

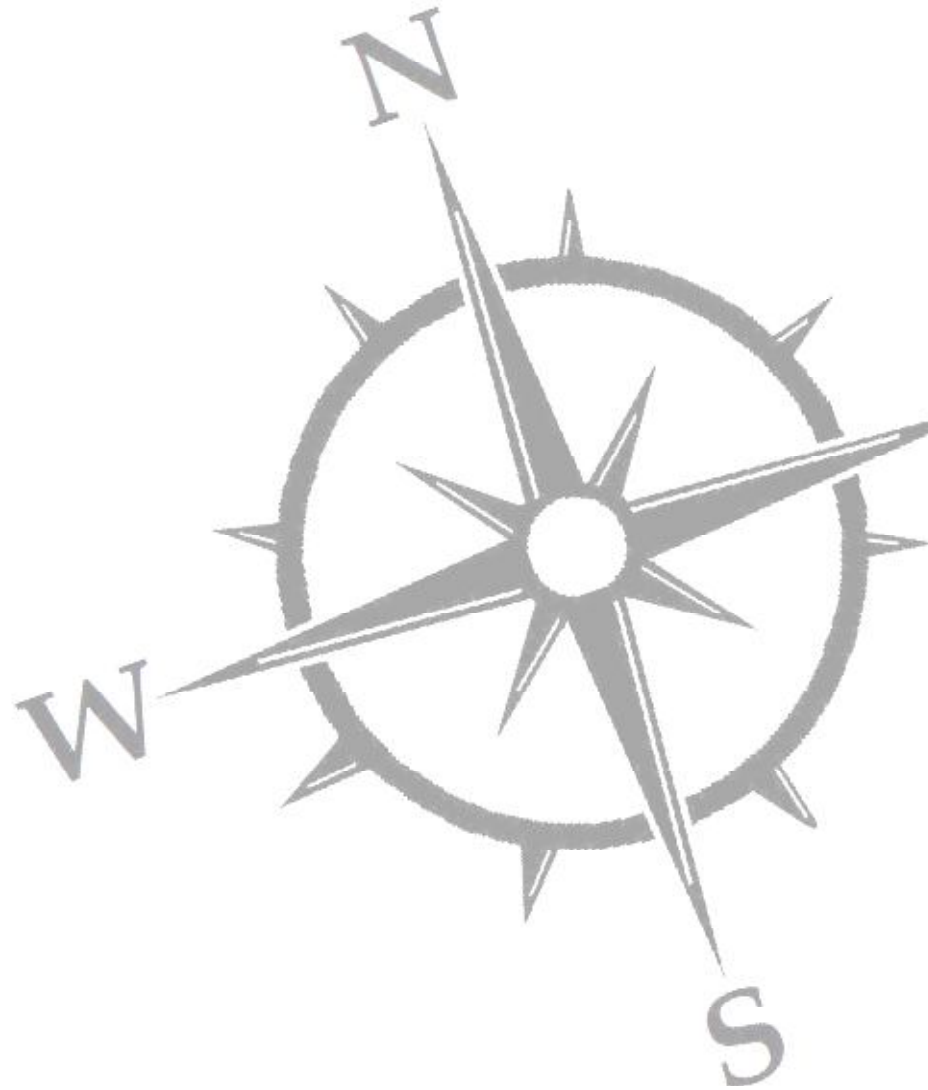
The Life of George Muller

(1805-1898)

Lesson: 1.4 – Preparation Missionary Spotlight Series

This story shows how God prepares a missionary by first saving him and then opening doors for him. God has a plan for each person who trusts Christ as his Savior. God prepares missionaries for their mission work long before they are on the field. He gives them opportunities and gifts to develop so that He might better use them on the field. God had some things that He wanted to do in George Muller's life to prepare him for what lay ahead of him.

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." - 2 Timothy 2:3







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 gone with Beta to a Bible meeting. The whole reason that I had gone was simply to get some funny stories to tell all of my other friends. The meeting started with us singing some hymns. Then Herr Kayser prayed, but this was different from anything I had ever seen before. First, Herr Kayser knelt by his chair, and when he spoke, it sounded like he was talking to someone in the room that he actually knew. Next, he read the Bible and then the sermon. The others were listening and nodding their heads and seemed to really believe what was being said. Finally, Herr Kayser prayed, and we sang another song. I sat in my chair for a few minutes after the meeting was done just thinking about what had happened.

On the way home, Beta nervously asked me what I thought of the meeting. "I need to

tell you something about tonight," I said slowly. "It's something that's going to surprise you, Beta."

"Well, what is it?" Beta asked.

"Nothing I have ever done has been as enjoyable to me as this evening was," I said, and I meant what I said. Beta told me that we should go back again tomorrow night, and I agreed. I went to meetings all that week. Before the week was done, I knelt beside my bed and asked the Lord to forgive me for all of my sins.

My life completely changed. I didn't want to go to the pubs anymore. Instead, I wanted to go to Bible meetings and read my Bible. My old friends didn't like the changes that they saw in me, and they spent hours telling me so and making fun of me. I didn't mind their teasing though.

I loved going to Bible meetings. I also enjoyed getting to see a girl named Ermegarde who also attended the meetings. I met Ermegarde the very first night that I went with Beta and enjoyed seeing her and talking with her at the meetings.

It only took me about six weeks of reading my Bible and going to church and Bible meetings to discover something that would change the rest of my life. I knew that God wanted me to be a missionary.

I was excited to tell everyone about my decision. A week or so later, I stayed behind after the meeting and talked with Ermegarde like I had been doing for several weeks. I told her that I wanted to become a missionary, and her answer surprised me. "What ever made you think of such a ridiculous thing?" Ermegarde said.

"Missionaries are poor and wear old clothes. I could never be a missionary's wife. You should be a lawyer or a doctor and leave being a missionary to those who don't have anything better to do."

This was not what I had expected to hear. I liked Ermegarde, but I knew that this was what God wanted me to do.

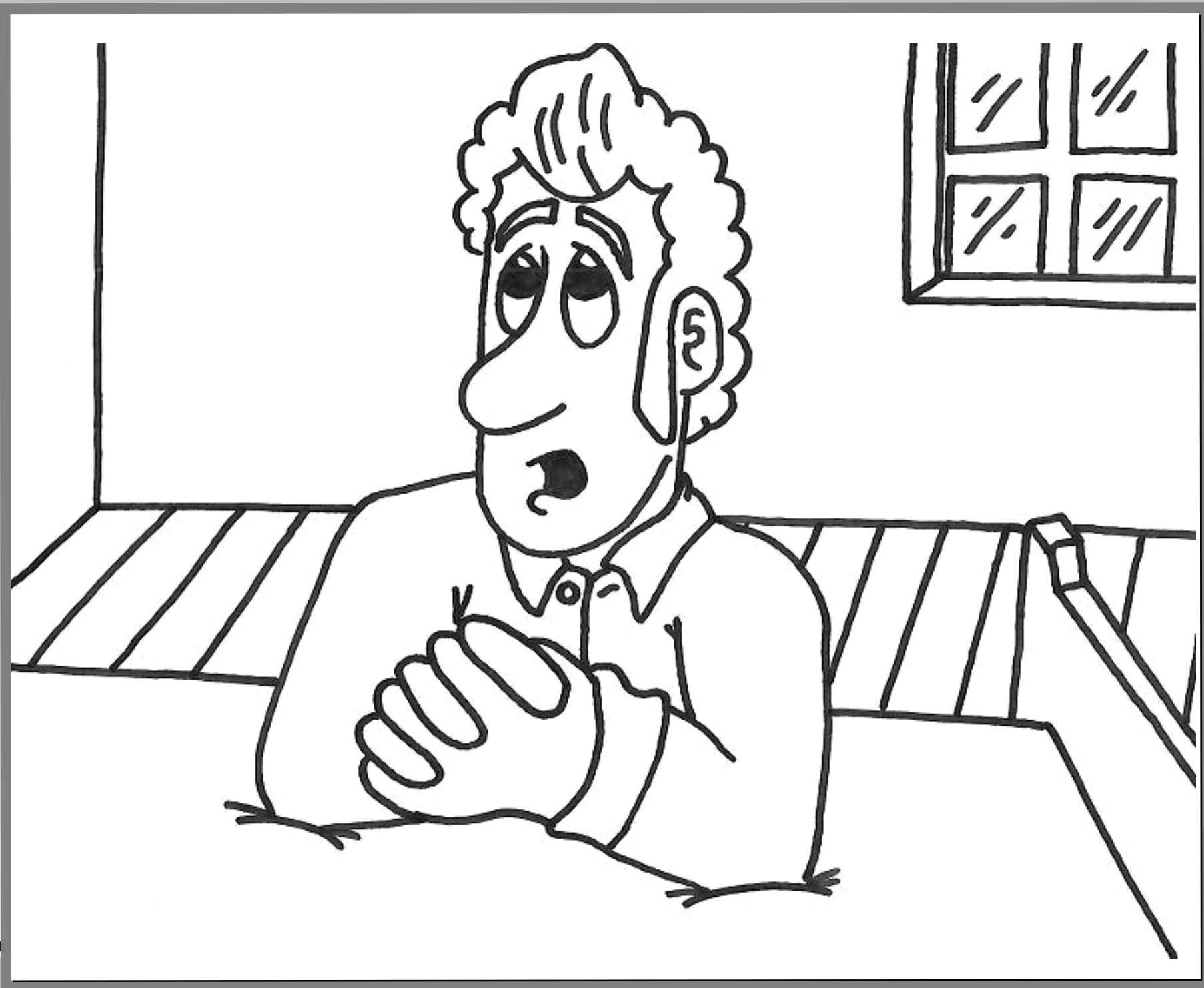
I began to read books and papers to find out more about missions and missionaries. I even went and listened to a missionary named Herman Ball speak. Herman came from a wealthy family, but he chose to work in poor areas with the Jews.

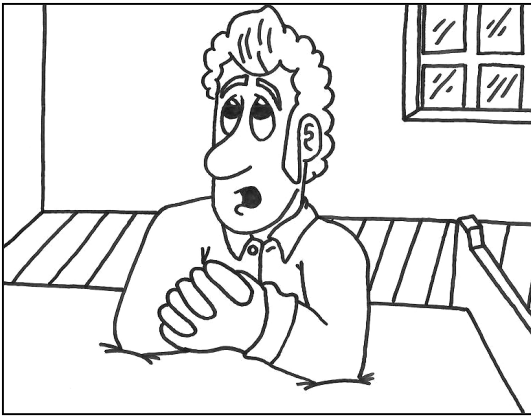
I decided that I would transfer from Halle to a missionary school and from there become a missionary. First, though, I had to get my father to sign the paper so that I could transfer to a different school.

My father was furious about my decision. "What is wrong with you, boy?" he yelled. "I'm more right than I've ever been," I began. "Dad, I have stopped lying, gambling, and drinking. I go to church every week and read my Bible." I tried and tried to make my father see that this is what I knew God wanted me to do with my life.

My father was still upset. He said that he had not paid so much money for the best school in Prussia so that I could throw my life away as a poor missionary. Finally, I told my father that since I felt I needed to follow what God wanted me to do, I would not force him to pay for my schooling anymore, and if he would not sign the paper for me to transfer schools I would finish school at Halle.

Soon, I was sitting at my desk back at





well, but the problem is that none of them speak German. Since you speak both German and English, George, I thought maybe you could help out."

This was the last thing I needed right now. I needed to be looking for a job, not volunteering to help four people learn German. I spoke to Dr. Tholuck in German and explained that I would love to help, but that I had some things change in my life, and I needed to look for a job now and may not have time to help. Dr. Tholuck laughed. "George, I don't want you to do this for free. This is a job!" I spoke with Dr. Hodge and learned that Dr. Hodge and his three friends would meet with me for eight hours per week and that each of them would pay me twice as much as a normal tutor would charge.

As Dr. Hodge and Dr. Tholuck started to leave, Dr. Tholuck turned around and spoke. "George, there is just one more thing I would like to ask you...there was a room over at the Franke Orphanage across the street that one divinity student can live in for free for two months. Would you like me to put your name on the list for that room?" I told him that I would, and the two men left.

I sat back down in my chair and looked at my watch. It had been an hour and a half, and I now had a job and hopefully a place to stay. "God did hear my prayer after all," I thought.

I did end up getting to stay in that room at the orphanage. While there, I learned how Dr. Franke, who had been a professor at Halle, had started the orphanage over one hundred years before. He had relied on God to supply the needs of the orphanage, and

even still, it relied on God to provide for it.

While there, I also got a chance to preach my first sermon in a little country church. On August 27, 1826, I stood up before the people and gave my sermon. I had memorized it, and I preached it word perfectly. Afterward, as people left, they made comments like, "That was a very fancy sermon," and, "I didn't understand a word you said today." The big words and fancy things I had learned in school were no help. That afternoon I got a chance to preach in the same church. This time I decided to just simply talk and use words the people could understand and quote verses from the Bible. After that service, the people thanked me. Many said that had learned a lot from my second message. I got many more chances to preach over the next year and always preached messages more like my second message than like my first one.

About a year after I preached my first sermon, Dr. Tholuck got a letter in the mail. It asked if he could recommend one student to be a missionary in a place called Bucharest in southern Europe. I applied and was sure that I would be accepted. I was just certain because even my father had written me and had agreed that I could go.

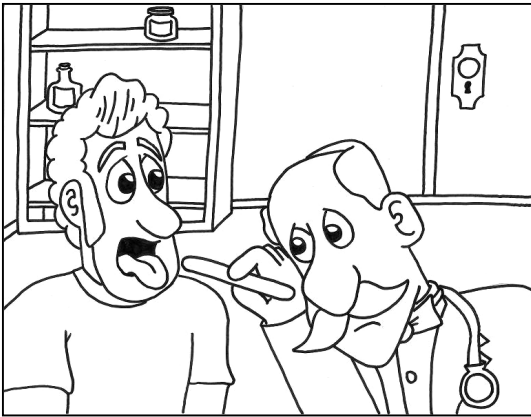
As I waited to hear back from them, I kept busy with my schooling. Finally, I got a letter back. Their letter said that because there was a war going on between Turkey and Russia, the Society didn't want to send a missionary there anymore. I was sad, but Dr. Tholuck suggested that I try and go work with something called the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews.

Halle in my room. I needed money...money for schooling, for food, and also for a place to stay. Before I got saved, I would have just cheated, lied, pawned something, or gambled to get the money that I needed, but now I was a Christian and I didn't do things like that anymore. As I looked out the window, suddenly I had a thought...what if I knelt and prayed about it? "No...God doesn't care about things like this," I thought, "...or does He?"

I got down on my knees and prayed a quick simple prayer. "Dear God, you know what I need. I ask you to provide for me. Amen."

About an hour later, I was looking over some notes from my last class when there was a knock at my door. I opened the door and there stood Dr. Tholuck, one of my divinity professors, and another man. Dr. Tholuck turned and spoke to the other man in English. "This is George Muller, the man I told you about. George, this is Dr. Hodge. He and three other men are visiting from America. They will be coming to some of our lectures and teaching some classes as





I sent in my application and again waited and waited to hear back. During the time that I waited, I was able to finish my degree at Halle. Finally, I heard back from England. They had accepted me, and I was to begin immediately. One problem that I forgot about was that Prussia required everyone to serve in the Prussian army for one year before they could leave the country.

"In a year," I worried, "my chance to work in England will be gone." Again, things were out of my control. All I could do was pray and trust that God would work things out for me.

A few weeks later, I suddenly woke up one morning in a daze. My eyes ached and burned to open, and I felt like I was in a dream. I could tell a doctor was pushing on my stomach, and it felt like he was stabbing me with a knife each time he touched me. I could tell the doctor was talking to someone. Was it Beta? My eyes burned, and I couldn't see who it was. I drifted back off to sleep.

I woke up several hours later. The whole bed was soaked in my sweat. My head ached. "What is happening to me?" I

wondered. Soon Beta came into my room. I asked him what had happened. "It's not good news," Beta said. "The doctor said that the cough that you have had for the last month has made your stomach start to bleed." "What can we do?" I asked Beta. "The doctor said that all that we can do is give you this medicine, have you rest, and pray for you to get better." Beta held up a vial with a thick black medicine inside. I sat up to swallow one spoonful. It tasted awful and just sitting up for a second like that wore me out. I laid back down on the pillow and fell asleep. During the next five days, the doctor said I nearly died several times, but then I slowly started to recover.

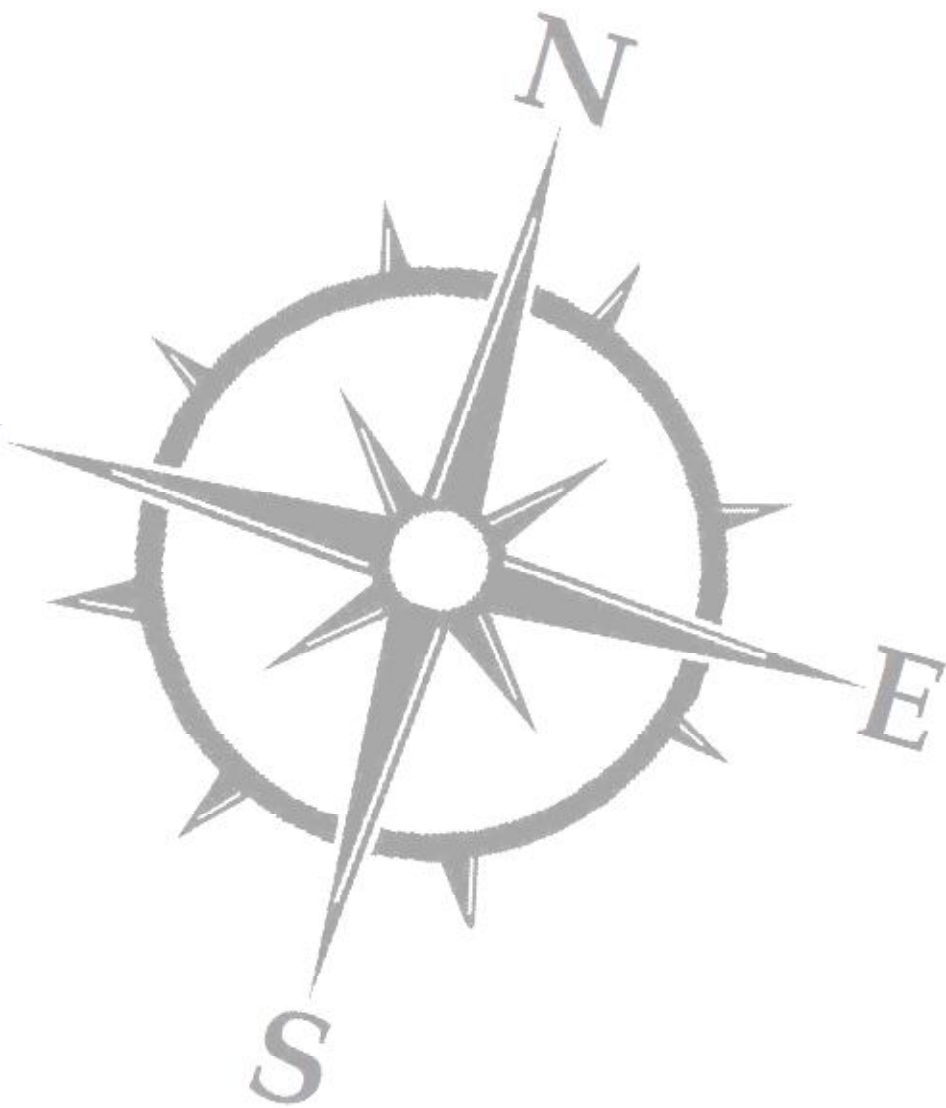
About a month later, I felt that I was well enough to report to the army for my year of duty. I didn't want to do this. I wanted to be in England ministering to the Jews, but I had prayed about it and had to leave it in God's hands now.

The army doctor brought me in and examined me. He asked me a lot of questions and checked and rechecked me a couple of times. Then he went out of the room. I could hear him whispering to someone behind the curtain. "What are they talking about?" I wondered. "Is something wrong with me?"

Finally, after what seemed like a long time, the doctor came back in with a frown on his face. "Mr. Muller, I'm sorry to have to tell you this," he said, and then stopped and took a deep breath.

What do think the doctor is going to tell George? What kind of news did he have? To find out, come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 1.4 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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