

## Carl and Ruth Hasselgren

### Following the Master's plan from Austria to America

by Kathryn Adamson

Where doors seem impossible to open and where students' money runs short, seminary is a place where miracles happen. Such is the case for Carl and Ruth Hasselgren from Austria.

For the Hasselgrens, this December marks the completion of their studies at AGTS and the end of their 16-month stay in America, at which time they will go home to Austria before returning to AGTS in May 2003 for graduation activities.

Graduation for the Hasselgrens equals a miracle and not because of any lack of academic ability. Carl and Ruth are often seen pouring over books in the library or typing in the computer lab. When they walk the line at graduation, they will receive their diplomas despite the closed doors and the lack of funds that could have easily derailed them.

One year after graduating with their Bachelor of Arts degrees from the Continental Theological Seminary in Brussels, Belgium, in 1997, Carl and Ruth were married. Ministry was their goal. "Ministry is not a job, but it is a calling," said Ruth, "You are not

called alone but as a team—together." Their first ministry experience was in a small church in Vienna, Austria. Carl functioned as the associate and worship pastor while Ruth coordinated the youth program as well as serving the national youth office in administration. Three years later, Carl and Ruth obeyed the promptings of the Holy Spirit and took decisive steps toward pursuing higher education.

Blockades of tradition and financial deficits planted firm roots in the Hasselgrens' pathway. Tradition said that more education was unnecessary

while the amount of money needed to study seemed unattainable.

"If it is God's will, the money will be there," said the couple.

Soon, through an acquaintance who rallied the support of many churches, the Hasselgrens were established financially. Their home church gave its blessing and support when Carl and Ruth shared their long-term vision and the potential benefits for the church.

When back on Austrian



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AGTS STUDENT

soil, Carl plans to implement his Master of Arts in Christian Ministries degree in the development of a holistic discipleship program and the furthering of evangelism. Ruth will use her M.A. in Counseling degree to counsel parishioners and establish the educational program in the church. Yet, these are only short-term goals. Eventually Carl and Ruth would like to help launch the first Bible Institute in Austria for the development of future leaders. "We expect God to do great things in Austria in the coming years,

and we feel this is a great time to be there. As our churches grow and multiply, more harvest workers will be needed, and we want to be a part of raising and equipping these future ministers," Carl said. Their vision for the country is strong.

"If (the financial miracles) had not happened, we would have been glad to continue serving God the way we did in Austria. Degrees are not God's primary concern or requirement, but He always guides and provides according to His plan," Ruth said.

According to Carl and Ruth, the flow of new material at AGTS has sharpened their knowledge, and the spiritual atmosphere has strengthened their relationship with God. "We are excited about returning to ministry, as well as to our friends and families," the Hasselgrens said. "We have learned a lot of good things that we look forward to using." ®

