

Opening The Window

SEVERAL YEARS AGO BEVERLY PEGUES BEGAN PRAYING FOR THE AREA KNOWN AS THE 10/40 WINDOW. NOW HER BURDEN HAS BECOME A LIFELONG MISSION.

When God called her to be an intercessor, Beverly Pegues' initial reaction was, "Lord, what is an intercessor?" Little did she know that searching for the answer to this question would lead her, in 1993, to begin overseeing a worldwide network of more than 40 million prayer partners.

Beverly, who coordinates Window International Network, admits: "Not knowing the specific meaning of my calling, I got involved with different prayer groups and began praying with people wherever I could find the opportunity so that I could learn more about being an intercessor. Soon I started praying about everything that I felt wasn't in the will of God."

Many of Beverly's priorities, including her career as a paralegal civil litigations specialist, began to take second place to her intercessory prayer life. She recalls: "I always thought that my ministry would only consist of financially supporting other Christian outreaches. However, the Lord revealed to me that becoming an effective prayer warrior was my mission."

Crediting the support of her late husband of 27 years, Leonard, and daughter LaTonya as a key factor in fulfilling her mission, Beverly says, "At first, my family thought I was going through a strange phase in my life, but they realized that God had placed a calling in my heart."

She believes that her husband, while suffering with terminal brain cancer, prepared for her ministry to continue uninterrupted after his death by clearing out his tool shed and performing other tasks that would have been Beverly's

responsibility as a widow. "Leonard did not want my burden for the lost to be hindered by his absence," she relates emotionally.

THE MISSION TAKES SHAPE This burden for souls led Beverly to focus her prayers on the 10/40 Window, an area of the world 10 degrees north to 40 degrees north of the equator that stretches from West Africa, across the Middle East, to East Asia.

Every non-Christian religion—Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Animism, Atheism and Sikhism—is headquartered in the 10/40 Window, making it the most hostile territory to the cause of Christ. Beverly says: "The need to bring the gospel to this urgent. Eighty-seven percent of the world's poorest people are located here, and death from sickness and starvation is prevalent."

Beverly began to share her burden with other women and developed a network of intercessors. "I let [the] women know that, even though they couldn't go to these countries, they could pray, give and teach others to pray," she says, adding, "God has given women the ability to nourish, and the same is true for nurturing intercessors."

The prayers of these intercessors have paved the way for Beverly and other women in the network to visit the people in the 10/40 Window and share the gospel. "By partnering with humanitarian groups," she states, "we gain entrance to these nations and then pray with the people, inviting the presence of God into their land."

During these evangelistic outreaches, Beverly dresses according to the customs of the country in which she is ministering. "I'm going there to pray and invite God's presence, not to bring attention to myself," she explains. "Plus, when you honor the customs of these people, they feel like you're honoring them, making them more receptive to what

you have to say.”

FINDING COMMON GROUND Beverly feels that the people in the 10/40 Window are responsive to her in part because of her African American heritage. “When they see me, they realize that my ancestors also endured slavery and discrimination.

“This helps them to identify with me and realize that there is hope for overcoming the same conditions in their societies. It’s opened doors for me to speak to churches in those areas where women aren’t usually allowed to speak,” she says.

The role of women in the 10/40 Window is one of subservience. “The women in these countries are raised to believe they have no value,” Beverly says. “[They] exist without any hopes and dreams. I’m not there to persuade women to adopt an American mentality, which could get them in trouble with their culture, but to lead them to a place of prayer and ask God to transform their nations.

“Many women who have accepted Christ in the 10/40 Window are confined by members of their families to a shed or an unused room in their houses and not allowed to leave unless they recant Christianity. Often, these women are forced to live in filthy conditions, and many die for lack of medical attention and malnutrition.”

In response to these atrocities, Beverly and Window International Network have designated the year from October 1, 2002 to October 31, 2003 as Praying through the Window VI: Women and “The Girl Child.”

A 31-day prayer point calendar, published by her ministry, offers demographic information about the female populations of two or more countries in the 10/40 Window. Available in more than a dozen languages, Praying through the Window VI lists specific prayer points for the 10/40 Window nations. Next year, she is placing the network’s prayer emphasis on the political and spiritual leaders of the 10/40 Window.

"The gospel is literally exploding throughout these countries," she states. "For example, India experienced more Christian growth in the year 2000 than in the previous 10 years."

She adds: "Thousands of India's new Christians, as well as countless converts in Nepal, China and Africa, celebrated Christmas for the first time this past year. Many underground churches in these areas are asking to be recognized publicly as Christian churches, which is very dangerous for these believers."

UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITIES At the invitation of the U.S. Western Sahara Foundation, Beverly recently led a prayer service for 180,000 Sahrawis living in refugee camps in Algeria. She observes: "The Sahrawis are a very beautiful people [who] possess an open mind-set, making them more willing to accept the gospel. They live in hope that the world will be made aware of their circumstances."

To increase such awareness, Beverly is planning to publish prayer point books for every country in the 10/40 Window. These books will give the historical background of each country, as well as listing specific prayer needs. She is also developing prayer curricula geared to children.

"It's my desire that we raise up a generation of intercessors-warriors that will be informed, equipped and mobilized to pray for evangelism, church planting and discipleship in the 10/40 Window," she says.

Another prayer tool Beverly is developing includes virtual prayer journeys of eight countries in the Window. These will be available on interactive CD-ROM and on the Internet.

"It may someday be impossible for me and my network to physically visit and prayerwalk through these nations," she says. "But our aim is to make sure that no man, woman or child in the 10/40 Window lives an entire lifetime without hearing

that Jesus Christ came to Earth to rescue them.”

Randy Wright is a freelance writer, producer and media consultant based in Springfield, Missouri. To request an intercessory prayer calendar, contact Window International Network at . **Candice Tolbert** also contributed to this article.