

Secure in your home - and at the Olympics

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It's official! The countdown to the summer Olympic Games in Athens has begun. The Olympic torch was lit on March 25 at an official ceremony in Greece by means of using the sun's rays. Now it will journey through 27 countries and six continents, before returning to Athens for the opening ceremony in August. While excitement will continue to build over the next four months, a long shadow is being cast over the Games. Serious questions and criticisms are being raised about security arrangements and unfinished sporting venues.



ATHENS 2004



When I first heard critical news reports on Australian television, I felt pessimistic. But, I wondered, was negative thinking helpful? Was I going along with the notion that the venues couldn't be completed in time? Or that athletes, visitors, and Greek citizens might not be safe from terrorist acts? I'm a keen supporter of the Games, so why wasn't I doing something constructive - such as praying about all this.

It makes me think of how something in my own life taught me the value of prayer for a complex project. It's set the tone for my spiritual support of the 2004 Olympic Games.

A home that supported our mission

Prayer works. It aligns thought with God's will, which is always good. A few years ago, for example, my family and I needed to relocate closer to Brisbane and the airport for my work. I travel extensively as a public speaker. We sold our home on the Redcliffe Peninsula and purchased one that was under construction in a residential development. We agreed with the buyer of our seaside home on a 30-day settlement. The construction work was proceeding, and the building company was confident that our new house would be completed on time.

Then it rained. And rained. And rained.

There were other delays and competing demands on tradespeople.

Two weeks from the settlement date - when we had to vacate our old home - the new house was nowhere near finished. I spoke to the estate agent and the site manager regularly, pleading with them to do whatever they could to speed things up. The electrical work, plumbing, kitchen cupboards, appliances, tiling, painting, floor coverings, light fixtures, and more still remained to be done.



My brother, who works in the construction industry, met me at our new house. He stood in the lounge room and surveyed the unfinished interior. With a sad look he said, "Bev, there is *no* way that this house will be ready in 14 days. You'd better make other plans. Where will you all go?"

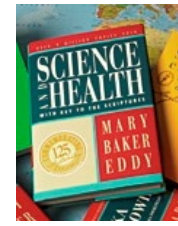
I was stunned. This house *had* to be ready for us to move in. I said, "I won't accept incompleteness. It will be ready for us. Nothing is impossible."

Taking the project to God

My brother left, and I sat in my car and prayed. My thought went something like this: God doesn't take things halfway. He takes us all the way. His plan is complete. Competing interests can't obstruct God's plan. Not even the weather can impede the work God initiated. God's law assures orderliness and harmony. This law is in force on our behalf, moment by moment. As a son or daughter of God, each person involved was functioning in accordance with His law. Consequently, I could do more than hope for a successful outcome. I could expect it with all my heart, and support it with the weight of spiritually based thinking.

I recalled words in a book I love, [*Science and Health*](#): “The devotion of thought to an honest achievement makes the achievement possible. Exceptions only confirm this rule, proving that failure is occasioned by a too feeble faith” p. 199.

The book’s author, Mary Baker Eddy, once launched a large building project. In the face of overwhelming obstacles – financial shortfalls, delays, bad weather, rebellious workers, and dire predictions about the schedule – the building was ready on time. That example encouraged me to expect our home to be finished on time.



Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures

I drove home feeling more confident, knowing that God’s hand was directing this project. Divine Love was caring for us. There was nothing to fear. Make no just-in-case-it-doesn’t-work-out plans, I thought. Trust in God. I held to the idea that nothing was too hard for God – or for us, His children. Over the next four days, my family and I prayed with conviction – and joy. We expected to actually see God’s law carried out. And we knew that this law was governing things worldwide, for everyone. In fact, the universal truth of spiritual ideas was a key point when I began thinking about Athens and the Olympics.

On the fifth day we drove by the building site. We couldn’t believe our eyes. The place was teeming with tradespeople. In the days that followed, their highly energized pace continued. The developer had stopped work on other houses and sent all his workers to finish ours. Nine days later, on settlement day, we moved in.

So here I am now, praying with real conviction and expectation that the Olympic building projects can be finished on time.

I’m also praying about security issues. Just as the construction workers, athletes, officials, and the Greek people are getting ready for this internationally unifying sporting occasion, so can spiritual thinkers around the world help ready things for the Games. Proactive prayer is the best way to help prevent wrongdoing or security failure. Praying proactively isn’t waiting for something adverse to happen and then asking for God’s help. It’s getting out of the starting blocks now.

It’s also standing strong in the certainty that God is constantly present everywhere, and that divine Love has the power to nullify evil intentions and keep everyone safe. I saw the truth of this once when I was suddenly caught in a racial riot. Before hostilities broke out, I’d been praying that divine Love would shelter me and keep me safe. Within a short while, the confrontation ended peacefully with no one harmed. From that incident I learned it’s possible to be fearless and protected regardless of circumstances.

Now, when I hear concern expressed about threats to people’s lives or the threat of sudden, unexpected danger, I don’t try to hide from the news. I pray with ideas like these:

- The unexpectedness of danger doesn’t diminish God’s ability to keep us safe. God is never caught off-guard. His protecting power is always with us. Feeling safe and secure is not about being, or not being, in a certain place. Nor is safety dependent on persons or things. God surrounds us all. He can save from harm.
- It’s possible for everyone to be fearless. The King James Bible says, “Be not afraid of sudden fear ... For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken”. Prov. 3:25,26.
- Because we are God’s children, we never have to feel helpless. No matter where people live, they can combat their fear for their lives. To acknowledge God as Life itself is a source of immediate protection.



King James Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures

Your prayer is a powerful and effective aid. It can help keep people safe... in Athens – or in any part of the world.

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