

South African Minister Credits 24-7 Prayer With 840,000 Salvations

A South African church leader is confident that God answers prayer, and he has a statistic to prove it: 840,000.

That's the number of people Peter Sekhonyane says have come to Christ in the six years since churches in his area began leading 24-7 "prayer watches."

"Our aim is that before the end of the year we will be crossing the 1 million mark of people giving themselves over [to] the Lordship of Jesus Christ," Sekhonyane said in an interview with Britain-based 24-7 Prayer International during last month's Global Day of Prayer, which was hosted from South Africa

Sekhonyane, an evangelist and church planter based in Orange Farm, located roughly 30 miles south of Johannesburg, said 7,800 prayer watches have been started in local churches since 2004, with the congregations covering each hour of the day in prayer. As a result, he said, 246 marriages have been restored, and 190 witch doctors have come to faith in Jesus.

Two years ago the ministry started teaching children about intercession, and now he says there are 62 youth prayer centers in five South African provinces. In Orange Farm alone, he reports that there are 18 centers with 5,400 children praying

"Through the prayers of those children, we have seen elderly people, widows, orphans, the needy and the poor receiving food parcels," Sekhonyane said. "When children pray, God answers in a very special way."

Sekhonyane began mobilizing pastors to embrace night-and-day prayer after reaching a crisis in his ministry that caused him to question his calling, 24-7 Prayer leader Scott Bower reported earlier this year. Sekhonyane was almost ready to go back to being a concrete engineer when he checked into a hotel and spent three nights in prayer.

He said God rebuked him, saying he was doing His work but not spending enough time with Him. He told him that prayerless pastors were producing prayerless congregations and that evangelism is weakened when new disciples are not taught how to pray.

As he left the hotel, he said God told him: "Go now and call my church back to prayer. Go back and restore the foundations of my church. Prayer is the foundation of the church." Sekhonyane then began teaching Christians to pray night and day, training teams to instruct others and plant "prayer tents" in their townships.

The evangelist said people who have been praying and haven't received answers should persevere.

"Take your Bible, find the promises and read those promises," he said. "Meditate on them, confess them over and over again and pray to God, reminding Him of His promises, and you will see exactly what we are seeing through the prayers, through the Word of God."

Without prayer, he said, "You're never going to see any direct result. It's the people that are praying that are able to witness for God and to testify that this God is the living God and this God answers every prayer that we have said."