my hope was renewed as I met people who equipped me to effect the change I'd yearned to make.

The next morning, I arrived at the outreach phase of the training, which took place right on my own campus. Once again, souls upon souls passed me by. But this time, I stood ready to reach out to these souls with power.

So I conversed boldly, listened patiently, made mistakes, and persevered anyway. Instead of arguing with students, I came alongside them so that we could sort out the truth about abortion together. And while I reasoned with the students, I trusted that the love of Christ would flow through me.

Over the years, JFA has trained up individuals like me to speak the truth about abortion in a respectful, intelligent, and loving way. I've been encouraged to hear real stories of JFA and its partners bringing hope to women facing unplanned pregnancy, as well as saving the lives of many unborn human beings.

"For many years, I had no sufficient answer..."

"But this time, I stood ready..."

-Megan Baatz