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China Ministry Leader Helps Dispel Misconceptions about Christianity in China

The world's eyes will be focused on China as never before during next month's Beijing Olympics. Its staggering economic growth and increasing importance as a player on the world scene are already well known. But few understand the important role Christianity stands to play in this new China, or how the country's rapid changes are affecting its indigenous church.

Mike Falkenstine, founder of the Colorado-based China Resource Center, hopes to shed light on the true state of Christianity in China with his new book *The Chinese Puzzle*. "Most people, if they are aware of Christianity in China at all, see the church there as a tiny, marginalized, and highly persecuted population," Falkenstine says. "This is a gross misconception. Christianity is growing faster in China than at any point in the country's history, the church is being allowed to operate in surprising freedom, and persecution is increasingly rare."

These are just a few of the topics Falkenstine, who has been involved in ministry to China for 18 years, seeks to dispel in his book. After providing a brief but comprehensive overview of Christianity's history in China beginning with the legendary travels of the Apostle Thomas, he provides an incisive analysis of the complex state of Christianity in the country today. Drawing on what he has learned through living in China, his numerous visits and extensive travel in the country, and countless hours of study and talking with Chinese nationals, Falkenstine offers some surprising insights.

- ▶ Fueled by the country's search for moral underpinnings to replace the void created in part by the Cultural Revolution, several major Chinese universities are adding Christian studies as an important component of their curriculum.
- ▶ Millions of Bibles are printed in China and freely distributed throughout the country each year with government approval.
- ▶ Many Western missionaries are conducting covert activities in China that they are unaware can now be conducted freely with no government interference.
- ▶ In 2007, less than 1% of all Christian activity in China suffered some type of persecution or harassment.
- ▶ There are new guidelines for Western involvement in China called the Ethical Foundations for China Service. These Foundations, which sprung up through the Western ministry community are designed to help Westerners constructively engage in China. There are at least 30 Western ministries who have now signed onto the Foundations.

Falkenstine, when asked why he wrote the book states, "My hope is to help people in the West understand China and know how to most effectively engage with what God is doing there." He continues, "Many missions experts are calling the growth of the Chinese church possibly the greatest Christian movement in history. I love being a part of what God is already doing."

The book, published by Xulon Press, is available on Amazon.com, bn.com and Christianbook.com. The retail price is \$13.99. More information about the China Resource Center, including their projects in China, is available at www.ChinaResourceCenter.org.

Mike Falkenstine is also available to speak about China. For scheduling information, please contact Mike at 303-332-8884.

Serving the growth and development of the Church in China and Clarifying Western Perceptions of Christianity in China

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