



Charles Lyons, Pastor
Armitage Baptist Church
Chicago, Illinois

All eyes on Beijing

The world is watching Beijing. China is the land of communism, burgeoning Christianity, expanding economy, throw in an earthquake, and now the 2008 Olympic Games. Beijing is China, just as Washington D.C. is USA, London is England, and Moscow is Russia. But

Beijing has been around for awhile.

The population of Beijing Municipality was 17.4 million in 2007. In addition, there are a large unknown number of migrant workers who are unregistered and live illegally in Beijing. The population of Beijing's urban core is around 7.5 million.

In recent years, expansion has brought to the forefront some problems of urbanization, such as heavy traffic, poor air quality, loss of historic neighborhoods, and significant influx of migrants from poorer regions.

Recent discoveries seem to put the first diffusion of Christianity in China during the 1st century A.D. Christianity took root significantly during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). The Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) was influenced to some degree by Christian teachings, and the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) was in part a reaction

against Christianity in China. Christians in China established the first clinics and hospitals, provided the first training for nurses, opened the first modern schools, worked to abolish practices such as foot binding and the unjust treatment of maid-servants, and launched charitable works distributing food to the poor. They also opposed the opium trade and brought treatment to many who were addicted. Some of the early leaders of the Chinese Republic, such as Sun Yat-sen, were converts to Christianity and were influenced by its teachings.

Robert Morrison, regarded as being the first Christian missionary to China, arrived in Macao in September 1807. Morrison produced a Chinese translation of the Bible. He also compiled a Chinese dictionary for the use of Westerners. The Bible translation took 12 years and the dictionary 16 years.

In 1854, Hudson Taylor arrived in China. Taylor has been called a significant figure in Chinese history. In the 1800s, the China Inland Mission was the largest mission agency in China and it is estimated that Taylor was responsible for more people being converted to Christianity than at any other time since the Apostle Paul took Christian teaching to Europe. It was Dixon Edward Hoste, the successor to Hudson Taylor, who originally expressed the self-governing principles of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement; at the time he was articulating the goal of the China Inland Mission to establish an indigenous Chinese church free from foreign control.

The number of Protestant missionaries surpassed 8,000 by 1925. Estimates for the Chinese Protestant community ranged around 500,000.

Between 1949 and 1952, all foreign missionaries left the country in what Phyllis Thompson of the China Inland Mission called a "reluctant exodus", leaving indigenous churches to their own administration, support, and propagation of the faith.

Nicholas D. Kristof, a columnist of the *New York Times* wrote on June 25, 2006, "Although China bans foreign missionaries and sometimes harasses and imprisons Christians, especially in rural areas, Christianity is booming in China." Estimates range from 40 million to 130 million for the number of China's believers.

In large international cities such as Beijing, foreign visitors have established Christian church communities which meet in public establishments like hotels. These churches and fellowships, however, are typically restricted only to holders of non-Chinese passports.

American officials visiting China have on multiple occasions visited Chinese churches, including President George W. Bush, who attended one of Beijing's five officially-recognized Protestant churches during a November 2005 Asia tour. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice attended Palm Sunday services in Beijing in 2005.

Christianity Today said demographers estimate an average of 200,000 Chinese people convert to Christianity every year. This means it is the fastest growing religion in the nation and has outpaced the communist party's population of 70 million people.

Today, all eyes are on Beijing.

People from approximately 200 nations and territories will gather for the Olympic games.

Pray for: **Chinese believers** as they mobilize to evangelize

Beijing believers as they host co-laborers from China and the world

Beijing churches for supernatural power and energy to maximize the opportunity

1st Millennium B.C.
Cities in the vicinity of Beijing

473-221 B.C.
Ji was established in area of present-day Beijing

938
Liao Dynasty set up secondary capital in what is now Beijing, calling it Nanjing

1403
Third Ming emperor Yongle moved Ming capital from Nanjing to the renamed Beijing

1425-1650
Beijing was the largest city in the world

1928
Beijing renamed Beijing

July 29, 1937
Beiping falls to Japan and reverts to its former name Beijing

January 31, 1949
During the Chinese civil war, communist forces enter Beijing without a fight.

October 1, 1949
The communist party of China creates the People's Republic of China in Beijing, making it the capital of the new government.