

Integrity and accountability

BY CARY TIDWELL

“As representatives of Christ and His church, we must be above reproach in our lives, our mission and our stewardship.”

“Did our missionaries receive the funds we gave?”

In order to answer that question, Assemblies of God World Missions must responsibly process the work funds and personal funds of missionary personnel serving in more than 200 countries and territories. Currently, that includes 2,691 missionaries and missionary associates and approximately 17,000 short-term volunteers. AGWM serves both missionaries and those who support them.

Financial specialists are responsible to keep accurate records of all funds given to missionaries and issue receipts to donors. They also must account for funds disbursed from missionary accounts. When a donor designates money to a specific missionary or approved project, the funds must be used for that purpose.

These funds are monitored closely by AGWM under detailed accounting guidelines. Both internal auditors and auditors not affiliated with the Fellowship regularly examine AGWM financial records for accuracy and to protect our integrity.

Accounting procedures, called an “accountable plan,” enable us to know exactly when funds

came in, when they were disbursed and who received the funds. Our use of this plan means the IRS trusts us to satisfactorily explain the use of money raised by missionaries and subsequently disbursed. In addition, our system of reporting and approvals always gives clear indication that financial control rests with the parent organization and not its agents.

AGWM leaders are committed to fulfilling these responsibilities:

- We are responsible to God for an accurate accounting. We have been entrusted as stewards in His kingdom.
- We are responsible to the General Council of the Assemblies of God and to the United States government to manage funds efficiently and fulfill all requirements under law.
- We are responsible to the Assemblies of God constituency — believers who generously gave \$221,174,677 for the cause of missions in 2006.
- We are responsible to missionaries who depend on our accounting and disbursement of funds.

When potential missionaries apply for service, we not only

consider their ministry record and ask for references, we also look closely at their financial management record and request a credit check. Churches and individuals invest substantial sums of money in these people to help them take the gospel to places around the world. When missionaries are approved for overseas assignments, we want to be sure they are trustworthy in every area of their service.

As representatives of Christ

and His church, we must be above reproach in our lives, our mission and our stewardship. AGWM leaders are as concerned about financial integrity today as our Fellowship’s founders were nearly a century ago.

When J. Roswell Flower took office in 1919 as the first full-time missions secretary/treasurer, 206 missionaries were serving under the Assemblies of God banner. Offerings for that year totaled \$63,548.

Flower appealed directly to the constituency for funding administrative expenses for the missions department. He said, “The foreign missionary interests of the Council are no longer a small thing ... the Missionary Department must be safeguarded in its work, and these offerings will make possible both the establishing and maintaining of this department in its forward work for God.”

As missions giving increased, a plan of accountability was developed that would give donors confidence their monetary gifts were being used wisely. In addition, missionaries had the assurance they would have the funds they needed to feed their families and minister to the lost.

God has been faithful through the decades to meet the needs of our growing missionary family. Churches and individuals exhibit great confidence in the stewardship of World Missions leadership and respond generously to the voice of the Spirit.

Through this partnership, missionaries are able to carry out their callings to the ends of the earth, and donors can be confident their monetary gifts are used as they have designated. **tpe**



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