

## NEW CREATION CHRISTIAN BOOKSHOP AND COFFEE SHOP



**TIVERTON'S newest coffee shop is a rather unusual one, set up for rather unusual reasons.**

New Creation, at the top of Bampton Street, opens today at 9.30 am. Also a book shop, it was set up by a team of three Christians in answer to "a calling from God."

Some time ago, Maureen Rendell had a vision. She had an overwhelming feeling that God wanted her to open a Christian bookshop in Tiverton.

At the same time, husband and wife Chris and Sharon Britton got a similar calling, the difference being that they felt God wanted them to set up a Christian coffee shop.

When both parties got together and discovered what each had experienced, they decided to combine the two projects, and that was the birth of New Creation.

Stepping into the newly refurbished shop is like walking into springtime. In just seven weeks, 41 volunteer helpers of all ages and all the local churches have transformed the shop into a haven of pastel decoration and pine furniture.

In addition, between 20 and 30 Christians of all denominations are to spare what time they can to share in the running of the shop.

Nobody will be making any money from the venture. As Chris said: "We hope to make a profit, but that will be

back into the shop to buy more stock. Eventually we hope to give money to charity or use it to help local Christians' needs."

He explained that the aims of the team who set up the venture were threefold.

"Firstly, we want to provide a resources centre for Christians by offering books, tapes and greetings cards. We will also be selling Third World crafts, bought from companies that do not exploit their workers and pay them at the proper rate.

"Second, we want to unite Christians. The world often sees them as set apart from others and each other, but God's purpose for them is for Christians to be as one body.

"Thirdly, we would like the shop and cafe to be an outreach to those people who are not Christians. We would like people to come in and browse through our literature while they have coffee and find out more about Christianity.

"We want them to come in and talk to us and ask us questions about our faith.

"A lot of people have spiritual needs but don't know how to fulfil them, and we would hope that we could help by talking and advising."

But the team are keen to stress that they will not be pushing religion to everybody who steps through the door.

Chris, who runs the nurseries at Withleigh, said: "We want to create a friendly open atmosphere where people can

*Ready to welcome Christians of all denominations or those who simply want a cup of coffee are Alison Britton, Maureen Rendell, Chris Britton and Sharon Britton, some of the staff at New Creation.*

just come in for a coffee without having to talk, but we are here if they need us.

"A lot of people are looking for fulfilment, but many may not realise that they can only achieve that by living with God through Jesus.

"It would be nice if we could help just a few people to be 'born again' - that is having their sins forgiven by asking Jesus to live in their lives."

The neat coffee shop seats between 16 and 18 people, and customers will be able to buy a range of drinks, light lunches, cream teas.

The book shop is packed with all types of literary work and tapes, and the range takes in everything from children's books to glossy publications and fun books.

But getting New Creation of the ground was not an easy task, and the team faced many setbacks in finding suitable premises.

Chris said: "It was a spiritual battle for us, and we prayed together a great deal. It may seem strange to people who are not religious, but when you are a Christian the Devil is very real, and we could feel him trying to pull us down and make us not succeed.