

24-7 PRAYER CHANGES VIOLENT TOWNSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the summer of 2004, with the help of some sponsors, evangelist Peter Sekhonyane put up a 300-seater tent to facilitate a 24-hour prayer watch in one of the 20 extensions and outer villages of Orange Farm. For three weeks he intensively trained Christians of all churches on prayer and the principles of 24-hour prayer. After three weeks, he decided to move the tent to the next extension, to repeat the process there. In October 2004 seven of these 24/7 prayer watches were up and running at an average of 15 hours per day. Then they combined efforts to launch a week of real 24-hour prayer.

At the end of the week of combined prayer Peter went to the police service station to ask how it went crime-wise during that week. According to their statistics something strange happened: in seven of the 20 extensions there was nearly no crime - exactly the seven in which 24-7 prayer was going on!

Something special then started to happen. People from townships from across the country started to ask for help. Peter and his team received people from Mpumalanga, KwaZulu Natal, the Cape Flats, Free State, Soweto and Zimbabwe to train and equip. These groups came for a week or two to experience for themselves what is happening and receive training. Afterwards they returned home to start similar 24/7 prayer watches in their own areas.

As a result of all these prayers crime was declining in the townships. The police asked Peter and his team to come and help in one of the outer villages where crime and violence were rampant. Peter started a prayer watch there. After about two weeks, crime declined rapidly and was brought under control!

A second encouraging thing is that people have been coming to the Lord as a result of these prayer watches. Prayer is now taken to the people and some are prayed for in their homes! The number of salvations seem to be going up compared to the previous evangelisation outreaches. The positive part is that significant numbers of new believers can now be discipled as they regularly come to pray at the prayer watch. Their chance to backslide is much smaller. It is also surprising to see that most of the new converts are young people.

Over the past two years the 24-7 prayer watches have 'exploded' to 1,460 prayer centres throughout the country, mainly in the townships. "We expect a minimum of five area pastors to adopt the prayer tent (an army tent) into their township, so there is local ownership," Peter explains. "Then we give workshops to train the Christians in intercession, who then bring this 24-7 prayer vision into their churches. This is why we see such a fast multiplication take place."

For most of the churches 24-7 prayer is a completely new dimension. "Realise that many churches and pastors in the townships are still into ancestor worship," Peter explains. "They were not used to prayer, let alone 24-7. Now the intercessors are being trained to 'cut off' the occult ties of idolatry, which leads to incredible breakthrough in the communities. As a result of women getting involved in prayer, we also see them being released in leadership of the churches. People are being healed, even of AIDS. The unemployment is doing down. More young people are being educated and trained."

Peter and his team are steadily working towards their goal of five prayer training tents per province - one in the north, the east, the south, the west and the centre. "My mandate is to get the whole country praying," Peter says. "Now even the white churches are opening their doors to adopt 24-7 prayer, and ask for our help, which is something that rarely happened before. In fact, the churches that were most involved in Apartheid are now the suppliers of the tents we use."

Source: Joel News Service