



PRESS RELEASE



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The Church in China - Olympic Hopes and High Anxiety

The August date for the opening games of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China is drawing near and news headlines are centring more on this, sometimes, controversial event. In the midst of all of this a UK based charity, Harvest Fields Commissioning International and its film production arm, OLI Productions, have just completed production of their film “China: Reflections from Heaven” filmed entirely in Beijing. The subject of the film is not just the beauty and history of this vast land, but on the lives and struggles of its 1.3 billion strong population. With a Christian population estimated to stand at over 100 million and growing, the reaction of The Church in China to the Beijing Olympics is varied. In the process of filming OLI Productions interviewed a number of church, ministry and business leaders to gain a greater picture of the situation. The main two divisions in China are between the “registered” churches and the “house” churches. One of the former churches in Beijing boasts multiple services throughout Sunday and a gleaming new “showpiece” multi-purpose building. House churches meet, most often, literally, in houses spread throughout the country sometimes changing location, for security reasons. They are usually limited to 10 or 20 and, as one leader put it, “are on almost every block across Beijing.”

Expectancy about the Olympics can be split into two camps. Some leaders feel that this major event, with the world’s eyes upon it, will be a chance for The Church in China to be salt and light to everyone. They feel that the authorities are looking for help and Christians in that vast land make good citizens, doing their jobs with gusto, being honest and trustworthy. On the other side church leaders are adopting a “wait and see” attitude. They reason that, since the world’s eyes are upon the country right now, persecution will be widespread after the sporting events end. To one part of The Church there are high hopes. To another, there is high anxiety. Most Christians interviewed felt that the number one need and prayer request for China is for the divisions between the two sides to end and for The Body of Christ to walk in love and unity and share the love of God through Jesus Christ to a spiritually hungry nation.

The film “China: Reflections from Heaven” is part of HFCI’s “Into All the World” film series currently being broadcast on 10 TV networks across the Middle East, Russia, in Arabic across North America & Mexico, Australia, Romania, the U.K., New Zealand, Indonesia, Holland and Israel and worldwide on cable and satellite.

Harvest Fields Commissioning International is a U.K. Registered Charity with the purpose of assisting in raising up and encouraging churches and leaders in 41 countries and on all 5 continents for work in churches, charities and other humanitarian assistance groups. Its websites are at: <http://www.agapelive.net> and <http://www.hfci.net>.

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