

W.W. Simpson before leaving for China.



He was stunned — but not totally surprised. W.W. Simpson had expected to experience the supernatural in his life. But he couldn't have anticipated this. A woman in Long Island, New York, received the Holy Spirit baptism and was speaking fluently in the dialect of Northwest China where he had labored for 23 years. The woman had no idea what she was saying, but Simpson understood every word.

THE

# Missionary

BY RANDY HURST

Years earlier Simpson had gone to China, expecting that God would supernaturally give him the ability to proclaim the gospel to the people in their own language as the disciples did on the Day of Pentecost. But it didn't happen that way. Instead he laboriously studied, first the difficult Chinese language and then two Tibetan dialects.

For 16 years he worked diligently, with very limited results. Then in 1908, he witnessed an extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Spirit. One evening after teaching a Bible study on Romans 6 and 7, he witnessed the Spirit's power come upon an uneducated Chinese cook Simpson had known for years. The man lay on the floor, speaking in tongues — first in an unknown language, then in a high form of classical Chinese understood by the Confucian scholars at the gathering. Finally, the man spoke clearly in English, though he had never spoken a word of it before.

Simpson was convinced that the Spirit's empowerment was what he needed. But four years of study and seeking passed before he received the Pentecostal experience. Afterward he taught about the Holy Spirit baptism and saw more than 100 people filled.

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W.W. Simpson (back right) in Shih Chia Chueng in 1923.



W.W. Simpson teaching at a Bible school in China.

# THE *Missionary*

Many early missionaries to China adopted Chinese dress. W.W. Simpson is at the lower left holding a banjo.



In 1914, the holiness mission with which Simpson worked rejected tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism. The following year he left the missions society he had served for 23 years. With no financial support, he returned to the United States and joined the Assemblies of God, briefly serving as principal of Bethel Bible Institute in New Jersey. He also served as a member of the first foreign missions committee of the Assemblies of God.

Though Simpson considered his initial call to the mission field was just simple obedience to the Great Commission, his call to return to China was dramatic and miraculous. Speaking through the woman in New York, the Spirit specifically charged Simpson to return to the city of Taochow. Appropriately this missionary, who had stood upon his conviction concerning the biblical validity of tongues, received divine direction for the rest of his life through that very means.

The Spirit continued to lead Simpson in missionary service in China for another 32 years. During this time his path was marked by both triumphs and tragedies. His life was miraculously spared too many times to count, yet his 30-year-old son, William, was murdered by bandits in a mountain pass in Tibet. Through every circumstance, Simpson remained faithful to God's call.

When the communist revolution forced him to leave China in 1949, W.W. Simpson left behind more than 10,000 believers and 50 churches he had planted on the border between China and Tibet. He died in California in 1961 at the age of 92.

# THE *W* Missionary

# The call

When Karen<sup>1</sup> was baptized in the Spirit and spoke in tongues, she repeatedly uttered just one word in the Spirit. For weeks, when she prayed in the Spirit, only that word came to her. She had no idea what it meant, of course, but she believed that the word held significance for her future.

Several years later, God called Karen to serve as a missionary to a particular people group in a restricted-access country. As she researched the area, to her amazement she discovered that the word she had prayed in the Spirit was the ancient name of the spiritual capital for the people group to which God had called her. Now, when she faces doubt or discouragement concerning her call, she looks back to that wonderful sign of confirmation and reminds herself that she's right where God wants her to be.

Karen and W.W. Simpson are examples of how the Spirit uniquely calls and places missionaries throughout the world.

The World Missions Executive Committee has the privilege and responsibility to interview and approve new candidates for missionary service. As we sit across the table from these people, we hear a wonderful progression of testimonies concerning how God has called each person. These times are sacred. This year, 138 new missionaries were commissioned to represent our Fellowship throughout the world. Each is a living testimony that God still calls people individually to proclaim the good news of Jesus in "the regions beyond."<sup>2</sup>

The Assemblies of God has no program for recruiting missionaries. The Lord of the harvest himself enlists each one. As in the Parable of the Landowner in Matthew 20, our Lord returns again and again to the marketplace to personally hire laborers to gather in the harvest before the night comes and the work ceases.

God's callings are personal. For some, the call is dramatic and unforgettable. For others, it is the steadily growing realization that they have no alternative but to spend their lives taking the gospel to the lost. God uses what will speak effectively to each person He has chosen. And for the consecrated heart, there is no option other than "yes."

Being a Pentecostal missionary is not a career choice based on human ambition or the desire for that deceptive goal the world calls "success." For the obedient follower of Christ, success is simply service.

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# THE *Missionary*



Aubra George photos



Missionary Carol Feigleson and Thai orphans.

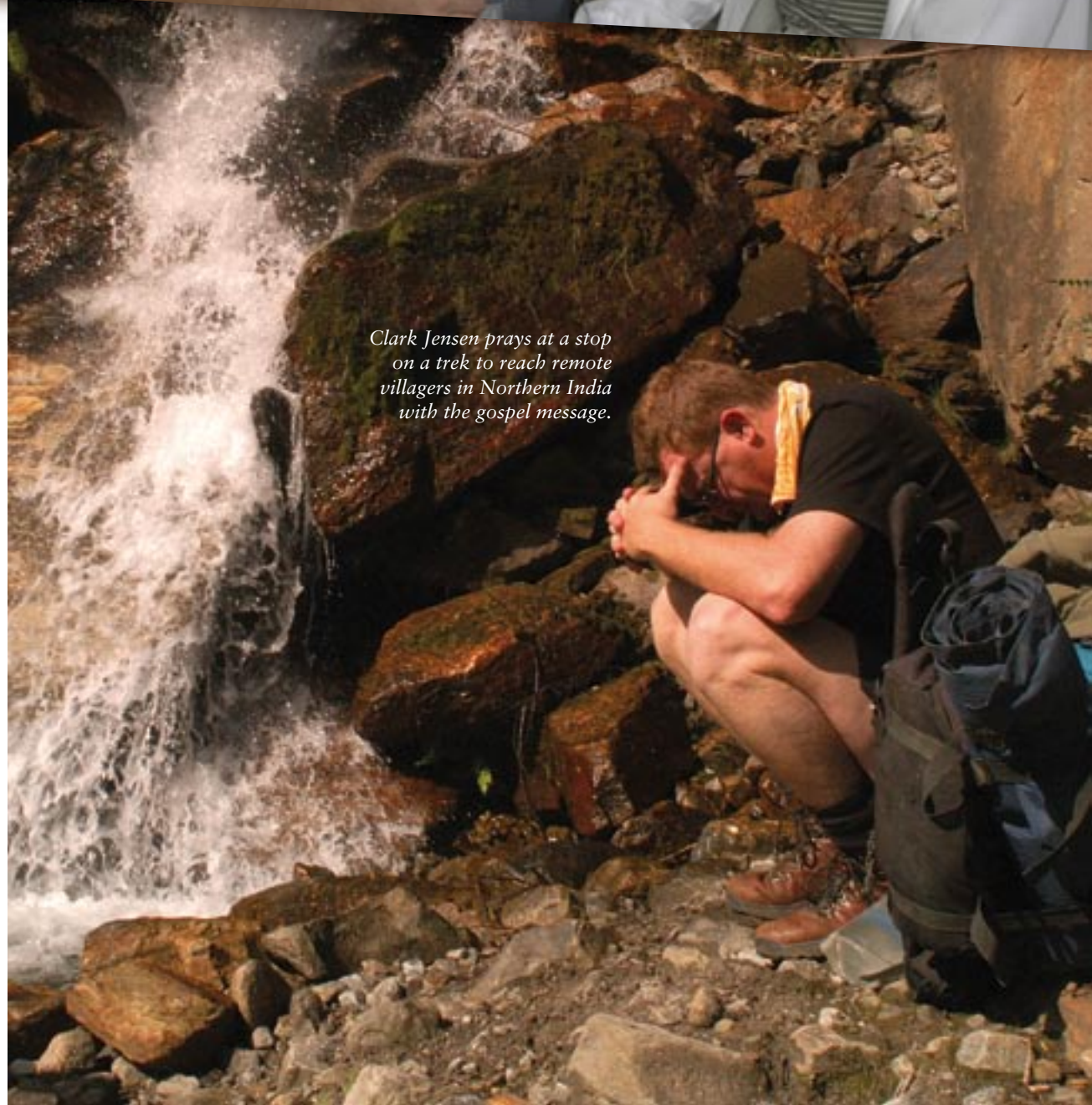
Missionary Greg Roane hugs a homeless boy in downtown Bombay, India.

# THE *Missionary*



Missionary Brenda Stryko assists at a HealthCare Ministries clinic in rural Zimbabwe.

Aubra George photos



Clark Jensen prays at a stop on a trek to reach remote villagers in Northern India with the gospel message.

## *The message*

The late missionary-evangelist Bernhard Johnson saw more than 1.8 million people respond to salvation invitations in crusades in Brazil. I once asked him, "What do you believe accounts for the great numbers who make decisions in your crusades?" He replied, "I always exalt Jesus Christ."

The Pentecostal message is not about Pentecost. When asked by a young missionary to describe the task of Pentecostal missions, W.W. Simpson replied, "It is the simple preaching of the real Jesus as revealed in the Gospels. Showing how He really took our place on the cross and became our sin and thus put away our sins forever as proved by His rising from the dead prepares the way for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That is the method used by the apostles, and it is the only method which will produce apostolic results now."

In the Book of Acts, Luke records five accounts<sup>3</sup> of Peter's apostolic preaching. In each instance, Peter boldly and clearly proclaimed the person of Jesus Christ — who He is and why He gave His life. Apostolic preaching was always Christ-centered. So is the missionary's.

In 1950 the Assemblies of God made the bold step of launching *Revivaltime* on the national ABC radio network. At its peak, *Revivaltime* aired on 700 stations in 80 countries. The theme song chosen for the broadcast was not a song emphasizing Pentecost. It was "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name."

Our message to a lost world is the same as Paul's — "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."<sup>4</sup> A missionary is a messenger. And the message is *Jesus*.

# THE *Missionary*

*Paula Ireland works with  
Zambian villages to improve  
sanitary living conditions while  
sharing the gospel.*

Dana Dominguez



Tim Schirman

## *The messengers*

Uri and Helen grew up under communism. Their schoolteachers told them there is no God. But something within them — a spiritual vacuum — yearned to be satisfied. Then communism fell in Ukraine. Doors opened to the West. An American evangelist came to Kiev, and Uri and Helen attended the meetings.

The evangelist told them about God — that 2,000 years ago He became a man and gave His life to pay the penalty for our sins. When the evangelist invited people to come forward and receive Christ, Uri and Helen responded. He prayed with them and gave them each a Bible. Then he was gone.

One day Helen was sitting on a park bench reading her Bible when another American approached her and asked if she understood what she was reading. She replied that it was difficult, so he offered to help. Twice a week for six months they studied together.

Now, Helen is a committed member of the Bahai cult. Uri is a Mormon. Both were reached with the gospel by Christians but were disciplined by cults.

The Ethiopian in Acts 8 had God's Word in his hands, in a language he knew, with a seeking mind and a hungry heart. But it wasn't until God put Philip into the chariot beside him that the Ethiopian understood ... and believed. Most of the lost in this world are like that Ethiopian. They need a *person* to come to them.

In many places of the world, missionaries are still free to proclaim the gospel in public places. People can respond without fear of government intervention or reprisals. But in more than a third of the 41 countries where Assemblies of God missionaries have begun working in the last decade, the gospel cannot be preached openly. Missionaries must be committed to the slow, deliberate task of relationship-building with nonbelievers — a process that sometimes takes years. Most evangelism is done one-on-one, sometimes in a home or in the student center of a university.

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*Ken Huff ministers as a  
supervisor over several  
AG-run schools in Cambodia.*

*Tim Southerland, missionary to the Netherlands, looks out over Amsterdam, the country's spiritually impoverished capital.*



Aubre George

*Missionary associate Penny Lemin spends time with orphaned children in Northern Thailand.*

Even in countries that are considered free, missionaries often face growing indifference and even hostility. In the world-renowned cities of Europe, Christian symbolism abounds within a spiritual vacuum. Many generations removed from the great reformers of church history, people have little knowledge of the life-changing power of the gospel. A lost soul in the shadow of a church steeple is still lost.

Our unbelieving American neighbors may have grown up attending Sunday School and have access to Christian television in their homes 24/7, but they are just as lost as the witch doctor in Africa or the pagan Indian paddling his canoe on the Amazon River. All are headed for eternal judgment. Yet not all are really equally lost, since not everyone has the same opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel. It is profoundly tragic when a lost person has no access to the message of salvation.

The word "missionary" doesn't occur in the Bible. It comes from the Latin word *missio*, which means "sent." The closest word in the New Testament is "apostle," which describes a messenger sent on a mission. The apostolic missionary task is taking the message of Jesus to those who haven't heard and establishing His church where it doesn't yet exist. As with the apostle Paul, missionaries have a passion to proclaim the gospel where Christ has not yet been named.

THE *Missionary*

Gaylon Wampler

# The senders

Missionaries are both sent and sustained by supporters in their homeland who are committed to faithful intercessory prayer and giving. Testimonies abound of missionaries who learned that the Holy Spirit impressed a faithful believer to intercede during the missionary's very moment of crisis. Paul, the first missionary to the Gentiles, depended on his fellow believers to intercede in the Spirit. He appealed to the Ephesian church, "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. ... that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel ... pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."<sup>5</sup>

Intercessory prayer is both a privilege and a responsibility. As Aaron held up Moses' hands, we can help sustain our missionaries as they faithfully work to bring the light of the gospel to those lost in darkness. Though we are separated by many thousands of miles, God allows us to be fellow workers with our missionaries on the front lines of spiritual harvest around the world.

The apostle John exhorted Gaius to send those who went out for the sake of Jesus' name on their way "in a manner worthy of God." He added that "we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth."<sup>6</sup> Those who support missionaries through prayer and finances are "fellow workers."

Paul declared and then appealed, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?"<sup>7</sup>

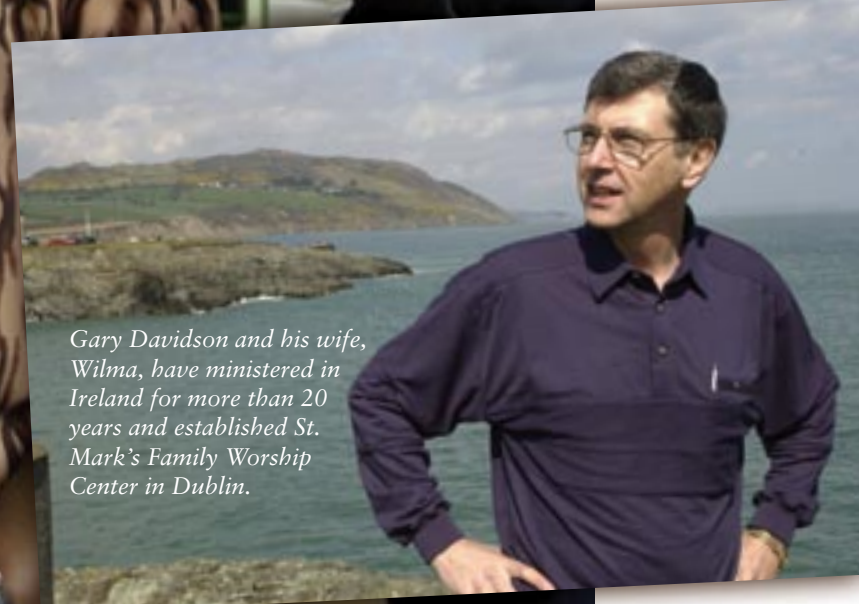
Our Lord calls laborers into His harvest field. They respond in obedience. But the mission is not complete until the called are sent. Our Lord's commands require each of us to be involved in taking the good news of His saving grace to this lost world. The missionary is our representative to those who wait for the message of the Savior. **tpe**

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E-mail your comments to [tpe@ag.org](mailto:tpe@ag.org).

<sup>1</sup> Not her real name <sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:16, NASB <sup>3</sup> Acts 2,3,4,5 and 10 <sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:2  
<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 6:18-20 <sup>6</sup> 3 John 1:6-8, NASB <sup>7</sup> Romans 10:13-15, NIV



Harold Suggs prays for Lynette Smith, a Christian educational leader in Guyana.



Gary Davidson and his wife, Wilma, have ministered in Ireland for more than 20 years and established St. Mark's Family Worship Center in Dublin.