

Subject: The History and Roots of the Olympic Games

HERALD MINISTRY PRAYER LETTER: 2.2004

THEME: THE OLYMPIC GAMES

19.01.2004

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

As promised I am sending you information on the **OLYMPIC GAMES AND HOW THE CHURCH** should respond towards this global event. Prayerfully read through this information and mobilize your church to pray for the precious people attending this event. It is important that we under gird the efforts of Christians in Greece by our prayers.

I received the information in this letter from Randal Weidenaar in Greece. I changed it here and there and would urge you to send it to as many people as possible. Let us trust God for a mighty outpouring of HIS Holy Spirit during this global event.

Lots of love IN HIM,

Gerda

THE HISTORY AND ROOTS OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

In **August of 2004** the Olympics will return to their ancient birth place Greece. Not many are aware of the **profound spiritual significance** of these Olympics. They are much more than just an athletic event, but rather a religious festival **dedicated to the powerful demonic spirit behind Zeus**. The world will be returning to the place where this principality **first gained** power with a festival in his honor. This act will renew **and strengthen** ancient covenants and establish new ones. This is the only religious festival that the **entire world participates in**, so its significance cannot be ignored. It is imperative that we understand that this is indeed a religious festival, and how to respond to it as Christians. The Church needs to act in an informed way, **based on facts** and the **guidance** of the Holy Spirit. In this way the Church can push back the kingdom of darkness and advance the kingdom of God.

The world, including Christians, sees the Olympics as a fun event and an opportunity for great entertainment. Most of us have positive feelings about it. We feel it is a noble endeavor and that it promotes good sportsmanship, national pride and world peace. These elements are undeniably a part of the Olympic games, but there is **much more** going on in this festival than what we see on the surface. When we look deeper into the **origins** of the games and some of the **rituals** that are done in the games, we will find a **pagan spiritual foundation**. We must take these factors into consideration in order to make an appropriate response to it. For example let us consider something we are more familiar with like yoga. Yoga may have many physical and mental benefits for those who participate, however there is also a spiritual component that comes straight from Hindu worship. A Christian should consider yoga holistically and understand that physical exercise may benefit the body but the spiritual component will affect the spiritual life, which is even more significant. Likewise the Olympic Games has a pagan spiritual legacy that is very significant and **cannot be ignored**, particularly the Olympic games of Athens 2004 that will be focused like never before on the ancient **pagan roots of the games**. So, let us first examine the spiritual background of the Olympic games and then the response of the Church to this religious festival.

A RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL

First of all, it is necessary to understand that the Olympics have always been a religious festival. The festival began in 738 B.C. in Greece, and was **dedicated to Zeus of Olympia**, hence the name Olympic games. During this era in Greece, there were several other similar athletic festivals dedicated to other gods like Apollo or Athina. **Athletic competitions** were a common form of religious festival in Greece. The Olympic games became the most significant of the games and drew athletes from all over the ancient Mediterranean world. It was in Olympia that one of the seven wonders of the ancient world was located. It was a colossal ivory and gold statue of the god Zeus. **Sacrifices** were made to this demonic power before and during the festival. There is also some evidence that even **human sacrifices** were made in antiquity for this festival. Pagan priests presided over hundreds of sacrifices to Zeus during each Olympiad. Huge financial gifts were made by cities from all over the ancient world in honor of this deity as they competed to see who could honor Zeus and gain his favor. It was a **covenant making** event that persisted for a 1,000 years, and then stopped and was dormant for 1,700 years.

In **1896** the timing was ripe for the evil one to revive this ancient covenant making festival and envelop the world with it. A Frenchman, Pierre de Coubertin was organizing a world wide athletic competition and while searching for a name he said, "The name [Olympics] imposed itself: It was not possible to find another." De Coubertin also said that the Olympics name would "impart to [the athletes] **a halo of grandeur and glory** that is the patronage of classical antiquity." At the age of 69 De Coubertin died of a heart attack and his **heart was removed from his body** and enshrined in **an obelisk** on the temple grounds of Olympia, Greece.

The modern Olympics did not just **revive athletic events**, but **revived** many pagan practices and the covenant making nature of the games. Honor was given to Zeus by priestesses and ceremonies. **An altar**, as the Olympic flame is officially called, is lit to Zeus. The flame is first lit in a pagan ceremony, presided over by priestesses, by the sun in the heavens where Zeus is said to preside. The sacred flame is then run to the city where the Olympics will be held and the **main altar** is lit to the cheers of thousands from around the world - and soon cities, just like in ancient times, began to compete to see who could honor the deity with gifts and by hosting the games.

One of the **officials** on the Greek Olympic committee said that the 2004 Greek Olympics will be characterized by this **pagan revivalism**. In the 2004 games, priestesses will preside over the entire games. The 2004 opening ceremonies will start with one of the most frightening aspects of the modern games--the **Olympic hymn**. It is a **sacred song** that **summons the powers** of hell to **inhabit** the games. It calls the nations to flock to Zeus' temple to worship him. Here is the hymn translated from the original Greek:

Ancient immortal spirit, unsullied father of that which is beautiful, great and true,
Descend, make thyself known and shine here on this earth and below .

These skies witness of Thy Glory.

Illuminate the endeavor of the noble contests in the running race, the wrestling and the throwing. Place a wreath of evergreen branch, creating the body as of iron and worthy.

Vales, mountains and oceans shine with Thee Like unto a great temple of white and porphyry to which all peoples hasten to this temple to worship Thee, Oh ancient immortal Spirit.

As a stadium of visitors from around the world **participate in this prayer**, it will **release** unspeakable spiritual authority to the powers of darkness as the world comes into agreement with his purposes. Another aspect, that is truly frightening, is that this hymn is **being taught to Greek school children** and out of the **lips of children** will come this **demonic prayer** instead of praise to God. (We live in Greece and my five year old daughter's kindergarten is learning this hymn). This is in stark contrast to **Ps. 8:3,4** where God explicitly states that He will be praised from the mouths of babes and infants! Pray that the Lord will raise up "babes and infants" to declare HIS praise and to silence the enemy and the avenger! The enemy is venturing to get this praise just as he did right in the beginning when he said in his heart that "**I will make myself like the Most High**" (**Ezekiel 14:14**).

The relay of the sacred Olympic flame for 2004 will be **unprecedented**. Over 20 million dollars have been raised for this **satanic prayer walk**. The flame will visit all five continents involving thousands of runners. It will visit all of the former Olympic host cities, as well as, other cities of global importance prior to arriving back in Athens. This will effectively **renew the covenants** that these cities of the world have made with this principality. **This sacred flame will be the most honored altar flame in history.**

Never before has the altar of a pagan deity been so honored and so welcomed by the entire globe. Even the South Pole has been dedicated to the Olympics by a Greek who recently planted an Olympic flag there and plans to plant one on the North Pole, too. The **entire planet** is being dedicated to this festival. As the people of the world cheer the lighting of the altar of Zeus, they will be cheering the same altar that once desecrated the Holy of Holies. **In 168 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanies** sacrificed swine to Zeus of Olympia and then poured the blood of the sacrifice in the Holy of Holies. The most sacred place to God, where not even consecrated priests would tread, was defiled by the god of the Olympics. The Jewish people were then tortured by Antiochus until they gave up the worship of Yahweh and bowed the knee to Zeus. Eventually the temple of God was destroyed in 70 A.D. and in its place was built a temple to Zeus. **The demonic force behind Zeus hates the one true God, Yahweh, and is active even today in defiling Christ's bride the Church.**

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FESTIVALS

Festivals are very significant in God's economy. It is on these days that His people renew covenants with Him. A festival was God's last act of creation. Man was to observe the Sabbath as holy unto God each week, effectively renewing their dedication to God every week. God has ordained days and times for His people to enter into covenant with Him, "kairos moments" where we can enter into His plans and times or miss them for another generation. Hebrews chapters three and four talk about how God established these "kairos moments" and called them "today." It associates these moments with the Sabbath rest or feasts of the Lord, as the feasts are called Sabbaths. The feasts **prophetically declare that the purposes of God** are already accomplished in the heavenlies. The Sabbath rest is a celebration that "it is finished" in the heavenlies. The feasts of the Lord are prophetic acts that release the Word of God as the sharp double-edged sword that establishes the will of God in the heavens and on earth (Heb. 4:12). Hebrews chapter three admonishes us not to miss the call of God like the Israelites did when God called them to go up and take the land. So we see these prophetic streams flowing from feasts to "kairos moments" to God's kingdom on earth. Is it any coincidence that Jesus died on the Passover, the festival that pointed to the redemption of man by the death of the Lamb? Is it any coincidence the Holy Spirit came during the feast of Weeks or Pentecost? It is very likely that Christ was born during the feast of Tabernacles, God tabernacleing with men. Is it any coincidence that the 7th trumpet of Revelation will call all history to an end and that the feast of Trumpets is the 7th trumpet of the monthly trumpets? It celebrates the last and final trumpet of the Lord. Is it any coincidence that the Sabbath echoes the fulfillment of God's timing for us, just as Hebrews chapter four reminds us?

Is it any coincidence that Hanukkah celebrates the cleansing of the Temple of Yahweh from the defilement of Zeus? Back in 168 B.C. when the temple was defiled and God's people persecuted, Yahweh delivered His people against impossible odds. A band of farmers defeated the most powerful army in the region. The people of God cleansed the temple from the defilement of Zeus and established the festival of Hanukkah in remembrance of God's deliverance. God also provided miraculously that a one day supply of consecrated lamp oil would last for eight days until more could be consecrated. Hanukkah is a festival of the miraculous light of God delivering His people from the defilement of Zeus.

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

Daniel 11:31-32

Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation [the altar to Zeus]. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

In the light of these realities, how should the Church respond to the Olympic games? I believe we **need to prayerfully** and **thoughtfully** respond differently than how we have in the past. Let us first look at a few scriptures for guidance on how to deal with pagan religious festivals. And then prayerfully consider what our role should be in this event of global spiritual significance.

Scripture is clear about idolatry, idols and idolatrous festivals. **Idolatry is called spiritual adultery**. God sees it as sleeping with an illicit lover openly in His presence. It mocks all of His love and utterly scorns it for the love of another. Idols are to be utterly destroyed. In fact, in Deuteronomy God commands us to burn them and not even scrape the gold off of them to save money, but to utterly destroy them. The temples of the idols were to be utterly destroyed as well. The names of idols were to be forever forgotten and blotted out. **Deuteronomy 12:30-31** says this about idolatrous festivals: "**Be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.'**" A very clear injunction against getting involved in pagan ceremonies, so completely that it even suggests that even inquiring about pagan ceremonies will ensnare us spiritually. Paul speaks strongly about idolatry and several times he tells us to "flee idolatry" (**I Corinthians 10:14**). That is to move quickly in the opposite direction, away from idolatry. He says later in **I Corinthians 10:20** "...**The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than He?**" I believe Scripture is clear about what God's attitude is toward idolatry. We are to have nothing to do with it.

Therefore, I believe we need to be very careful about how we are involved in the Olympic games. We need to ask the **Holy Spirit to guide and convict** us as to our proper response in light of scripture, and the full knowledge of what the games are about. I believe any response not guided by

the Holy Spirit in this case will have a significant affect on the kingdom of God. I don't think that there is a place for neutral or passive spectators in this case. I believe that there is a real satanic agenda, to bring the people of the world knowingly or unknowingly, as the Olympic hymn states, to the temple of this demonic spirit to worship and honor him. We must conclude that a casual response is not one open to the kingdom minded Christian.

I believe that our best response to the Olympics is to go on the offensive for the kingdom of God. I believe that we can do this through **prayer and evangelism**. Both of which are ways of declaring the kingdom of God come and that the kingdom of darkness be silenced. **This is not a call to physically or politically oppose** the games but to pray and work for God's kingdom to be advanced in the light of this satanic attack. Paul reminds us that we battle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and spiritual forces of darkness. As Satan will be actively calling the world to serve and worship him, we should respond using all of the authority granted to us in Christ, to silence the enemy by declaring the purposes of God through worship, prayer and evangelism. This will bring glory to God and advance the kingdom of God.

I would encourage you to also seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this offensive as well. **The Lord will call some to come to Athens to evangelize and pray**, that may or may not be you. The Lord will also call some to pray for the Olympic games and oppose the enemy, that army should only be those whom God directs. If you feel directed to pray there are several things to pray for including the following:

Pray for unity for the Church in Greece. The Church in Greece is small but God will move mightily to defend it and even move out to destroy her ancient enemies if the Church of Greece **will stand in unity against** the forces of the Olympics. As it stands the Church of Greece is not unified and is welcoming the Olympics as a positive thing rather than an impending battle.

Pray for those involved in the Olympic outreach. There are hundreds of people, churches and organizations involved in outreaches at the Olympic games and around the nation of Greece during the games. **Pray for their safety physically and spiritually**. Pray for their strength and wisdom as we approach this massive organizational task.

Pray that God would turn this event **from the glory of Zeus to the glory of God**. In the 1972 Olympic games God did just that after the assassination of Israeli team members by Arabic terrorists. **Christian outreach teams** were asked to do a peace march through the streets of Munich. This made headlines and grabbed the attention of sports spectators and athletes and they were ready to hear the Gospel.

Pray for an opening of ears as participants from closed countries participate. Pray that they can be reached with the Gospel. Ask the Lord to open doors for the evangelists.

Repent for your country's involvement in honoring the deity of Zeus through these games. Repentance breaks the authority of the evil one and allows God to come in mercy rather than judgment.

Resist the spiritual forces with **Zech.9:12-17** and declare that the time has come for the sons of Zion to be roused against the sons of Greece. Declare verse 14-17 as a strategic prophetic word and ask the Lord to provide the "grain" to the young men and the "new wine" to the young women.

Ask the Lord to send confusion into the ranks of the enemy. Also ask the Holy Spirit to direct your prayers against this stronghold. As the Olympic torch, which is headed to light the altar flames of Zeus, is run through areas in Greece ask the Lord to give strategy to the church HOW to pray to oppose this satanic initiative spiritually.

In conclusion, I believe that the Holy Spirit will guide us all into the proper response to the Olympics. I believe that this paper will help us better understand the significance of the Olympics and the spiritual times and seasons associated with them. I don't want to encourage a spirit of legalism of "dos and don'ts," but rather proactive and informed Spirit led decisions. I believe that the 2004 Olympics are a tremendous opportunity to advance the kingdom of God and thwart the schemes of darkness.

Pray as He leads and guides you. Thank you! (Randy Weidenaar and Gerda Leithgöb)

ADVICE:

- Keep these letters in a file so that you can help others with this information and prayer guidance
- Send WORD AND STRATEGIES to herald@mweb.co.za , Randal Weidenaar rsw@enanet.gr , George Markakis markakis.g@cdrm.org