

Paraguay's 'Altar of Prayer' Evidence of Revival

For 12 years, a **prayer** marathon has brought Christians together in the South American country of Paraguay.

The 24 hours of uninterrupted prayer involves thousands of people from all Christian denominations, in 85 locations around the country.

Every Sunday at 6 a.m., a small group braves the cold of winter and mosquitoes in the summer to **pray** on the top of the hill called Lambaré.

For almost two years now, this hill overlooking Asunción has become an altar of prayer for many families in Paraguay.

"Christian groups, churches, denominations, we are understanding that the personal, spiritual **revival** movement reaching out to our neighbors and the country in general, is accomplished through prayer," church-goer Hugo Sanz said.

"Personal contact, communion, a new sense of friendship with our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Sharing His Word," he continued. "I have no doubt that this will produce a national revival that will be a blessing for all."

Some individuals report miracles taking place since they have gathered to **pray**, including people healed without any medical explanation.

But above all, these believers pray for the gospel of Jesus Christ to reach the whole the country, including government authorities.

"There is a biblical mandate to **pray** for our country's authorities and we are pleading to God that they be driven by divine wisdom to do the best for our people," Zully Yegros,

another churchgoer, said.

For the first time in history, on the national holiday Aug. 15, Paraguay President Federico Franco attended an evangelical thanksgiving and **worship** service along with other government leaders.

Pastor Walter Neufeld, who chairs Jesus Responds Foundation, one of the largest Christian foundations in the country, said he believes God is using the spiritual revival to open doors for **evangelism**.

"There have been big changes because if you go back seven years ago, in the statistics, Paraguay had 2 to 3 percent evangelical Christians, similar to Cuba or Uruguay," Neufeld said.

"Never in the history of our country have we had a president who attended evangelical services, and now we have," he continued. "We could never get into state institutions. Today we can, freely, with the support from the secretary of education and culture. To me, these are all indicators of revival."

Although there are no precise statistics on the percentage of evangelical Christians in the Paraguayan population, most churches report a growth of 10 to 15 percent annually, with thousands of baptisms nationwide.

For Pastor Emilio Abreu, who leads one of the largest evangelical churches in Paraguay, spiritual revival is particularly reaching young people.

"We believe there will be a great empowering of the lives of young people because of the strength they have, the passion they have." Abreu, who leads Family Worship Center, said. "The church has never understood them. They haven't given a platform for the youth—in the arts, culture, music, painting, theater, movies."

“And this will be a time when we’ll have people with a vision to do all of this, to turn our young people loose, open their minds, anoint and empower them to go and conquer the nation,” he continued. “Every month almost a thousand new people come to our churches, (and) they’re converted.”

“And this is growing,” he added. “Now we are going to begin invading with the mass media and it’s going to be a tsunami!”

These opportunities also showed an important need. According to Pastor Neufeld and a survey conducted by the Bible Institute of Asunción, a large percentage of evangelical church leaders nationwide have no theological education.

The challenge now for the church is to encourage a deep Bible study among its leaders, to carry the gospel to the whole country.