

China Pastor Sees Fruit From Hotel Outreaches

Ministry reports out of China are mixed. Some report ministry is more open in China than it's ever been before. Others say Christians are more oppressed. Eric Burklin, president of China Partners, just returned to China with an eye-witness report that offers another perspective.

Indeed, Burklin says pastors are using avenues outside the **local church** to introduce people to Christ. For example, Burklin says one registered church pastor is seeing many turn to Christ through hotel outreach.

Here's how it works: Organizers rent a ballroom at a local hotel. Each church member brings a non-Christian friend or family member to the special event.

"They have dancing, plays and music," Burklin says. "At the end, he preached an **evangelistic message**, and 60 accepted Christ." That pastor also says he's baptized more than 200 new believers.

Many people wonder if the hotel outreach is illegal. Burklin did, too.

"I asked this pastor very specifically, 'Isn't this illegal?' He said, 'Well, we didn't ask authorities ahead of time. We just did it. We figured that if they weren't going to say anything, we were just going to do it.'"

China Partner provides training to **church leaders** in the country. Burklin says the leaders are asking for something controversial: youth training. It's illegal to evangelize children under 18.

"They would have to figure out how they could legally do

that," Burklin says. "The government is very concerned about not forcing anybody under 18 to make a decision in any religious direction."

Despite that, China Partners is raising money for this new ministry push. Burklin says it's important, especially since many young people who are in their late teens and early 20s are interested in knowing about God. He says a conversation with a 22-year-old university graduate at McDonald's in China proves the point.

"This conversation at McDonald's turned into a day-long witnessing [event], because the next day we invited her to come to church where we were doing our training," Burklin says. "And she did show up."