

Radical Hospitality

An unprecedented opportunity to impact Vancouver and beyond with the power of God's love



When the world comes to your door, you cannot ignore it.

So, with the Vancouver 2010 Olympics scheduled for February 12-28, Christians across the province recognized that a spiritual opportunity existed to impact not only Olympic Games attendees, but the nations as well.

The Canadian Pacific District of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada has joined together with *More Than Gold*, a local relational network of 14 other major denominations and 29 Christian agencies to provide witness, service and unity in and through the Body of Christ to the city and those attending the Games as guests, athletes, officials, media and spectators.

History shows that the Christian community has been involved with the Olympics stretching as far back as the early 1970s, particularly the 'Aide Olympique' movement at the 1976 Montreal Summer Olympics. Considering that the Christian community often represented the largest single religious constituency in many previous host cities, it is not surprising to find that the Church has been involved in an array of officially sanctioned programs ranging from the provision of water, homes to host athletes' families and facilities, to chaplains, creative arts performers, translators and literature resources.

Despite the fact that the International Olympic Committee charter only recognizes that the Christian church be involved with the official chaplaincy program within the Olympic Village, local host organizing committees have

utilized the resources of the local church in a number of different ways. Over the past 17 years, the Christian community has played an even more significant role in assisting official organizing committees implement various programs associated with the Games.

Working on models from previous cities, Christians have played and will continue to play a key role with the Official Organizing Committee (VANOC) through *More Than Gold*.

Alliance churches throughout the district will be involved in many different programs, from KidsGames to festivals, and mission teams to hospitality. We have the opportunity to live out our faith, to show the face of Christ to the world and to the local communities in which we live.

When the world looks to Vancouver, what will they see?

Will they see the majestic Rocky Mountains, Gastown, Stanley Park, beautiful ocean views or the Vancouver Canucks? Will they focus on crime, sex for sale, the downtown eastside and political differences? Or will they see followers of Christ working together to strengthen our community and to show compassion and love to a needy generation.

In 2010, more than 300,000 visitors will come to Vancouver and Whistler. Reports indicate that up to 80 countries will be represented at the Olympic Games and 40 countries at the Paralympic Games scheduled for March 12-21. The nations will be here, and what better way to share the Word than to meet them in this place?

At the local level, we can meet the community through hospitality

and the public screening of major events like the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the Gold Medal Hockey Game. Many locals may be unable to afford tickets to the events but will still want to be part of everything that is happening.

Plans are in place to invite people to come and enjoy the excitement of the games, in some cases screening the events in church sanctuaries or gymnasiums. Add in creative arts and worship plus hosting guest speakers from the secular world who are relevant to issues today, and you have programmes designed to impact the local community as well as the Olympic community.

Alliance churches throughout the district will be involved in many different programs



Across Canada, we can also participate, even if we are not attending the Games themselves. The Olympic Torch relay will touch many communities. There are ample opportunities for direct participation—running in the relay—to creatively using the relay's presence in town to establish a loving atmosphere in your local community.

It has been said that no church can grow when it stays inside. How can we impact the world if we don't know the world or we are not in the world?

Go, be my light to the entire world. ✠

Updated information about church activities can be obtained from the Canadian Pacific District website, www.cmacpd.bc.ca