



Asia Pacific Regional Director Russ Turney and his wife, Patsy, pray for new missionaries Josh and Carmen Lovelace.



Missionary candidates Steve and Amanda Hinson

The Assemblies of God does not recruit missionaries. In the secular business world, matching diverse job descriptions with qualified candidates would be impossible without a concerted search.

So, how does an effective blending of people and talents come about? We rely on the Holy Spirit's ability to speak to the hearts of qualified people and call them into His service in the location where they can be of greatest use to the kingdom of God. During the five years I have served on the World Missions Committee, this principle has always proved true.

Called and **qualified**

by **Rick** Johnson

When new Assemblies of God missionaries are accepted, they become part of a long-established, prayerful cooperation between the Lord of the harvest who does the calling and the sending agency that provides the means. He brought about our missionary mobilization process over the course of this Fellowship's history.

At the first General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1914, a resolution was passed, declaring that all those who claim to be called to serve as missionaries must be properly tested in these three areas:

1. Their personal experience of "full New Testament salvation."
2. Their divine call to missions.
3. Their physical, mental and spiritual qualifications.

Europe Regional Director Greg Mundis and his wife, Sandy, pray for new missionaries Dan and Silvana Place.



When the AG World Missions Executive Committee begins examining the qualifications of missionary candidates, their entire life histories and how they've prepared themselves for missions comes under scrutiny. These potential missionaries will be living in a cross-cultural environment and addressing life issues and daily challenges they may never have experienced. Their academic, financial and relational preparation; their reliability throughout their job history; and the development and level of maturity in their Christian testimony are all factors in identifying the newest members of our missionary team.

Many people have an idealized, even romanticized, mental picture of missionary work. Certainly there is excitement in traveling to another country and integrating with another culture. But missionary ministry is also hard work. A level of spiritual warfare inevitably comes to bear when followers of Christ take the good news into the enemy's territory. Candidates must be able to meet challenges they are not even aware of as they begin the application process.

Within this spectrum of personal qualifications, where does God's call to missionary ministry fit? The answer is at the very foundation of our selection process. As every individual or couple comes to be interviewed, we seek for a certain conviction that God has laid His hand upon them. What will enable them to remain in an environment if things they plan do not come about? What will keep them committed to the task when they are tired and discouraged, low on funds, far from family, or possibly even opposed by local authorities? As a committee, we want to hear how God has led them to this point.

Every personal testimony is unique. Some describe how God spoke to them as children, and they have spent their lives preparing for this moment. Listening to such personal narratives, committee members are very aware of our responsibility to stay spiritually tender before the Lord of the harvest and discern what He is saying to us regarding His will for a person's life.



On occasion, someone may have fulfilled many of the steps in preparation for missionary service, yet we realize something still needs to be completed. Perhaps the person needs to demonstrate more job stability or financial accountability. Perhaps ministerial education or experience is lacking. We may ask a candidate to continue in a ministerial role another year or two. In almost every instance, people who have been delayed in the missionary approval process came back later to report that the decision to delay them was to their benefit.



Director for Personnel and Family Life Rick Johnson prays for new missionary David Wentling

Left: New missionaries Aaron and Tiffany Hanson during an interview

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One couple we interviewed had a child who was critically ill, yet they were convinced God was calling them overseas. As a committee we prayed for a miracle, and in God's timing the child was supernaturally healed. This experience became a wonderful confirmation of the Lord's calling to that family's field of service.

Another couple came to us with impressive qualifications. They clearly articulated their call to serve in a much-needed area of ministry. Yet they faced a major obstacle: tremendous financial debt acquired through their higher education. We agreed with them in prayer, even though we could not accept their application at that point. In a matter of weeks an inheritance came to them unexpectedly and completely covered their debt.



(From left) U.S. Relations Director David Lee, Latin America/Caribbean Regional Director Dick Nicholson and Rick Johnson pray for new missionary Tim Strange.

A husband once wrote to us asking that we overlook the fact that his wife had never been baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. He described her many other ministry qualifications, the fruit of the Spirit in her life and their years of significant service in the Fellowship. While we as a committee felt great appreciation for them, we reiterated that all endorsed missionaries with the Assemblies of God are to be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking with other tongues.

Whenever we commission a married couple, we recognize God's calling on both the husband and wife. The divine Author of marriage doesn't place a ministry burden on only one marriage partner. Particularly in world missions, the responsibilities of family, ministry and cultural adjustments are too great for a couple that is not united in purpose. Spouses are dependent upon each other for fulfilling their respective roles in missions.

As a Pentecostal missions-sending agency, AGWM strongly emphasizes and constantly expresses reliance upon the work of God's grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is as essential to the Great Commission in 2009 as it was in the first century. A Pentecostal experience is foundational to our Movement. The Baptism is the gift of God's grace. God desires to baptize missionary candidates and fully prepare them for service.



Eurasia Regional Director Omar Beiler and his wife, Pat, interview new missionaries Mike and Laura Clark.



New missionaries Josh and Carmen Lovelace during an interview

Below right: Cary Tidwell, AG World Missions administrator, formerly served as director of Personnel and Family Life of AGWM for 12 years.

Right: John Bueno, AG World Missions executive director

to partner with the Holy Spirit as He sovereignly brings men and women to a realization of their highest purpose in life. Sometimes life circumstances need to be addressed before someone can be fully available for God's service. But in more than 200 nations and territories of the world today, the confirmation of this process is lived out in the lives of 2,700 missionaries and the families and communities they serve. It never fails — when God speaks to a missionary candidate's heart, He confirms His leading by granting divine guidance within our committee, divine provision within the churches of our Fellowship, and a divine harvest around the world. **tpe**



We sent the couple a letter of encouragement, along with a book on seeking Spirit baptism. Soon afterward the man's wife prayed for the Baptism before going to bed and awoke the next morning worshipping God in a language she had not learned. This experience was a tremendous joy to the couple and confirmed that as a Pentecostal movement we have absolute and utter dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Word of God.

We pray the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers, and we are thankful to God for sending people to us. We are not, and never will be, a recruiting agency. Rather, we continue



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