

## **John White**

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### *Christian Outreach and the 2012 Olympics in London*

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) states that “Sport unites the principles that the Olympic Movement holds dear: education, sustainability, non-discrimination, universality, humanism and solidarity. These are the principles that drive far-reaching social change.” Since this is their principled vision, then, what is the import of this ethos, more specifically, on a local level where the Olympics are hosted? Furthermore, for the purposes of this research program, what is the significance of this vision as it relates to the Christian Church? This is an important research question with numerous practical implications for Truett’s new Sports Ministry program.

To pursue this line of inquiry for this research project, Austin Tiffany will assist Dr. John White’s research by partnering with the Contextual Theology Centre (London, England) during the summer of 2012. Austin will participate with the Centre in “community organizing” in The Highway Tower Hamlets district of the city, a divided segment of white citizens and Bengali Muslims. This community has already received local jobs from the Olympics, and it is our goal to study the community impact of the Olympics and to help build bridges for dialogue between these two segments of people on issues of common concern as they relate to the Olympics (e.g., healthcare, transportation, security, etc.). This focus will entail that Austin interview and meet daily with other Christians and non-Christians about such matters of common concern. We intend to engage hundreds of local citizens in conversations and house meetings to see how churches can provide practical services to people in need and to utilize the channels of communication already established by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA). The ODA concentrates on the Olympics’ goals of equality and inclusion, health, safety and security, sustainability and legacy in the area surrounding the Olympic Village. The impact of this research will identify the social impact that the Olympics has on communities and appropriate responses from the Christian church.