

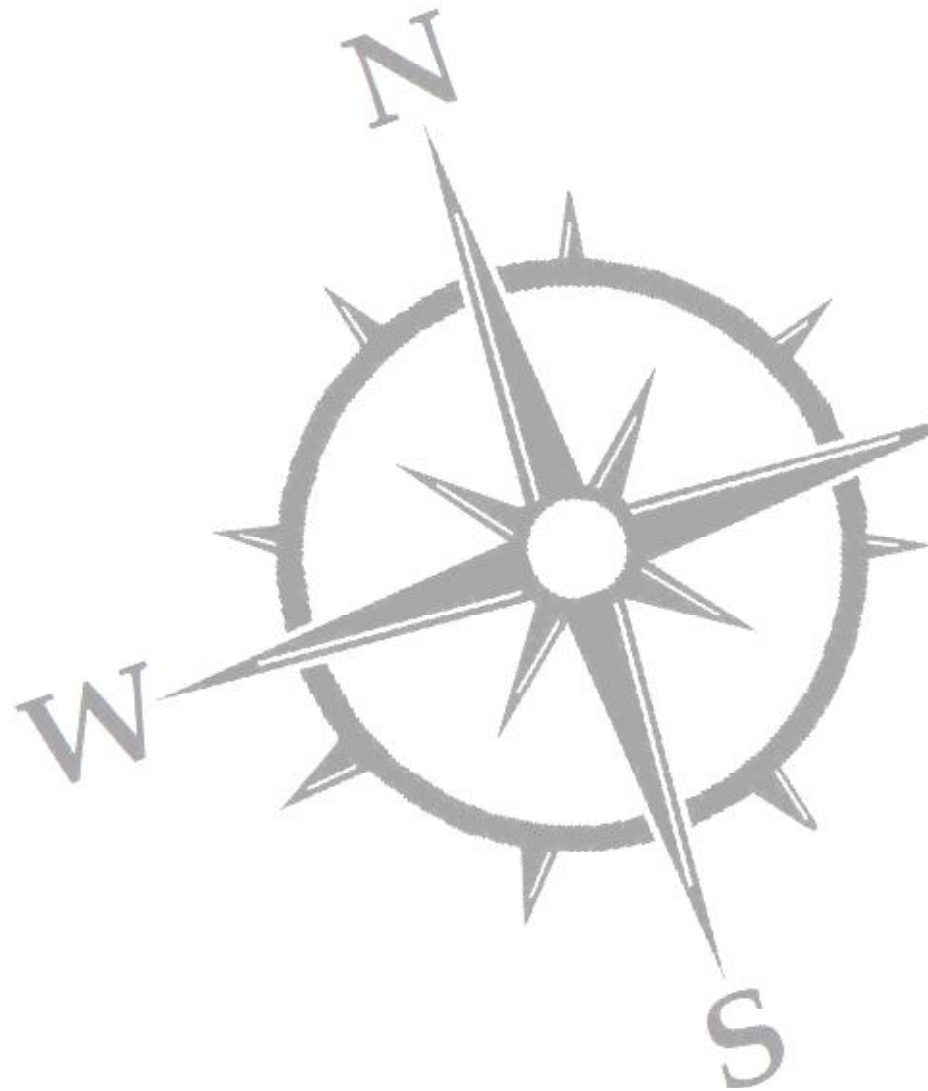
The Life of George Muller

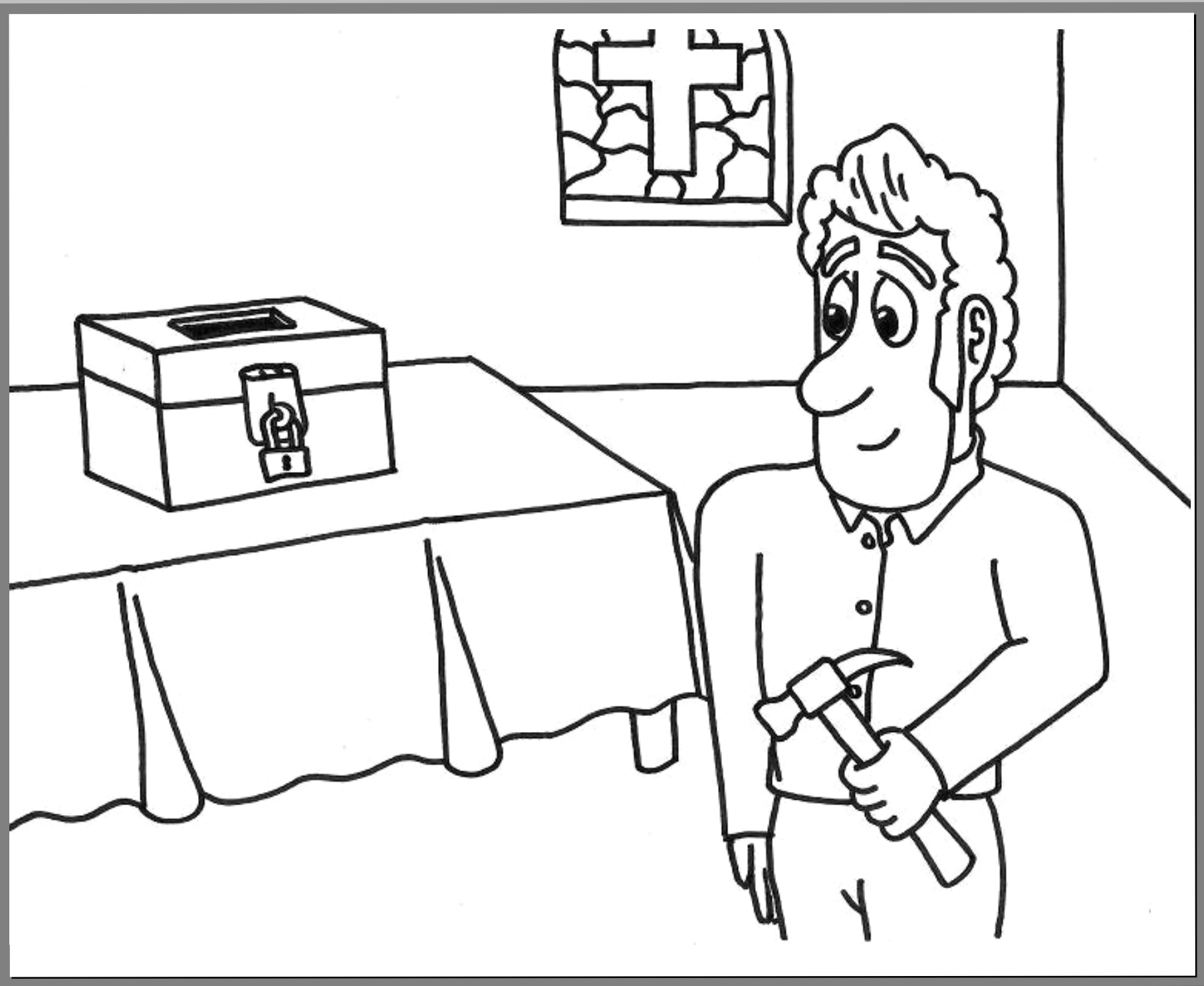
(1805-1898)

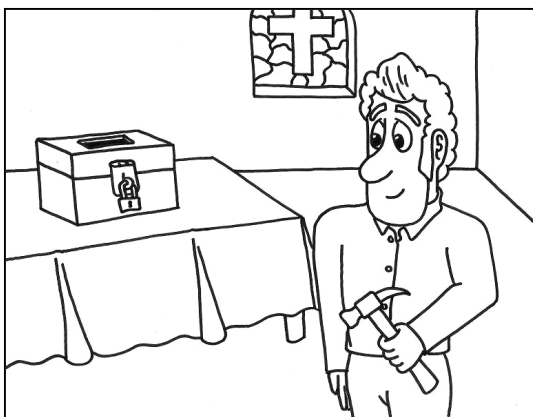
Lesson: 1.6 – Protection Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us that the Lord is ever present to protect and care for His children. When God is on our side, regardless of the opposition, we are never outnumbered. George Muller faced a lot of scary things, but he knew that the Lord was going to protect him and keep him safe.

“The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.” - Psalm 18:2







Who remembers where we left off last week?

(Read the last paragraph from last week's lesson to begin this lesson as a review).

I had come to Teignmouth a little over a year before with no job, no money, and only one friend. I was now the pastor of Ebenezer Chapel. Our church had grown from eighteen people when I first came, to now having over fifty people there each week. God had given me a wife, and we were going to have a baby soon. God had taught me that He would provide all the money that we needed.

Yes, everything was going great in Teignmouth, until one day in 1832 when I came home and found a letter addressed to me sitting on the table. That letter was from my good friend Henry Craik. Henry had moved up to the busy city of Bristol. He invited me to come up and visit, and I went.

Bristol was a busy place. Several ships came and went from there all of the time. It was also a smoky, dirty place from all of the

factories located there. Beggars stood on the street corners, and children covered in dirt ran through the busy streets.

Henry and I held ten days of meetings in two churches in the city. Each night was busier than the one before. On April 29, there were people in the aisles, in the foyer, and looking in the windows. There were so many people that some weren't even allowed in because there was no more room.

After the meetings, the people at a church called Gideon Chapel begged Henry and me to stay on as their pastor. Henry and I prayed about it and decided that the Lord wanted us to do this. We decided we would work together as the pastor of the church. The church agreed to this, and I went home to tell Mary the news.

Two days later, I went to the homes of everyone at Ebenezer Chapel and told them the sad news. We packed up our few things and headed off to Bristol. I was twenty-six years old and was excited for what lay ahead in Bristol.

At first, everything went very well. We found a home with five bedrooms that we lived in along with Henry Craik. A rich man in our church rented a second chapel that we called Bethesda Chapel. Henry and I took turns preaching at Bethesda and Gideon chapels.

One morning, the town's church bells began to ring. Something told me that a disaster had come to Bristol. You see, in Bristol, the church bells are rung after every funeral. Starting in June, the bells rang almost nonstop. A terrible disease called cholera had come to Bristol.

In cities in those days, dirty water and sewage overflowed from many of the street drains. Though we didn't know it, the water that we drank carried many germs in it.

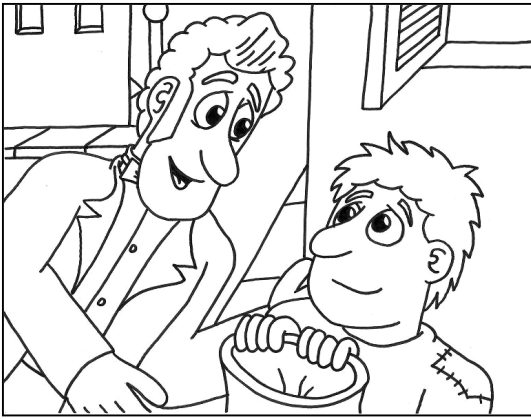
Cholera spread like a fire throughout the city killing thousands of people. Henry and I were exhausted as we traveled all over Bristol to houses in the city so we could pray with and for people who had caught cholera. Those who caught cholera passed away quickly. It usually only took about twelve hours from the time a person began to feel sick before they were put into a coffin...that is if a coffin could be found because so many people were passing away.

Everyone knew the best chance of staying healthy was to stay far away from other people; however, the people in our churches wanted to keep meeting to pray and encourage each other, so we had a prayer meeting each morning to ask God to stop the disease from spreading.

Henry and I were kept very busy. "What if you get sick?" Mary asked me before I left one morning. "Each time you hold a sick child's hand or hug a sick person or pray and talk with the family of a sick person, you expose yourself to cholera." I nodded my head. "But I have to do this, Mary. Someone has to help these people and tell them about God's love."

On September 16, my daughter Lydia was born. Even though there was death in the streets all around us, Lydia was a healthy baby. By October, the disease was done. We held a big service of thanksgiving to the Lord at our church. Interestingly, out of the two hundred people who attended our church,





only one person had passed away in the terrible epidemic.

On January 4, 1833, I received a letter from Baghdad. I opened the envelope and out fell two hundred pounds (which was a lot of money.) I read the letter and found out that the money was for my family and Henry Craik to travel to Baghdad and be missionaries there.

I was very excited. Mary's brother Anthony Groves had written us many letters telling us about what being a missionary was like. It sounded so wonderful, and now here was our chance. The letter promised there would be more money for us when we got there. I hurried off and nearly ran to tell Henry the good news. Henry was just as excited as I was. We talked all morning, and by lunch, we had decided we would go to Baghdad.

After lunch, I left and went to visit a member of our church who lived in the poorest part of Bristol. Not far from the man's house, a little five-year-old girl came up to me. Standing next to her was a boy with a runny nose and torn clothes who was

probably about three years old. "Can you spare us a shilling?" the girl asked with a lisp. "Mother got the cholera, and Dad went away to the mines and never came back." I knelt by the girl. "What is your name, dear?" I asked. "Emily," she said, "and I can spell it too."

"I'll tell you what," I said, "if you can spell it, I'll give you your shilling." The girl thought for a second and then said, "E-M-I-L-Y."

"Wonderful! Now, here is your shilling," I said. She took the shilling, her brother's hand, and walked away and disappeared into a crowd of people. I had seen many orphans like this over the last six months, but suddenly, it bothered me. Where were Emily and her brother going? Where was she going to sleep? Was some evil person going to hurt her?

As I kept walking, I wondered why I hadn't seen it before. I didn't need to go to Baghdad; there was a mission field right here in Bristol.

Emily got me thinking about all the orphans who needed to hear about Jesus. I decided to open up our house and invite them to breakfast and tell them about the Bible and the Lord. Mary wondered where we would have them all sit and where we would get the money and food for them, but I just knew that God would supply what we needed. After only about 1 month, 20-30 ragged children gathered on our doorstep at eight o'clock every morning. The Breakfast Club grew so much that after one year we had forty or more people coming, and we had no more room for them.

Then I had an idea. I wanted to start something...something that would provide schools to those too poor to pay for school...something that would provide Bibles for the poor...something that would allow us to send money to support missions overseas. That "something" I decided would be called The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad.

I told Henry Craik all about my plans, and we set up a meeting to tell the churches about our plans. Most people thought something like this was crazy. How could we expect people to give and God to provide for something like this?

Two weeks later, Mary and I had a son named Elijah. Though I was very happy and excited about my new baby son, I was frustrated about something else. It had been a couple of weeks since our meeting, and we had not raised even one penny for The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad. "Maybe it was a mistake. Maybe I shouldn't have started this," I thought. I decided to pray a very specific prayer.

"God, I believe that you gave me the idea to start this organization, but nothing is happening. If you want me to stay with it, please send me twenty pounds to show me that this is what you want me to do. I'll use the money to buy Bibles to give to the poor. Amen." Now it was in God's hands.

That night when we sat down to dinner, there was a knock at the door. When I opened the door, a lady from our church was there. "Sorry to bother you, but I've had something on my mind, and I know the Lord





wants me to give this to you," she said handing me a white envelope. I could tell there was some money inside of it. "What did you want me to do with this?" I asked.

"Use it for whatever you want or need," she continued. "Is there anything specific you want me to do with it though?" I asked again. "Well, if you don't need it for yourself, I was hoping you could perhaps use it to buy Bibles for the poor," she said as she walked away.

I closed the door and smiled. "If I'm not wrong, this envelope should have twenty pounds in it," I said as I walked in to show Mary. Sure enough, exactly twenty pounds fell out of the envelope.

Everything took off from there. Just six months after starting The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, education was being provided for over two hundred children and forty adults. Money had been sent to missionaries, and over one thousand Bibles had been given away to the poor.

Suddenly, my son Elijah got very sick and passed away. I also got very sick, and

my family and I had to leave Bristol for a while.

England was going through a depressing time. While I was gone, many people were out of work and had to go to terrible places called poorhouses.

When I got back to Bristol, three interesting things happened. First, a boy in one of our schools named Freddie was sent to the poor house. His father had tried to steal some food for him and was put in jail. Freddie had nowhere to go and was sent to the poor house. "What good is it to have schools if the children can't come to them because they have no food or homes to live in?" I thought to myself.

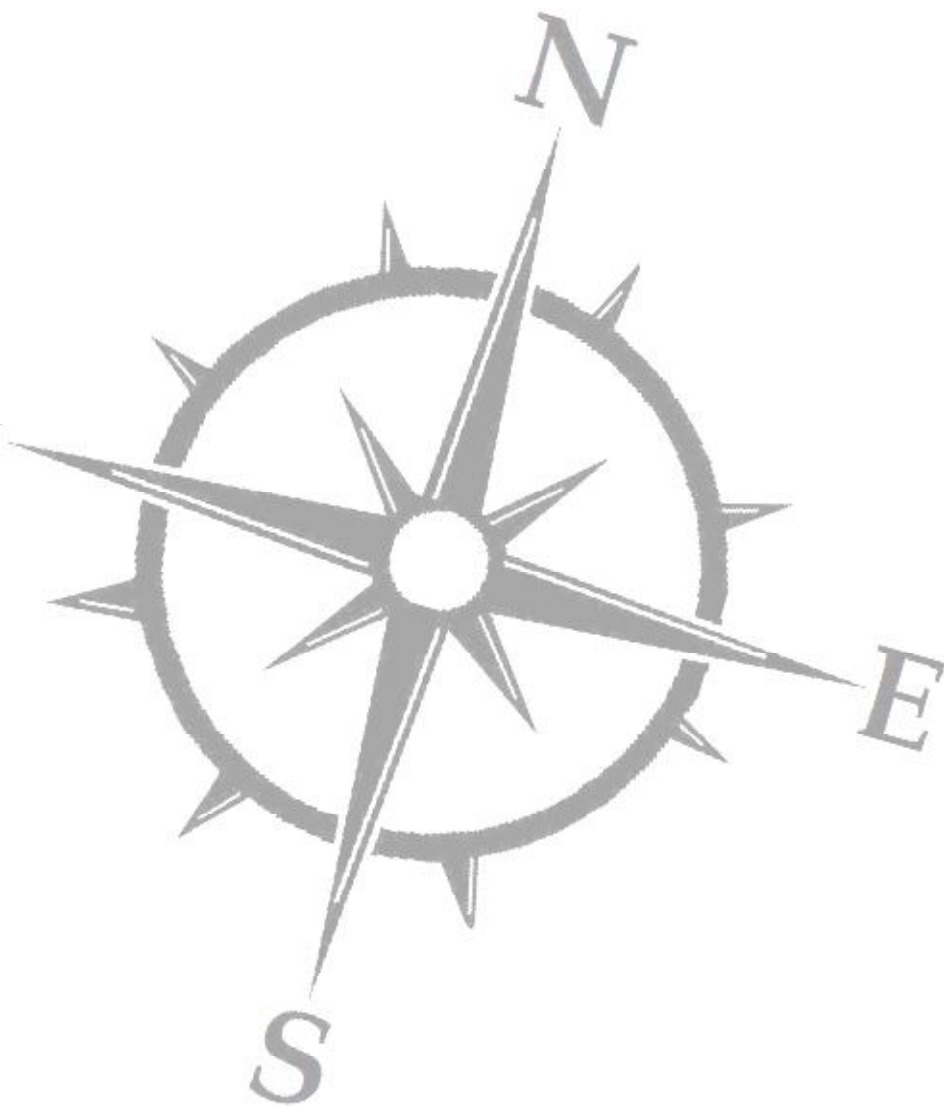
The second thing happened when I went to visit Bill Wentworth from our church. Bill worked sixteen hours a day. I asked him if he had time to read his Bible and pray. He told me that those things weren't going to put food on his table for his family. I remember thinking as I left that I wished I had someone or something to point people like Mr. Wentworth to and say to them, "Look, that person trusted God, and God took care of them and their needs."

The last thing happened when I went to visit Elizabeth Brinsdon from our church a few weeks later. As we were having tea, I noticed she had many shelves filled with books. She said that I could borrow any of the books I wanted. I got up and looked through the books. One small book caught my eye. It had no writing on the spine. I pulled it off of the shelf and looked at the front cover. Suddenly, goosebumps ran up my arm and my neck as I read the title. "It's

interesting that you picked up that particular book, Pastor," she said. "Very interesting, indeed."

What do think that book is about? Why would it give George goosebumps? To find out, come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 1.6 on **page 136** in your *England Expedition - Leader's Guide*).*



References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained our information:

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