

How God Moves Through Olympics Outreach

I have been in YWAM for more than 40 years now. I have been involved with some remarkable projects, and have seen God do some amazing things in and through YWAM. The Olympic outreach in Munich in 1972 is one of those memorable events.

Munich 1972 is remembered by most people for the horrors surrounding the so-called Munich massacre of 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team. But in the midst of that tragedy, God was working. Although the world was on edge, watching the unfolding drama of the terrorist attack, God was drawing His people together as one, to bring His message of peace and reconciliation to the watching world.

I will never forget walking down the main streets of Munich, banners in hand, one of thousands proclaiming the name of Jesus to all who would listen and take notice. And there were many who listened, many who took notice. Despite the tragedy at Munich 1972, God was still glorified: indeed, perhaps because of the tragedy He received even greater glory as people looked for some comfort, some good, some source of real peace.

Munich was the first outreach that YWAM did at the Olympics. A general call was made to YWAM worldwide to come to the event. (Not so easy in those days as it is now, as there was no such thing as email or the Internet—just telephones and the Postal Service).

In those days YWAM was not that large (around 100 full-time staff), yet over 1,000 YWAM volunteers came from all over the globe to be part of this new adventure. We all slept in a castle—Schloss Hurlach—that, miraculously, YWAM had been able to purchase, and which is still a thriving YWAM training

center. We ate together, ministered together, prayed and worshipped together, and saw God do great things during those two weeks—together.

Out of that unity and closeness, God did something more than just touch thousands with His Good News. Such was the inspiration, such the Spirit-filled experience, that many of those YWAM volunteers who participated returned home to start something new. Others in a sense never went back home, but lost their heart to another country.

Among the nations that can definitely count Munich 1972 as the starting point for their YWAM work are the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Germany and Austria. There are no doubt others, and of course, in terms of YWAM, many other nations look to these listed nations as their spiritual parents or grandparents. Munich 1972 really was the start of something.

I believe that this year's **Olympic outreach** is capturing something of the spirit of Munich 1972. There is a tremendous sense of YWAM and others stirring themselves worldwide to be present at London 2012; a sense of unity and oneness not seen for some time. This is an opportunity like no other: not only will we have the world coming to the Games, but in the case of London we already have the world here, in a way that probably few cities can claim.

Of course it will be different—Jesus never does things the same way twice. But 40 years on from Munich 1972, there is real excitement within YWAM that He is going to use this Olympic outreach to bring big expansion to the mission force. Not for YWAM's sake, but for the glory of His name; to raise up a whole new generation of young people who will go—unreservedly, wholly, with no care for themselves—to establish the kingdom in places and circumstances where it isn't, and to preach the gospel among peoples that have never heard it.

I for one am going to be there. The question is, can you afford not to be?