

Taking Care of Her Father's Business

Patricia Bailey boldly shares her message of faith in some of the most treacherous places on earth.

Missionary evangelist Patricia Bailey is not one to give up easily, especially when it comes to carrying out what she says is an urgent call on her life to fulfill the Great Commission. The vivacious 44-year-old has spent the last 20-some years ministering around the globe—from Europe to Africa to the Middle East. In recent years she has focused on regions closed not only to the gospel but also to women.

Patricia preaches salvation and deliverance and ministers in signs and wonders throughout the area known as the “10/40 Window”—the most populated yet least evangelized countries in the world. These nations encompass the majority of the world’s Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

She could have turned down the call to missions. Not only is she a single woman but also a mom who for many years brought her son with her. “God called me to the nations,” she explains, “so I strapped my baby to my back, and we took off.” Her son, Karim Israel, is now 24 and attends college in Virginia.

“Only God could open the door for a single black woman—with a child—to bring the gospel to these people,” says Patricia, who travels in disguises and often smuggles in Bibles and Christian books. “I wrap myself up like a Muslim, [and] every time I go in, God disguises me.”

Patricia believes global evangelism has never been more crucial than right now. “The Arab world is opening up like never before,” she says. “It’s the greatest age of the

harvest. It's the greatest time to saturate that part of the world."

KEEPING HER PROMISE

In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where Patricia grew up, life was a far cry from the mission field. She attended charm school and debutante balls, and she had determined by age 19 that she wanted to be the first African American anchorwoman.

By 1978 she was on her way to fulfilling her dream. But her ambitious plans disintegrated.

At 21, Patricia was the single mother of a 3-month-old baby boy. Patricia was also given the devastating news that her recurring health problems were due to an incurable heart disease.

"My life was caving in all around me," she says. "But God now had my full attention." She wound up back in Winston-Salem, close to a Spirit-filled grandmother who, Patricia later discovered, was praying and fasting for her. One day Patricia found herself in an open field, where she fell on her knees and gave her life to Christ.

Patricia vowed that if God would heal her, she would serve Him. "I promised to go wherever He wanted me to go and do whatever He wanted me to do." She returned to the doctor and heard the stunning news: no trace of any heart disease, not even the heart murmur that had plagued her. "God had done His part; now I was obligated to do mine," she says.

She turned to her grandmother for spiritual discipleship. "Every day she fed and taught me the Word of God." The two women attended a Kenneth Copeland Believer's Conference, where Patricia heard about Bible teacher Norvel Hayes' New Life Bible College in Cleveland, Tennessee.

"I looked at my grandma and said, 'I'm going to Bible college,'" Patricia says. On the way home from the conference,

they stopped off at a grocery store, where Patricia picked up boxes to start packing. "I had no idea where I was going to get the money. I just knew I was supposed to go to Bible college."

At Bible college one day, Patricia found herself sitting in a packed auditorium listening to guest lecturers T.L. and Daisy Osborne, who had just returned from 40 years on the mission field. T.L. spotted Patricia.

"I was hard to miss," she laughs. "Not only was I the only African American student but I was really into wearing Afro-centric fashions and had my hair tied up in an African head wrap. I probably looked like I was straight out of the heart of Africa."

T.L. prophesied over Patricia that he saw nations in her. "I had no idea what that meant," she says, but the Osbornes helped out by discipling Patricia and imparting to her and the other students a vision to take the gospel into all nations.

"We were all just a bunch of kids," Patricia says, "but walking with T.L. and Daisy changed our lives forever. They taught us how evangelism and the Great Commission are so dear to God."

In 1982 the Osbornes invited Patricia to join them on a crusade to Kenya, but due to political unrest in the country, the trip was canceled. Patricia had already bought a nonrefundable ticket to Kenya and decided to go anyway, "just to see what Africa was all about."

As providence would have it, the following Sunday at church there was a guest speaker from Kenya, who promised to meet Patricia at the airport and arrange some speaking engagements for her.

Upon arriving in Nairobi, Kenya, Patricia was stunned to see banners and posters advertising: "Miracle Crusade with a woman

of faith and power, Patricia Bailey from the U.S.”

Patricia decided to take on this opportunity even though she had never held a crusade in her life or done very much public speaking. “What I did have was a burning passion for the lost,” she says. “I got alone with God and began to earnestly seek His face. I visualized Him using me to heal the sick and raise the dead.”

Using a translator she preached a message of hope, faith and power to a tent filled to capacity. Then Patricia prayed for people, and the miracles and healings started: A blind man received sight, a tumor disappeared off another man, and a demon-possessed man was delivered.

“Faith rose up within me,” Patricia says. “I remember thinking, Wow, this stuff really works!”

She returned to the United States but was soon back out on the mission field, traveling with the Osbornes to crusade meetings in Malaysia, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. Patricia knew the mission field was where she belonged.

PATRICKS AND PATRICIAS

In the early days of her ministry abroad, Patricia often found herself praying for barren women. “That’s what I became known for in Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda,” she says. “I jokingly told these women that they needed to name their sons or daughters after me. I returned the next year, and these women were lined up to introduce me to their little Patricks and Patricias!”

Since that time, she has learned to go wherever God leads her and has found herself in places such as the refugee camps in Western Sahara, Africa. “We fed about 250,000 refugees and gave them food staples and resources,” Patricia says.

She says most of her time is spent training nationals on spiritual warfare and the full gospel message. “In a lot of

these areas they have not been taught about the Spirit-filled life," Patricia says. "So we get them filled with the Holy Spirit, teach them about the gifts and that the power of God has not passed away. Many times they're hearing this for the very first time—from a woman."

However, she's not always received with open arms. In Istanbul, Turkey, for instance, men refused to enter her meetings and be addressed by a woman.

When they finally entered, they sat in the back with their arms folded across their chests. As Patricia preached, she fervently prayed for divine intervention. The breakthrough came, she says, when God showed up as she ministered in signs and wonders. "The men realized that God was with me."

Patricia's ministry has also included very harrowing experiences. The night before she and her assistant were to smuggle Christian literature into a capital city in the region, her assistant woke up and sensed the Holy Spirit instructing her to repack all the forbidden materials, moving them into one suitcase.

The next day when they went through customs, that was the one suitcase guards did not search. There would have been serious consequences had they been captured.

Patricia says she simply relies on God for direction and protection. "Everybody thinks I'm this bodacious, bold woman for what I do," she says. "But it's not my great faith; it's God's great faithfulness. It's not my great boldness; it's God's great protection.

"I'm simply my Father's daughter, running around with her Dad, taking care of His business. It's just that simple. And [that] keeps me from being afraid."

MASTER'S TOUCH MINISTRIES

Patricia spends most of her time overseas, but her ministry,

Master's Touch Ministries International, is based in Atlanta. Family members work alongside her in ministry. Her beloved grandmother passed away seven years ago, "but not before she saw me get started in ministry," Patricia says.

Patricia attributes the growing openness to the gospel in the Arab world to the September 11 tragedy. "What the enemy meant for evil God turned to good," she says. "Some Arab nations never knew how violent Islam could be, and their people are now asking questions."

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