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Perspectives and analysis for those who serve China

China SOURCE

The Clash of Culture and Class in China's "Olympic Era"

James H. Law

In what may be the greatest economic miracle since the Industrial Revolution, China continues to become a global economic force into the twenty-first century.

Historically, while Europe was suffering through the Dark Ages, China had already developed writing paper, the compass and gunpowder. However, from before Marco Polo to Chairman Mao Zedong, China has been an enigma—advanced in many ways and behind in others. Since the early 1980s, the dynamic changes in China's socio-economic demographics have been nothing short of astounding.

China overtook India's standard of living in 1993 and, in the following decade, the Chinese economy continued to grow twice as fast. China now has a projected gross domestic product (GDP) for 2004 of US \$7000 per capita. Global investors recognize an economy with great potential (ten percent plus growth) and, in the past year, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to China (projected at US\$65 billion in 2004) continue to be five times greater than India and second only to the U.S. The future for China looks bright, or so one would be led to believe.

The initial results are more than a million Chinese millionaires with pent up consumer demand and money to spend. *Forbes* magazine's "Richest 100 People in China" starts with wealth at a minimum of US\$110 million for #100 then goes up from there. The average age of the richest 100 people in



Graham Cousens



Julie Laddlaw



China is 44 years old. The economy continues to hum along in spite of SARS and avian influenza. Urban centers like Chongqing and Beijing are some of the fastest growing cities on earth. Shanghai, with its 20 million citizens, the world's tallest hotel/office building (Jin Mao Tower), and forty percent of the world's building cranes is more a space-age movie set than a historical city once known as the "Paris of the East." The urban confluence of young professionals (China's growing middle class) at Starbucks, KFCs and McDonalds reveals China's consumer driven frenzy. Megamalls springing up everywhere offer international luxury items like Swiss watches, Italian fashions, Russian caviar and French wine. Everything the world has to offer and more can now be bought in the New China—for a price.

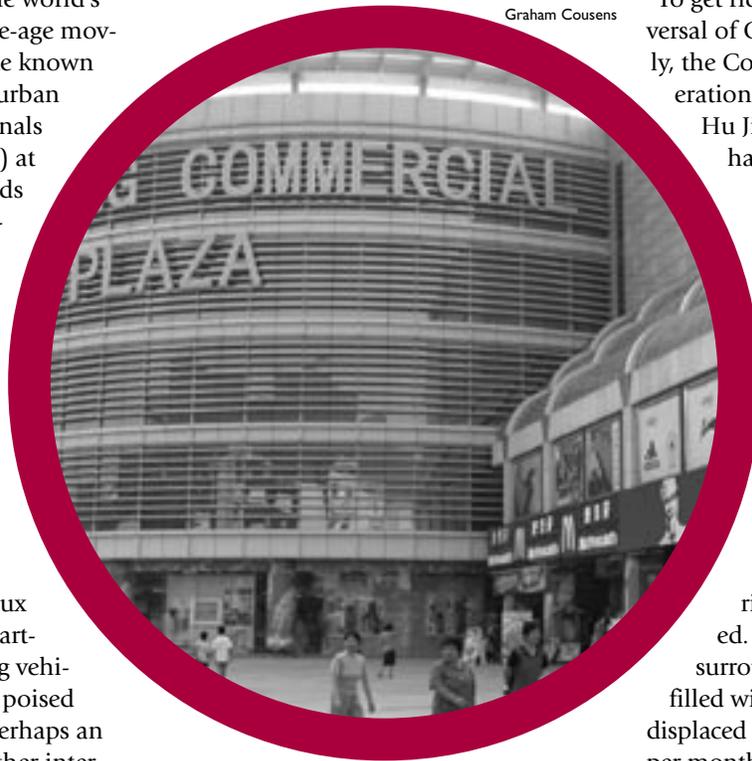
The two most important (and conspicuous) consumer items for the Chinese "nouveaux riche" are automobiles and apartments. Car dealerships offering vehicles from all major brands are poised for staggering sales growth—perhaps an even greater success than all other international sales combined. Chinese middle and upper classes purchased 1.8 million new cars in 2003, bringing the national total to 10 million. And this is just the beginning. If car ownership ever reached similar levels as in the United States, China would have more than 600 million automobiles on the road.

New houses and garages for the new automobile are a must. Impeccably designed urban/suburban communities with such un-Communist names such as "Manhattan," "Palm Springs" and "Pebble Beach," offer China's wealthy class-

es premium homes and apartments with every conceivable luxury including spas, bowling alleys, movie cinemas and gated 24-hour security.

China's consumerism is spreading outside traditional borders. Hong Kong's first economic upswing since 1997 has been

Graham Cousens



Everything the world has to offer and more can now be bought in the New China —for a price.

driven in no small part by the easing of restrictions on Chinese tourists to allow them to descend on Hong Kong shopping malls and buy up Hong Kong real estate. Similar consumer spending is oc-

curing in countries like Singapore, Thailand and South Korea—all of which have the coveted Chinese government approval as tourist destinations.

In the 1980s, as China adopted a "market system with socialist characteristics," the late Deng Xiao Ping declared, "To get rich is glorious," in a stunning reversal of Communist ideology. Currently, the Communist Party's fourth generation of leadership under President Hu Jin Tao and Premier Wen Jia Bao has consistently reinforced the economic direction of China.

These leaders, the first to have been educated and lived internationally, have done an admirable job of governing China's 1.3 billion people given the global shadow of 9/11, the subsequent war on terror plus the SARS epidemic and avian flu in the mix.

Unfortunately, China's new wealth also has a dark side.

The widening disparity between rich and poor continues unabated. Luxury gated communities are surrounded by poorer shanty towns filled with illegal migrant workers and displaced citizens scraping by on US\$50 per month. Millions of Chinese are left unemployed from their abandoned unprofitable state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Rural poor continue to struggle to provide for their families with little more than a sixth grade education. Prostitution in cities has become one of the few ways that women with little or no education can eke out a living.

Statistically, China's income disparity is worse than that of other Asian countries like South Korea, Japan and India—this despite the fact that China had created one of the most even distributions of wealth between 1950 and 1980. In fact,

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ChinaSource
Partnering Resources with Vision

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Chinese economic inequality levels are approaching the days when the Communists, under the leadership of a then unknown peasant, Mao Tse Tung, toppled a corrupt Nationalist (KMT) government which then fled to Taiwan in 1949.

Environmental issues are also a serious challenge for the New China. Two thirds of China's largest cities have clean water shortage issues. Urban sewage issues and air pollution continue to be major urban problems made all the more serious because of new car sales. With Chinese factories interested only in profit, environmental damage continues unabated; poor air quality has caused more than two million deaths in the past decade. However, when challenged, the Chinese counter with the claim that as a developing country China is too poor to "go green." Officially, as a "developing nation," China's global environmental standards do not need to be as stringent as nations in the West; however, few countries need environmental protection more.

So, time is of the essence for the New China. The government must undertake to build a social welfare network to protect the weakest in society. This safety net certainly includes the unemployed and impoverished, but also extends to the physically/mentally challenged, the elderly and the sick. Who will protect the "orphans and widows" of China? How long will the disaffected and disadvantaged in the New China be willing to go along with the status quo?

Yet, there is little sympathy from the privileged classes for the bleakness of Chinese daily life. Urban professionals in China rationalize their economic inequality as fitting within atheistic constructs of society. Social Darwinism in China's cities shows all too well that the greed of the rich succeeds at the expense of the poor. Exploitation continues under the mantra that the "end justifies the means." China's one child families desire to get rich—and get rich quick. For the spiritually attuned, the current Chinese milieu may prove to be an entry point for a reevaluation of Chinese society and the need for ethics and morals.

In the face of the socio-economic challenges, and to maintain their legitimacy, the Communist Party, through the National People's Congress, has made recent amendments to the Chinese Constitution to make "lawful property rights as inviolable." This follows in the wake of other changes including easing of worker/household registrations, low-level political reforms (election of some city councilors), and the admission of "entrepre-

sociation and the press are routinely squashed and ignored at best. It may be a few years yet before one sees the true effects the constitutional and other political changes will have. As indicated by the SARS epidemic, in the era of advanced communication via internet and mobile phones, Chinese citizens desire greater social justice and despise government cover-up.

The resultant clash of cultures and class in the New China reveals the importance of China's non-profit organizations (NPO) and non-governmental (NGO) sectors. During the "Iron Rice Bowl" era (circa 1950-80), China's "Big Brother" took care of social welfare needs. Those times are long gone, and China continues towards what has been termed a "small government, big community" system. Traditionally, Chinese normally help only their family members and those within their *guanxiwang* or "connections network." One rarely helps an acquaintance and never a complete stranger. Charity and volunteerism were unknown concepts up until the past decade.

The NPO/NGO sector becomes increasingly crucial to bridging the socio-economic gaps between haves and have-nots. China rapidly adopted the Western capitalist models of greed without acknowledging the important Judeo-Christian underpinnings of society—those which provide a moral compass and safety net for the weak and disadvantaged. The New China's materialism is based on a desire for profit in a moral vacuum where anything goes. China desperately needs to continue to develop its non-profit sector and find areas (environmental/poverty alleviation) where it can encourage citizens to show kindness and generosity. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can also play a key role in helping domestic and multinational for-profit businesses invest in China's social capital.

Is it any wonder, then, that many Chinese are extremely cynical and unhappy about their lives? Young people—many from single child families—in China do

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The Beijing 2008 Summer Olympic Games provide **a prominent diversion and patriotic esteem** for Chinese society.

neers and business people" into Communist party membership.

Critics claim recent changes further benefit the rich by protecting "illegally acquired" property. The Chinese constitution may be a finely worded document espousing virtuous ideals, but even with China's movement towards a "rule of law" system, this may help little. Constitutional arguments are rarely, if ever, heard in commercial or criminal courts. Freedoms such as those of religion, as-



Julie Laidlaw

Church and Community Sports Partnerships

Edward Lee with David Remus

In Malaysia, a local church has its own court for floorball, a combination of field hockey and ice hockey. The players use the worship hall which has been converted into a gym for the night. Local believers use this recreation to reach out to their community, drawing local families into participation at differing levels. This has become very popular with the local people.

- Another church group, in a small Muslim country, has organized a weekly men's soccer league. They invite people from the majority religion to come to play—and they do! This has provided individual believers with a great means for creating contact points with the participants with whom they can then follow up with care and sensitivity at appropriate times.

- In the southern part of another Asian country, a church has organized interchurch basketball leagues for different ages where they can attract nonbelievers from the local community.

- In another part of this Asian country, a residential soccer school has been set up for youth. The school partners with the church in another country which sends coaches and

trainers who work with local administrators and managers. They are committed to reaching the young men for Christ in addition to building a viable (and profitable) soccer program.

These church-based sports activities are not being done in the traditional way that Westerners or those working in more open situations in Asia may be familiar with. For example, an outreach program such as a city-wide basketball or volleyball tournament from a local church,

- Lack of facilities. Most churches do not have a suitable place for sports activities. Often parks or schools will not let outsiders use their grounds or facilities.

- Sports in general have not caught on with the average person as a participant. Exercise groups for older people are seen, but sports are not necessarily a part of normal leisure time activity. Who has the most leisure time in China's developing and hustling cities?

- Expensive health clubs are becoming

Sports activities can be done in a creative way given the right conditions and prepared people to carry them out.

or a youth program centered in the gym or yard of a local church usually has an evangelistic speaker or an offer to join a church or Bible study as an integral part of the event. These kinds of events obviously cannot be done in the current environment in China.

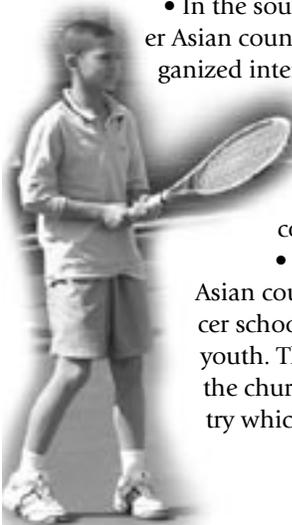
The environments we face in China present some unique challenges for those who may want to use sports to benefit their communities. What are some of these challenges?

the vogue but largely for upper level urban people with disposable incomes.

- Sports, up to this point, are played mostly by elite athletes or specialists in training (those who go to sports schools or are on government or company teams).

- Currently, there are no church leaders who participate in sports, so in general, the churches do not know how sports could be used for outreach.

However, sports activities can still be



done in a creative way given the right conditions and prepared people to carry them out.

- There are numbers of young people in the cities playing “pick up basketball” at local parks and recreational facilities, especially those in or near colleges and universities. However, volunteers are lacking to organize and sponsor teams, tournaments and leagues. Could local believers be trained to do this? In some cities, sports leagues have already been formed—a great way to extend the circle of friendship.

- Could local churches create their own facilities by leasing part-time or building a multi-use facility that could be used for community meetings, then converted to a gym for different kinds of sports?

- There might be opportunities for sports or community centers to be established in urban communities throughout the country.

—Such centers could help fulfill the *Chuan Min Jian Shen* (Whole Community Total Fitness) movement the government is promoting throughout the country.

—A holistic approach would be provided for reaching into a community, similar to the YMCAs in the West or in Hong Kong.

—Sports could be a key component, with local intramural teams and leagues formed for a variety of sports and activities. Local church leaders could be trained as coaches, managers and owners.

—Language classes could be offered for a fee to attract all age groups.

—Additional courses could be offered for parenting, counseling, husband-wife relationships or other needs that are expressed.

—Local believers could join as partners and/or employees depending upon the initial scale of the project.

—These centers could tap into the “Olympic fever” that has already begun to grip Beijing and will certainly spread to other cities in the next months and years.

- Host a short-term sports team of some kind. All kinds of teams have gone to



China over the past twenty years, from high-level professional teams to amateur “friendship teams” that help pave the way for longer-term involvement. These can be men’s or women’s teams that play basketball, football (soccer), volleyball or other sports.

plenty of anecdotal evidence of interest on a community level for anything involving children. Games for children could be used in the open community spaces that are springing up in most new urban apartment complexes.

These are some ideas on how to an-

Can local church-based sports activities be implemented in China?

We believe the answer is “yes!”

- Secure an invitation for long-term sports workers, which is not difficult. Coaches and players can work either with official venues such as schools, come out as language students or come with another kind of visa and help develop sports on their own.

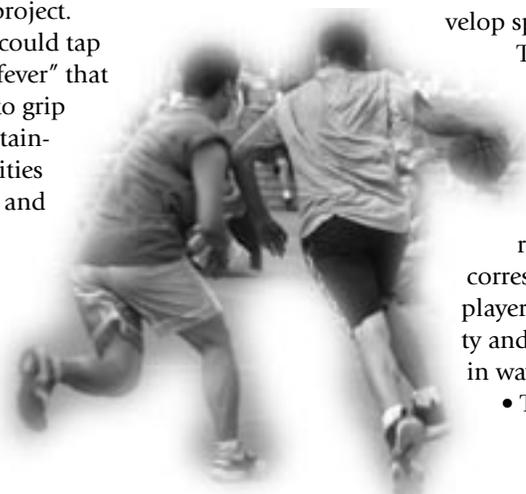
There is no limit to this type of opportunity. Both short- and long-term sports teams can relate to officials, corresponding coaches, players in the community and the general public in ways that are unique.

- There seems to be

answer the question, “Can local church-based sports activities be implemented in China?” We believe the answer is “yes!” if done carefully and as a means to affect outreach into communities. At the same time, the expatriates involved should keep in mind the desire and need to develop local leadership no matter what the project is.

Edward Lee has been in sports outreach for nearly twenty-five years, the last twelve years in Asia. He is the Asia director for an agency that facilitates sports activities in 22 nations.

David Remus has been in Asia for twenty-five years and has facilitated short-term teams to East Asia. Currently, he is overseeing the initial language learning and acculturation of long-term workers in several cities. 译



Preparing for 2008: It's Not about the Olympics

John Christopher

It's not about the Olympics. It's not about 2008. It's not about Beijing. It's not about sports. It's about what God is *already* doing across China and how can we join him in his work. God is working powerfully in the hearts of the people of China. Record numbers are coming to faith each year. Growth is so fast that church leaders are having difficulty keeping up. Perhaps no other Olympics have been held in such an amazing context where God's spirit is moving like a mighty wave.

If we are to keep up with God, we need to be apostolic, not just evangelistic. We need to expect, encourage and equip multitudes of new believers to immediately start new churches. Most will be small groups, perhaps part of a larger church or

network. These new groups can be healthy, reproducing rapidly to the fourth generation and beyond.

China Fervor

Long before the Olympics were awarded to China, the Chinese people showed great interest in sports. On a national level, when a Chinese athlete wins a championship, a sense of pride is felt in the hearts of the Chinese people. Thus, China will invest vast sums of money in the Olympic Games with a goal of producing a 2008 Olympic event that will bring honor to China in

Julie Laidlaw



CHINA WILL INVEST VAST SUMS OF MONEY IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES with a goal of producing a 2008 Olympic event that will bring honor to China in the eyes of the world.

the eyes of the world.

On the local level, sports and exercise are a way of life for the Chinese people. On most days, parks are filled with people running, skating and exercising. A program called "Whole Community—Total Fitness" encourages sports programs and exercise.

If you add Chinese fervor for sports to Christian zeal for the lost, you can readily understand "China fever" among many believers outside China. Questions often raised include: "How many people will come to do outreach during the 2008 games? How much evangelistic literature can we pass out? What can we get away with?" Better questions are: "What are we trying to do? What will be effective over

the long term? How can a passion for sports be linked to a passion for spiritual things?" What we pass out does not matter as much as what we leave behind—new believers gathered into new healthy, reproducing churches.

Restrictions and Respect

An early consideration for ministry in China is to realize that what works well in most places may not work in China. Many methods effective elsewhere may not be welcomed in China. Even though Christians disagree with some restrictions in China, it is in our interest to show respect for those restrictions. Yet, we can still affirm that the Great Commission and the entirety of God's word take precedence over any human institution. If we operate without taking both sides of this tension into consideration, the results could be detrimental to many. Foreigners enjoy some autonomy that the local Chinese Christians do not have. What foreigners do with that "freedom" can negatively affect local believers. The Olympics coming to China will offer great opportunities; nevertheless, we must take advantage of these opportunities in the appropriate manner.

Relationships

In 2008, throngs of Christians will come to China to "share the gospel." The method that many will use will be massive amounts of materials being handed out to total strangers. Chinese do not readily "hear" a stranger. They are polite and may listen. But the words fall on deaf ears even if the heart is really soft and open. Impersonal mass distribution of material without relationship or means of relational follow up will not have any significant impact on bringing people to faith. The fact that God can take material and use it is not being questioned; however, we need to ask if there are better ways to spend our time, energy and finances. Let us look beyond Beijing and before 2008.

What Can We Do?

Be a learner. We must first be willing to learn from what is already working and adapt our work to fit what God is doing. Our Chinese brothers and sisters have much to teach us about what works in their homeland. We can learn how to



THE 2008 OLYMPICS IS AN EVENT THAT WILL COME AND GO. What we do in the years leading up to the event will make the greater impact on China.

start healthy groups that reproduce rapidly (see box on page 8).

Be a friend. If you go out to eat with a Chinese friend, don't plan on a quick meal. A meal with a friend may take three hours. Relationships are built and maintained by taking time to talk and show interest. As in many cultures, in China, friendship opens the door to the heart. The depth of the relationship will often determine the opportunities you have to share with a person. Sometimes this can happen very quickly. Other times it will take much longer. We need to be sensitive to each person and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Be a servant. Friendship may open the door, but a true servant attitude lets you walk in. Since the 2008 games were awarded to Beijing, sports have increasingly provided many ways for Christians to serve all kinds of people in China. Multiple government and non-governmental entities want to promote and develop sports. This applies to the athletic community as well as to the general public. We can train Chinese athletes. We can compete against Chinese teams. We can play all kinds of games with ordinary

people. Sports are a great way to build relationships and be a servant.

Pray. Pray for the Chinese people that they may come to know Him and then be used by Him to carry the gospel to others.

Short-term Opportunities in China

The 2008 Olympics is an event that will come and go. What we do in the years leading up to the event will make the greater impact on China. Don't wait until 2008 to go to China. Come now! Come before 2008. Build relationships as a tourist, as a sports participant or sports instructor. There are many opportunities for you to make a difference by just being available. You would be surprised by how many Chinese are studying English. Many are eager to engage any friendly native speaker. Perhaps you qualify.

Build face-to-face relationships that allow you to share the truth. Chinese are less likely to reject the message if they have a good relationship with the messenger. Plan ways to stay in contact with these new friends and put Christians already here in contact with those who show interest. Plan to return to China

Julie Laidlaw



GOD HAS GIVEN US THE TOOL OF SPORTS to use to make relationships which will give an opportunity to share about Him to an audience that will not turn us off before we begin.

to maintain those friendships and make new ones.

Come to China to get a vision of what the people here are like so that you and your church can pray for the people of China. Read books and internet articles about China and the church in China. Learn some basic Chinese before coming by using computer software, taking a class or talking to Chinese you might know or meet.

Long Term Opportunities at Home

Look around where you live. Do you have mainland Chinese in or near the place you live? Befriend them. Serve them. Share the Gospel with them. Start a Chinese house church right where you are.

Why start a house church instead of inviting them to your church? Your church is probably not at all like the church in China. Thus, if you want the Chinese you bring to Christ to continue their spiritual growth after they return to China, you need to model for them a church life that will be like what they may find when they return to China.

This may require study and lots of change on your part but could be very rewarding. You will better understand how most Chinese worship and have fellowship with other believers. You can rejoice with God as your group grows and mul-

tiplies in your home country and then starts reproducing groups in China. Instead of seeing a few Chinese believers join your church, you could see a stream of reproducing churches you initiate flow back into the mighty wave of what God is doing across China.

Starting churches and teaching the churches how to start new churches that start churches is the way to reach the huge population of China. It is not the method we are accustomed to, but it is what is working in China right now.

Conclusion

It's not about the Olympics or sports, but about what God is already doing in China. God has given us the tool of sports to use to make relationships which will give an opportunity to share about Him to an audience that will not turn us off before we begin. If you wait until 2008 to expect great things to happen in China, you will miss a blessing waiting for you now. Come to China now! Come as a learner, come as a friend and come as a servant. China is a field ready for the harvest. Make yourself available now to come and labor.

John Christopher has worked in China for more than 10 years. 译

"POUCH" Churches

One model of churches that are healthy and reproducing rapidly is the "POUCH" model.

Participation.
Teach the Bible through discussions rather than preaching.

Obedience.
The goal of teaching is obedience, not knowledge. The word, not any person, is our authority.

Unpaid leadership.
Ordinary, obedient believers can start and lead churches that reproduce.

Cells.
Organize in small groups.

Homes.
No need for a special building.

English and the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

Jerry Liebersbach

The modern Olympic Games have never been awarded to a host country whose citizens did not have English as a common language. The promise to be the host city presented enormous language challenges to Beijing. Many of Beijing's 13 million people will be working with the athletes and spectators. Nearly every walk of life will need bilingual English skills by 2008. Police, hotel and restaurant workers, medical personnel, gas station attendants, airport baggage handlers, bus conductors and anyone who meets the public will be trained in some level of English. English speaking passengers become instant teachers for taxi drivers who play language cassettes as they zip through Beijing's horrendous traffic: "Would you like air conditioner? Go to airport? Are you American?"

Little did I know, as I walked through my life, how my training and experiences would be major qualifiers for my teaching English to people of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the XXIX Olympiad Games (BOCOG) who are working on the world's biggest and best ever international sports event. These talented, skilled, handpicked leaders believe the 2008 Games are the booster rocket necessary for both the nation of China and her individual citizens to go over the top toward the goal of a "new and improved" China. An important ingredient in the fuel for that rocket is good English language skills.

In December 2001, with the establishment of BOCOG, Beijing was launched into seven years of hyperspeed develop-

ment for the "Best Olympics Ever." Before they could begin the process of leading Beijing to English competency, the BOCOG staff needed to improve their own business English language skills.

China is moving at exponential speed into consumerism and materialism, and the Olympics are playing a large role in the speed of that move in Beijing. Fast rising middle income families are driving



Julie Laidlaw

the urban economies upward while at the same time driving solid traditional family values out of the culture.

English is a language tool for helping people work on family values, ethics, morality, greed and corruption and time management—balancing work with strong core values in personal goal setting. While I was away from my wife on business, I realized that many of the BOCOG students travel internationally and experience the same loneliness and similar cultural issues when they are away.

Most people have heard variations on

the saying, "First you develop a twenty year relationship in China, then you can start to talk about doing business." Here we were developing strong relationships by the end of the first month of English classes. Perhaps that is the result of my personal decision to teach business English to adults based on real adult issues they feel and face every day. Or, perhaps it is the result of two cultures coming together to meet a common goal. Whatever the reason, English is definitely allowing relationships to be established.

Culturally, Chinese students are not accustomed to self-disclosing their feelings, doubts and shortcomings. As these topics are shared together in a nonthreatening way in an English class, it is interesting to watch the students begin to understand how to set higher personal values than they had ever before dared to consider.

Many of my students lived through the Cultural Revolution. Their experiences give them a unique filter for directing their own lives. Using the medium of the English language for discussion, we explore what motivates people to become charity donors and how volunteerism and foundations effect social change. One of my students told me that after 2008, she and her husband would like to move to the country to be teachers in a poor area.

We are witnessing the inner growth of new leaders. These leaders are personally changing inside as they change their society from the inside. After studying, traveling and working in other countries their minds are open.

Learning English is not only a benefit to the people of the great country of China for 2008, but it will help them with their country's economy and world relationships far beyond the great Olympic games.

Jerry Liebersbach has been an English teacher with the Beijing Organizing Committee since its inception in 2002 and works with Beijing companies through the advanced English school of Jingmei University and Training Center in Beijing. 译

Peoples of China

Chinese Athletes

Kay Danielson

In January 2004, the government of China announced that it would be sending a total of 350 athletes to the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens and, that to date, 178 athletes had already qualified for the national team. With China on deck to host the Summer Olympics in 2008, sports, and the athletes who participate in them, are taking an increasingly visible role in Chinese society. Chinese people, like those of most societies, love sports. The sports pages of magazines and newspapers are filled with stories of the ups and downs of the local teams, the national teams, and even the latest scores of English Premier Football and the NBA. They have their sports heroes, from gymnast Li Ming, diver Fu Mingxia and basketball star Yao Ming to Michael Jordon and David Beckham. A *China Daily* article of July 2002 claimed that there were 13,000 registered professional athletes in China. From that pool, roughly 1300 are chosen to represent China on her various national teams.

I recently spoke with a young woman who once played professional football and served on the national team. I asked her about the life of a professional athlete in China. Ms. Li (not her real name) was assigned by her leader to play football for the factory. After that, she was recruited to play on professional squads in two different provinces and, from there, she went on to play for the national team. "It was not my choice," she told me. "My factory boss told me that I had to play football." She told me that this was a common route into professional sports ten years ago.

Another route into professional sports is the state-sponsored sports schools. Scouts from the sports ministry or various athletic associations travel the coun-

try visiting schools, looking for future talent. When someone with potential is spotted, they are channeled into the national sports schools. This always means leaving their families and going to live at the schools which are usually located in distant towns and cities. If the school is close enough, they can go home on the



The life of the professional athlete is extremely difficult. The training is hard and we must commit our lives to the sport.

weekend. If not, then they only go home for the holidays.

In recent years, as a result of the economic reforms, some of the athletic associations and professional teams have begun to recruit from the college and university systems.

Ms. Li highlighted two main factors that motivate young athletes. One is the desire to change their life situation. Many, especially those from poor families or impoverished regions, hope that a pro-

fessional sports career will bring them financial prosperity. It is possible to get rich in the Chinese professional sports world, according to Ms. Li, but only for the men. Between their regular salaries, product endorsements and sponsorships, professional footballers, in particular, do well. Another motivating factor for athletes is the chance to play on the national team and bring honor to the nation. As is the case with any country, athletes long to represent their nation at the Olympics and other international tournaments.

When asked about the life of a professional athlete in China, Ms. Li used two Chinese terms: *jianku*, meaning arduous; and *yapo*, meaning oppressive. "The life of the professional athlete is extremely difficult. The training is hard, and we must

commit our lives to the sport. We have no free time, and we rarely see our families. The team becomes our family." The pressure to succeed is relentless, and the training is often excessive, even to the point of being cruel.

The difficulties persist once the athlete's career is over as well. Because athletes grow up within the system of sports schools, they do not receive a good education, thus making it difficult to find work. The stars can get rich from endorse-

ments and establishing their own companies, but the vast majority of "retired" athletes have a hard time adjusting to life out in society. They have spent their lives in a rigid, structured environment with little or no freedom or training in decision-making.

Ms. Li is a Christian, and I asked her about Christians within the professional sports world in China. She told me that although there are not many, the number of Christian athletes has been growing in recent years. Where, or how, does a professional athlete have the opportunity to hear the gospel, I wondered. She told me that, like other young Christians in China, many learn about the gospel from Christian parents or grandparents. She also told me of a situation in which a foreigner was brought in to coach a team, and that foreigner was a Christian who was active in teaching his players about Christianity. She told me that while being a Christian professional athlete was difficult ten years ago, today things are much more relaxed, and athletes can be open about their faith.

According to Ms. Li., reaching professional athletes with the gospel is not easy. A major factor is the transitory nature of their lifestyle. Athletes are constantly on the move and have little time or opportunity to build lasting and stable relationships or connect with local fellowships. She also believes that the gospel is best preached from within, by Christian athletes living out their faith, being good examples and telling their fellow athletes about Christ. "It's very difficult for those from the outside to be involved in evangelism with professional athletes."

Finally, I asked Ms. Li how best to pray for Chinese professional athletes. She again reminded me of how difficult life is for an athlete and that many are depressed and unhappy. (She used the Chinese word, *kumen*, meaning "depressed, dejected.") She also suggested that it would be good to pray for the coaches and for government leaders, that they will pay closer attention to the life of the athletes and do a better job of preparing them for life outside the state-sponsored sports system.

Kay Danielson has lived and worked in China for 15 years and currently works in the field of cross-cultural training. 译

Olympics on the Web

The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) was established on December 13th, 2001, five months after Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Games.

Currently, the Committee consists of 18 departments looking after everything from venue planning to environmental management. BOCOG will gradually expand its departments and staff in line with the demands of the Olympic preparations. By the year 2008, there will be more than 30 departments and 4,000 staff under the BOCOG umbrella. To learn more about the BOCOG, go to their official web site at: <http://en.beijing-2008.org/>

Other web sites providing news and updates on the 2008 Olympics are:

www.china.org.cn/e-shenao/

Introduction to the city of Beijing as it prepares to welcome visitors.

www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/focus/newolympics_page.html

Event updates on *China Daily* regarding the Beijing Olympics.

www.olympicwatch.org/

Olympic Watch monitors the human rights situation in the People's Republic of China in the run-up to the 2008 Olympic Games.

www.time.com/time/asia/features/olympics2008/

A *Time* magazine online special edition that covers the events surrounding Beijing winning the 2008 Olympics bid.

www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/olympicbid/

A CNN online special edition on Beijing winning the 2008 Olympics includes essays and analysis on expected impact.

<http://news.google.com/news>

Type in "2008 Beijing Olympics" to get the latest news from around the world about the Beijing Olympics.

Book Review

Practical Advice for Chinese Relationships

A review by Sarah Doyle and Wright Doyle

Encountering the Chinese: A Guide for Americans by Hu Wenzhong and Cornelius L. Grove. Second Edition. Intercultural Press, Inc., Yarmouth, ME, 1999, 208 pp. ISBN 1877864587, paperback. Cost: \$21.95 at <www.barnesandnoble.com>.

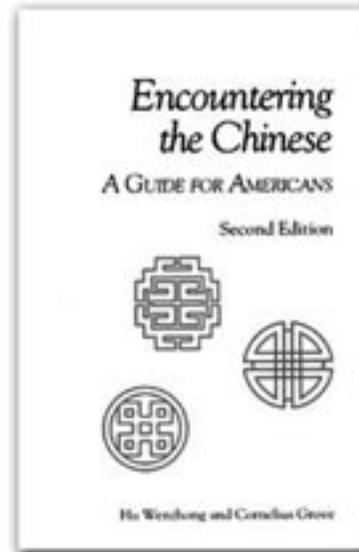
Encountering the Chinese is, as the subtitle suggests, a guide designed specifically for Americans who plan to have prolonged interaction with people from the People's Republic of China. The book is broken down into two main sections, one entitled "Advice for Americans Interacting with the Chinese," and the other "Advice for Americans Living and Working in the PRC." Many topics are covered under these two headings.

The opening chapter, "A Brief Background to the Chinese Way of Life," explains the group cohesiveness that exists in contemporary China and its implications. It also mentions three fundamental values of the Chinese: collectivism, large power distance and "intragroup harmony and avoidance of conflict in interpersonal relations." These values continue to be expanded upon throughout the book. The authors contrast Chinese values and practices with those of most Americans who esteem individualism, closer relations between people at different levels of authority and forthright speech.

The first section addresses nine major topics: Chinese titles and forms of address; greetings, conversations and farewells; Chinese-style dining; appointments, visiting and time use; Chinese modesty and humility; making friends

with the Chinese; teaching and learning among the Chinese; negotiating and institutional decision making; and the concept of "face" in Chinese-American interaction. Under these topics, various ideas are stressed, most eventually relating back to the information contained in the first chapter.

We learn, for example, that closeness and formality can go together. A student who regards a teacher with great affection may continue to address him as "Teacher" despite frequent requests to use his



and Americans have very divergent views of the negotiation process. The same goes for the role of contracts, which Chinese tend to see as one stage in a relationship building process, not a final and binding legal document. The book gives ways to navigate these potential minefields.

The educational systems differ so radically that American teachers can be both exasperated and exasperating! Following a few simple guidelines, such as respecting the ways in which Chinese teach and learn, can defuse the tension.

No treatment of Chinese culture can ignore the huge role of "face" in interpersonal relationships. Americans can save themselves much trouble if they subordinate their cultural expectations and exercise self-control,

tact and courtesy.

The second part of the book gives a great deal of practical advice for Americans living and working in China. It covers topics such as obtaining personal as-

No treatment of Chinese culture can ignore the huge role of "face" in interpersonal relationships. Americans can save themselves much trouble if they subordinate their cultural expectations and exercise self-control, tact and courtesy.

first name. Different types of greetings, appropriate to time of day, status and relationship are explained. A careful explanation of the crucial concept of *guanxi* (relationship) helps us understand why Chinese expect far more of friends than do their American counterparts, why classmates may help each other in ways that seem like cheating and why negotiations take much more time in China.

Partly because power is employed so differently in the two cultures, Chinese

sistance, the etiquette involved in hosting or being invited to a banquet and problems foreign teachers tend to face at Chinese universities, among many others. Whom should you invite to a meal? (People of status similar to yours.) When should the host offer a welcoming toast? (At the beginning of the meal.) The guest? (Towards the end.) What gifts might be given, and what should *not* be offered? (Hint: Nothing personal!) How does one deal with last-minute invita-

tions, changes of schedule and shifts in teaching assignments. It's all here. In general, the rule is to adapt, adjust, smile and never—*never*—express anger.

The authors make few, if any, value judgments of either culture. They simply note, and usually analyze, the most important differences and offer very wise advice. Seldom have we seen such sensitive matters discussed with such exquisite finesse, delicacy and good sense.

The end of the book also includes a glossary of Chinese terms, a list of Chinese titles and forms of address, and recommended readings.

The practical advice contained in this book will be very useful for Americans planning to have any sort of extended contact with the Chinese. The psychological aspects that are touched upon are better explained in other books, such as Michael Bond's *Beyond the Chinese Face*, but, for an easy-to-read guide to everyday behavior and reasonable expectations, this book is excellent.

The original 1991 edition has been updated to reflect changes in the PRC such as the increasing role of private enterprise and, thus, the decreasing dominance of the work unit (*danwei*) in the personal lives of most Chinese. The essential principles come from China's fundamental cultural heritage, however, and remain valid. Future revisions will, no doubt, take into account the urbanization, industrialization and Westernization of the educated elite with whom potential readers will come into contact.

The comments on the back cover from authorities are well deserved: "An extremely useful book," (Jan Berris, Vice President, National Committee on US-China Relations); "Unusually valuable reading for anyone planning to visit or live in China," (Douglas Murray, former President, China Institute of America). This volume ought to be required reading for all who go to China for any length of time, as well as for any who relate to Chinese in other countries.

Sarah Doyle was born in Taiwan and is a graduate of James Madison University with a B.A. in history. **Wright Doyle, Ph.D.**, served with OMF International in Taiwan for several years before returning to the U.S. where he conducts research, writing and ministry to Chinese in Charlottesville, Virginia. ☞

Clash of Culture and Class

Continued from page 3

not believe that goodness, kindness and truth can coexist in a modern environment of greed, corruption and power. It has not taken long for even the wealthy and privileged to realize that money and fortune do not satisfy the soul.

To lighten the national mood and help citizens feel "good" about China, the government continues to focus on nationalistic and patriotic activities to divert attention from the seriousness of China's socio-economic challenges. Diversions like China's space program, the Beijing Olympics and a growing role in international relations help gloss over mundane hardships in life—even if only for a short time. While the Great Wall historically kept people and influences out of an insular Chinese society for much of the past five millennia, government officials have begun to use the new phrase, "big power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics." China's foreign relations have improved with the United States since the Hainan Island spy plane incident. China has signaled a readiness to become a global player on the world stage as seen in the recent visit by Premier Wen Jia Bao to the United States. China has also taken an important role in backchannel activities during the recent rounds of North Korean six party talks hosted in Beijing. China recently signed a vow of peaceful dialogue on the controversial China Sea (Spratly) Islands.

The Beijing 2008 Summer Olympic Games provide a prominent diversion and patriotic esteem for Chinese society. This "coming out party" for China—a defining moment in China's history—will showcase China's place in the world and also bring millions from abroad to celebrate the New China economic miracle.

At the same time, God has been bringing together a wide confluence of Chinese and international Christians who believe the Beijing Games will be used as a catalyst to accelerate the fulfillment of God's purposes for China. International sports ministries have been active since the early 1950s. Basketball and "ping-pong diplomacy" were used by Christian organizations to establish relationships in countries behind the iron/bamboo curtains.

Currently, the global fellowship of sports ministries represents almost 200 countries and several hundred ministries and organizations. Olympic Games have been a key component/strategy of Christian sports ministry since the 1980s.

However, indigenous China sports ministries are typically young or nonexist-



tent. Currently, the Chinese and international body of Christ is prayerfully seeking new and creative ways to have a relevant Christian witness through sports in the lead up to, during, and after the 2008 summer games. With the general movement towards a more open society in China, there is an unprecedented opportunity for international Christians to support the Chinese church.

Nothing is certain, and other key questions remain for China in the next few years. Only the Lord knows—let us continue to pray for the Lord's Spirit and blessing to be released in China in a mighty way.

Note: Statistics for this article were taken from the *Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)*, January-February 2004, and *National Geographic*, "China's Growing Pain," March 2004.

James H. Law is a Chinese-American lawyer who has lived in China for several years and continues to work in support of Christian and secular non-profit organizations.

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Graham Cousens



Preparing for China: Worth the Wait?

In northeast China, an American studying the Chinese language returns to his dorm room. He has only been living in China a few days, but, like a freshly poured can of *jianlibao*,⁺ he is bubbly with the excitement of his new life!

A little surprise is waiting for him as he enters the door of his room: broken glass litters the floor. Standing on the debris, somber Chinese police are covering the room, as thick as Sichuan farmers on a “Help Wanted” poster. His window had been broken by an unknown intruder, and his brand new laptop—a farewell present

from his uncle in Topeka just three weeks before—is gone. *Zai jian* (goodbye)! The honeymoon is over. Suddenly, the thought of practicing strokes and the wonder of writing his very first Chinese character seem markedly less exotic.

The same month, still in China but 2500 miles west, a young Australian cou-

Graham Cousens



ple descends the steps of an airplane. Their new home in Xinjiang province immediately welcomes them and their baby (born just four months before in Brisbane) with a cheery blast of minus twenty degrees air. *Ni hao* (hello)!

These are recent, true* stories of Christian workers in China. So, how did they respond to their reality checks? The young man, whose new computer was stolen, watched calmly as other non-Christian foreigners in his dorm screamed profanities at school officials. When they finished, he politely accepted the apologies of the officials, helped them save face by recounting tales of thievery back in the United States and thanked the police for all their pretentious efforts to find evidence. The Chinese were deeply impressed and later repeatedly noted the difference in responses from various kinds of foreigners. The young Christian victim went to share with the rest of his team where they all prayed for his loss to be restored a hundred-fold—in Chinese coming to know Christ!

Morrison Center
equips, trains and teaches
prospective Christian
workers for China service.

The couple from Brisbane was not daunted by the cold, nor by the tense, multicultural environment. They threw themselves into their jobs as English teachers, loving their students and their town. Strangely enough, after only one week, and never having mentioned Jesus, the entire Chinese faculty asked them, “Would you please tell us stories from the Bible? We’ve heard it has wonderful stories, but we’ve never heard any of them.” They heard them that day—and since then!

Perhaps these Christian foreigners would have begun with the same success in China even if they had not first graduated from the Morrison Center (MC). Perhaps. But it is interesting that they *did* graduate from that China-specific training first.

It is interesting that they have *all* (including the young man’s entire team) specifically testified to how frequently

that preparation has been put to good use on the field.

Of course, there are others. For example, there was the one who recognized during the MC semester that he was not ready for China yet. He postponed going and is being mentored further in the United States. Then, there is the girl who came to the MC with a call to China but without contacts or a sending agency. She received lots of both in the course of her MC training and, after graduation, signed up with an experienced sending agency. That agency is now grooming her for long-term living in China adding their own distinctives.

This kind of fruit comes not only from classroom study with a dozen visiting China Christian veterans or from reading twenty books. Just as importantly, it comes from exercises that require the participants to become team players, handle conflicts, assess their own weaknesses, compose a specific ministry plan, start learning Mandarin, write their first support letter and interact with actual Chinese. Then there is the squatty-potty!

The MC experience lasts sixteen weeks. Plans are under way to take some of the China-specific modules and attach them to existing generic, cross-cultural training programs of agencies and churches—perhaps yours?

One noteworthy obstacle has arisen: there seem to be quite a few Western Christians who cannot imagine China adding another four months to its 5000 year history while they invest in preparing themselves. Perhaps that mindset itself invites a prescription for further development. However, for those zealously seeking more of an “express bus” route to China, just this year we discovered a viable alternative. It is in Brazil. A major training effort there can place you in China—or elsewhere in the “10-40 window”—after only five intensive years. There is a catch though: beginning next January, for those going to China that training will include sixteen weeks at the Morrison Center!

*a refreshing nutritional drink

For further information contact the MorrisonDirector@aol.com.

*Minor details have been altered for security. 隱

The Morrison Center China Specific Cross-Cultural Training



Jointly founded and led by a cross-section of ministry agencies and organizations, the Morrison Center exists to equip, train and teach prospective Christian workers for China service. More than a school, this learning center can help equip you to do the following:

- Ascertain your unique gift and calling in China ministry
- Adapt to Chinese culture, lifestyles and cross-cultural dynamics
- Avoid cultural, personal, security and ministry pitfalls
- Develop and implement a cross-cultural ministry and language acquisition strategy
- Network with leading ministries active and effective in China today

**For more information contact
Morrison Center:
MorrisonDirector@aol.com**

The Olympic Challenge

Once the final medal has been awarded and the final anthem played in Athens, the eyes of the world will shift eastward to Beijing, host city for the 2008 Olympic Games.

In preparation for its moment of glory in the international spotlight, Beijing is fast becoming a very different city. The majestic sloping rooftops of the Forbidden City, once an easily recognizable landmark for miles around, are now dwarfed by towering office complexes and new hotels. Block after block of traditional walled compounds that housed generations of Beijing families are being razed to make room for high rise apartments and condominiums. The few narrow *hutong* that remain have been refurbished as tourist sites.

Whereas languid store clerks in the 1990s would answer almost any inquiry with a tired *meiyou* (meaning—“We don't have it.”), today—“Welcome!” and “Can I help you?” are becoming more common phrases as Beijing moves toward a service-oriented culture.

Newly built parks add color to what

was once a very gray landscape, while overhead gigantic billboards proclaim China's dream of hosting “the best Olympics ever.”

Into this transformed city will flood millions of visitors in the years leading up to the 2008 Games, among them many Christians from abroad.



Brent Fulton

The experience of previous host cities has shown that the church can make a significant contribution to the success of the Games, providing needed services during the event, assisting with logistics, offering sports clinics for local aspiring athletes, even finding accommodations for families of Olympians who might otherwise have not been able to attend. Such activities don't just happen spontaneously. They are the fruit of months, even years, of careful planning and coordination involving Christians from around the world.

The 2008 Games provides an unprecedented opportunity for the Body of Christ to come together in support of China's Olympic dream. Doing so can show a regime that is, at best, skeptical toward Christianity, that followers of Christ do desire to be a blessing to China. Carefully planned and executed activities in the years leading up to the Games will leave

behind a legacy that speaks well of the role of the church in Chinese society. As believers from outside assume a posture of servanthood, those inside China will increasingly find new ways to witness for Christ amidst the sports fervor that is already sweeping China.

The challenge for the church outside China will be to put aside organizational agendas and a tendency toward individual self-promotion, and to consider how best to support the long-term interests of the church in China given the variety of opportunities the Games presents. Will the watching world in 2008 see a visible witness of the unity of the Body of Christ, or will they see a series of disjointed one-off activities undertaken with little thought given to long-term impact? The choices made during the next four years will provide the answer to this question.

Let the partnership begin!

Brent Fulton, Ph.D., is the president of ChinaSource and the editor of the ChinaSource journal. 卍

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