

Olympic bracelet raised rights awareness: "Let justice and peace kiss"

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By the end of the Beijing Olympic Games, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, Germany, had sent out 237,400 black silicon Olympic bracelets to protest the human rights record of the Chinese government.

The church raised about 50,000 euros (\$74,000), donated by those who received the bracelets in Europe and as far afield as India.

Bishop Margot Kässmann of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, who launched the campaign, will hand over the contributions to the Asian Human Rights Commission, based in Hong Kong.

"I'm grateful that so many people who ordered the bracelets sent a clear signal against human rights violations in China and Tibet. I thank all those who have donated," said Kässmann on August 25. "You have contributed to let the biblical hope for justice and peace become apparent."

Church officials said that many people were thankful to be able to show their solidarity with oppressed people in Tibet and China in a simple way, without boycotting the sporting event. The campaign was to continue during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, which began in the Chinese capital on September 6.

The vicar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, Christian Bode, planned to accompany German athletes to the Paralympics because he is also the trainer for the national Paralympics table tennis team.

Acting also as pastor for the entire German team in China, Bode traveled to Beijing carrying special silicon bracelets printed with the words, "Let justice and peace kiss—Paralympics 2008." *-Ecumenical News International*