

# The Life of Andrew van der Bijl

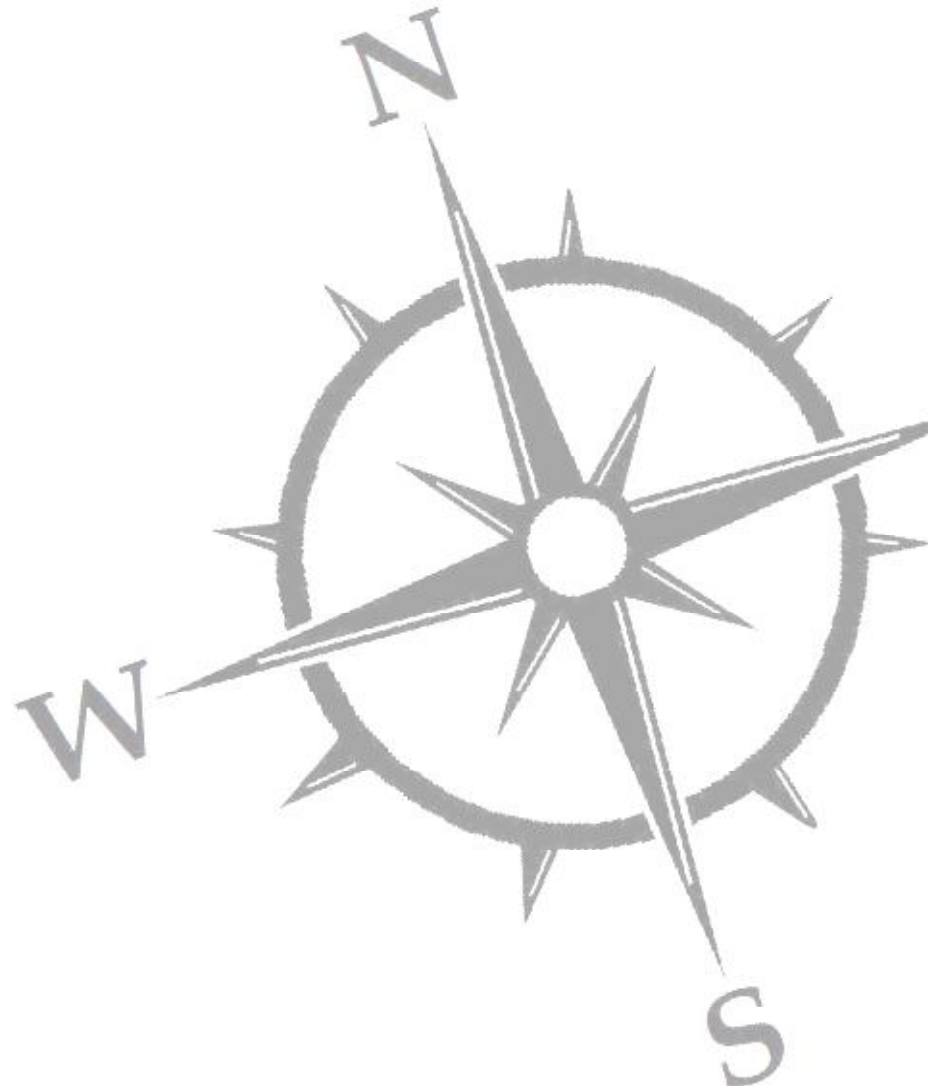
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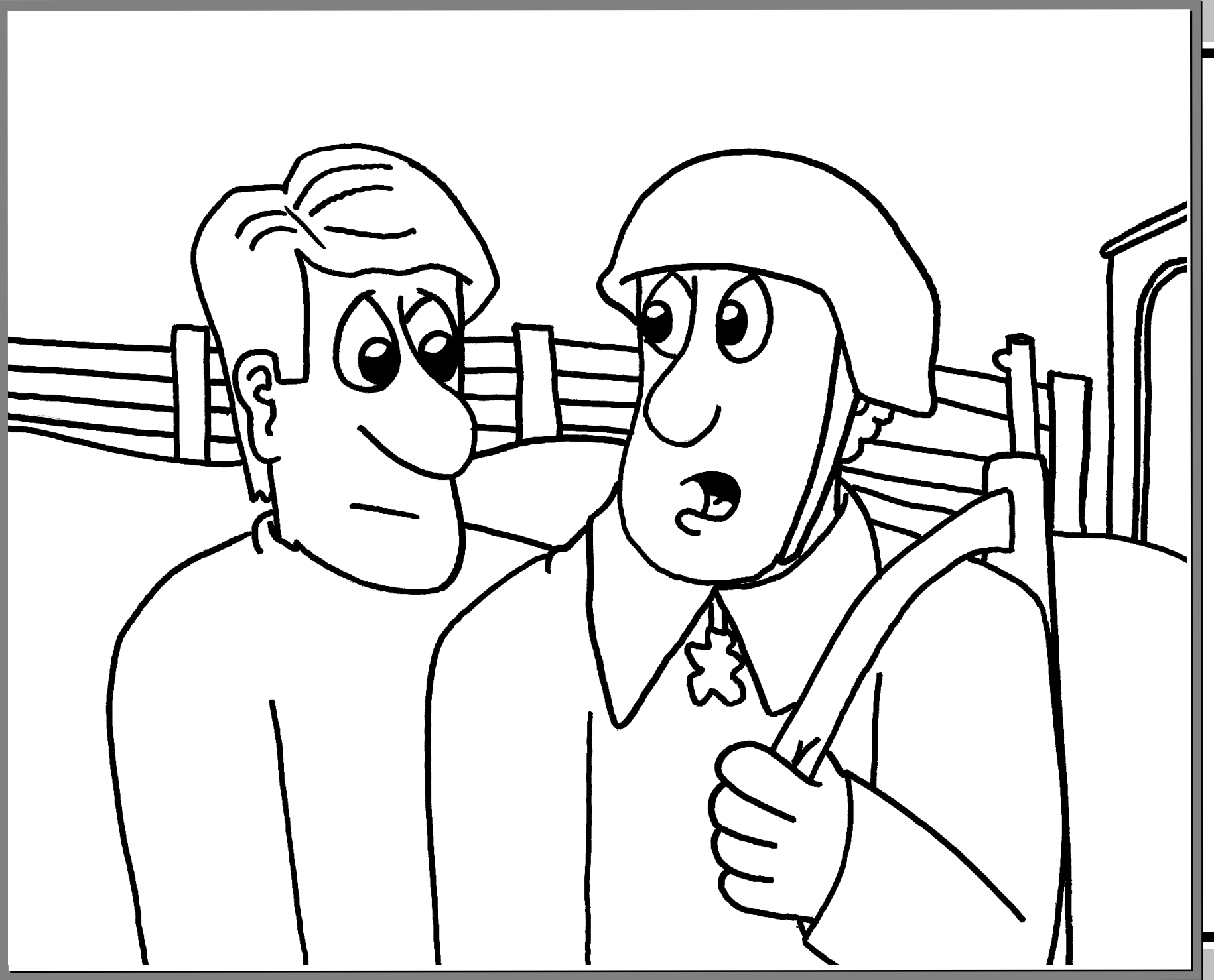
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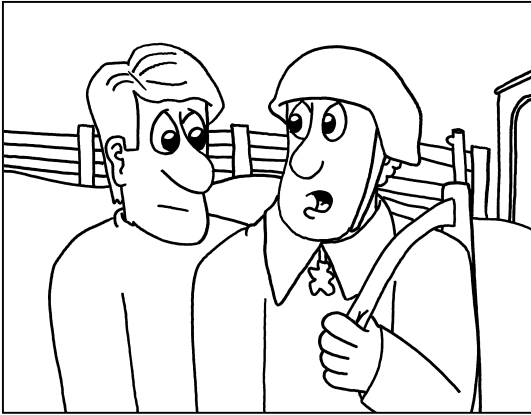
## Lesson: 3.23 – Treasure Missionary Snapshot Series

This story encourages us to treasure God's Word. In many places around the world, people are not allowed to have a Bible. We should read, respect, and cherish our Bibles. Andrew van der Bijl visited many places that did not have a single copy of the Bible because the government wouldn't allow them to. Andrew decided to try to sneak Bibles into these places so they could have God's precious Word. Will he be caught?

*"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." -  
Psalm 119:162*







### **Introduction:**

Have you ever held your breath underwater? After a couple of seconds or minutes, what is something you desperately need? A big breath of air! Air helps us to stay alive. Our story today is about God's secret agent who risked his life to bring people something more precious than gold...the Bible. The Bible gives spiritual life to lost sinners and helps Christians to keep going. There were many times that this missionary could have been put in prison or punished very badly for bringing Bibles to these places where it was illegal. Would God keep him safe and protect him? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about Andrew van der Bijl...

### **Missionary Story:**

Squeak! The brakes of my small blue car made one last squeak as I came to a stop in a line behind three other cars. I was just leaving the country of Bulgaria and was about to enter the country of Romania. "This should only take a couple of minutes to get across the border," I thought. I soon found

out how wrong I was. Forty minutes later, I was still sitting in the same spot, watching the border guards looking through the first car in the line. When they finally lifted the gate and waved that car on, the next car in line pulled up to the gate. The guards then began inspecting it. About an hour later, everything inside the car had been laid out on the grass, including the seats of the car, the spare tire, and even the hubcaps. The guards were even looking at the engine.

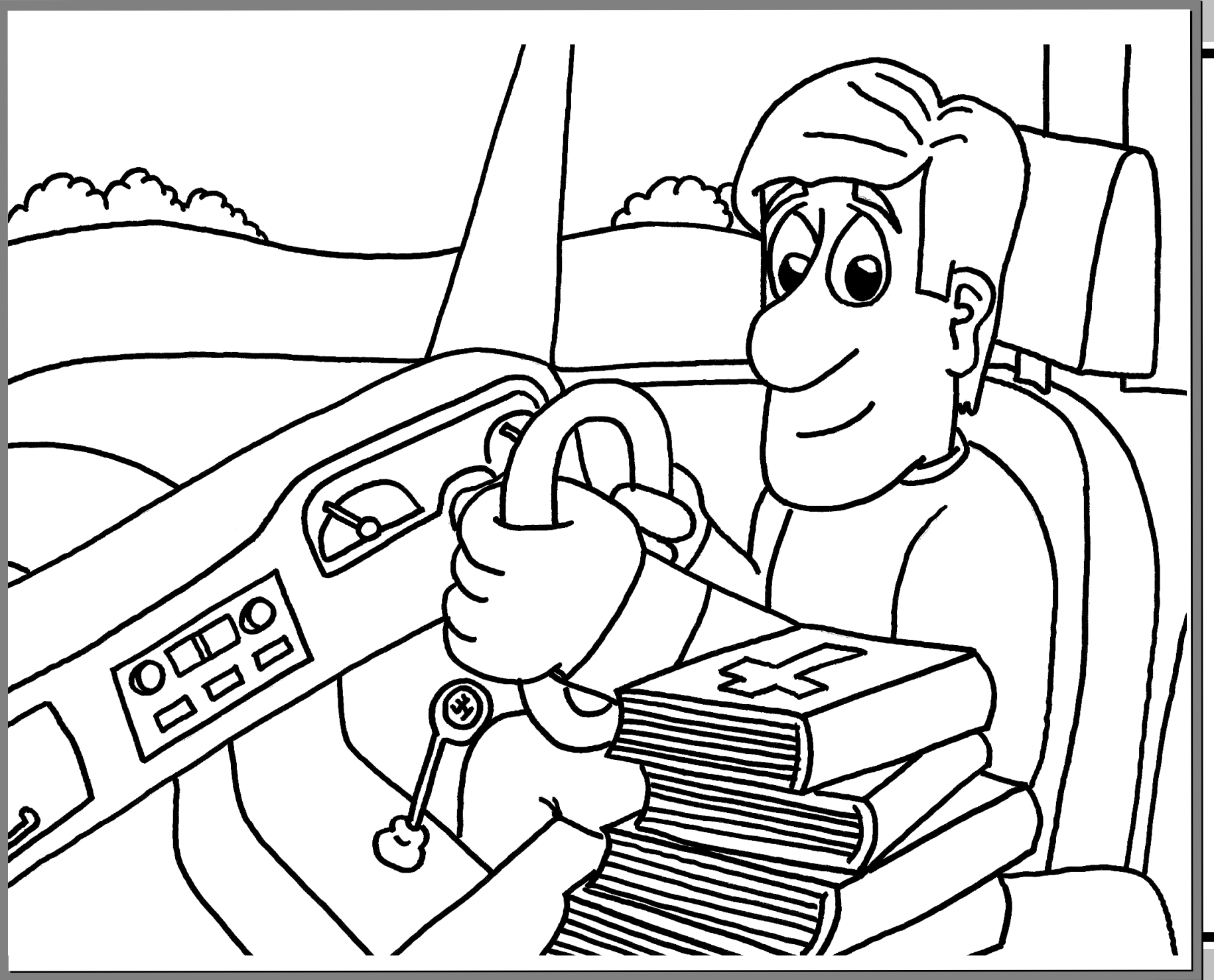
I had crossed the border into many communist countries before, but this was the first time that I had ever seen anything like this. "What am I going to do about the Bibles?" I thought. It was illegal to carry Bibles or religious items across the border. I didn't have just one Bible either; I had a whole box of them. "If the guards search my car like they are searching those cars, they will surely find the Bibles and take them away. I will then be taken to a Romanian prison, and no one will know where I am," I thought. "But what about all those poor Christians?" I thought, "They must have these Bibles!" And with that, I began to do what I always did when I did not know what to do, or I was nervous or scared... I prayed. "Lord, the Bible says that you can make blind eyes to see... Today, I need you to make seeing eyes blind."

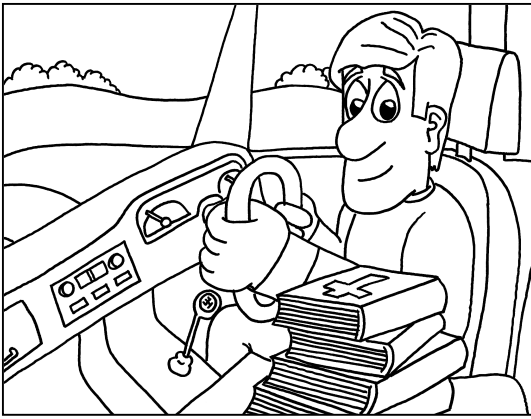
As I sat there in my car, I thought back on my life. I had grown up in a place called Holland in the years between World War I and World War II. I remembered when the Germans rolled into our town in 1940. I remembered joining the resistance and doing things like putting stuff in the

Germans' gas tanks to make the vehicles break down or lighting fireworks in the middle of the night just outside of their headquarters. I remembered the time that I stole a bike from a Nazi soldier and was nearly shot while riding away. That did not seem to be enough adventure for me, though. When I got older, I joined the Dutch Army and went off to battle, but that didn't seem to fill a hole I had inside myself either. One day, I got shot in the ankle and was forced to lie in a hospital bed and recover. The only thing I had to pass the time was a Bible, and so I began to read it. When I was discharged from the hospital, I went to a revival meeting. God got my attention and saved me.

After World War II, a terrible kind of government, called Communism, was forcing its way in and taking over many countries in Europe. Communism did not allow Bibles or religious freedom, and many Christians were being punished and put in prison for not obeying it. I could not forget about Christians and churches that were stuck behind this terrible Iron Curtain of Communism. I remembered taking one trip and seeing that even the pastors of some of the churches did not have a single Bible. These people needed a copy of God's Word, and I was determined to get some copies to believers and struggling churches all throughout the Iron Curtain. This was the adventure I had been looking for!

"Move up!" the guard shouted at the car in front of me. As we both pulled forward, I silently prayed again. "Lord, you have done it before; I need you once again to make seeing eyes blind." God had taken care





rainy season is in the middle of the summer.” “July is our rainiest month,” the first guard said. “No, it’s more like August,” said the second guard, who was now more interested in the weather than in checking my suitcase and belongings. After talking a few more minutes about the weather, the guard said, “Anything else to declare?” “Just some small things,” I said. “We don’t worry about small things,” he said, handing me back my passport. The gate was raised, and off I went. Yes, the Lord had taken care of me in the past.

“Now it is time to stay cool and calm,” I said, patting the small stack of Bibles that were sitting out in the open on the seat next to me. I prayed once more for God to work a miracle and looked up to see the guards just finishing up with the car in front of me. I had now been at this border crossing for four hours. “Next!” The guard yelled, waving my car forward.

I pulled up and stopped in front of the gate. “Nice day!” I said as I rolled down my window and handed my passport to one of the guards. The guard said nothing, but bent over and looked inside my car, not at me, but right at the stack of Bibles sitting on the seat beside me. The guard stared at the Bibles and then looked around the car, and then looked once more at the Bibles. My heart was pounding so loudly, I was sure that the guard could hear it. He stood back up and began to write something on a piece of paper. “Here...pull forward,” the guard said, handing me my passport and lifting the gate. “Am I supposed to pull over off to the side of the road so that the car can be taken apart?” I

wondered as I pulled slowly forward. Nothing happened. I looked in the rearview mirror and saw the guard turn away from me and wave the next car up to the gate. I watched as the guard ordered the man out of the car and told him to lift the hood of his car. I had sat in line for four hours, and the Lord had allowed me to pass the checkpoint in about thirty seconds. “God be praised!” I shouted as I drove off into Romania.

### **Application:**

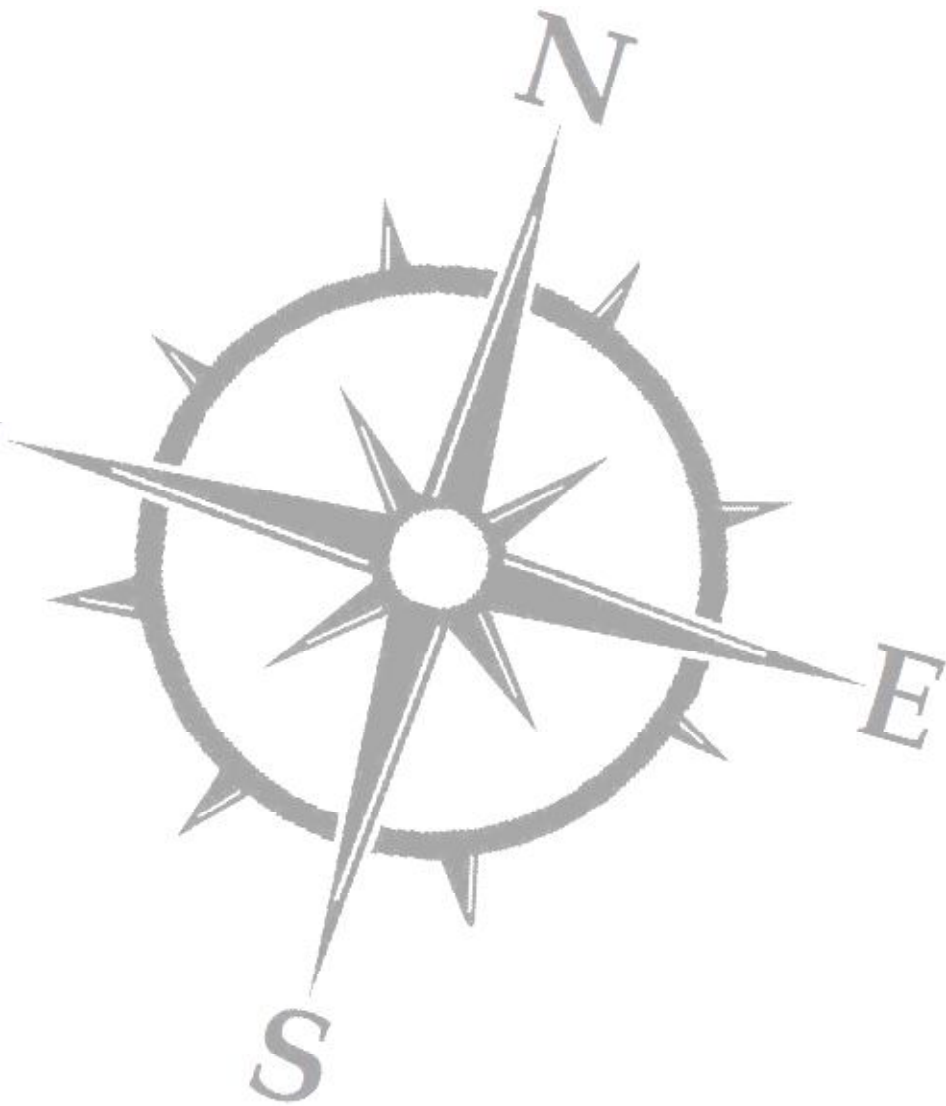
You know, boys and girls, Psalm 119:127-128 tells us that God’s Word is a treasure that is more valuable than gold. In it, we learn all about God and how much He loves us. People behind the Iron Curtain were often arrested and punished for having a copy of the Bible or for trying to go to church. Yet they were thrilled when Andrew brought them a copy of the Bible to read. Do you treasure God’s Word like that?

Andrew van der Bijl was told by a doctor when he was younger that he was too weak to do much traveling. Yet in over 50 years, he worked in over 125 countries and traveled more than 1 million miles behind the Iron Curtain and in other closed countries. He had his passport taken away from him over 12 times. Andrew started a ministry that continues to smuggle Bibles into closed countries of the world to people who desperately need them to this day.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson, please refer to lesson 3.23 on **page 90** in your **Vanuatu Expedition - Leader's Guide.**)*

of me in many situations just like this. I remembered crossing the border, going into the country of Yugoslavia, just a few months before. This time, I was the only car that was at the gate. The two guards came out of their guardhouse. “Passport,” the guard had said as I rolled down my window. I handed him my passport as the other guard asked me to step out of my car. The guard began feeling around my camping gear. I froze as his hand felt near the box of gospel tracts that I had hidden under one of the blankets. “What do you have with you today... Anything to declare?” the guard asked. “Well, I have a watch, some money, a camera...,” I began to say. “Take this suitcase out for me,” said the guard, cutting me off before I could finish. I pulled the suitcase out. The guard pushed some shirts aside, uncovering another open box of gospel tracts. I could feel my hands getting all sweaty and a lump in my throat. “Please, Lord... please make seeing eyes blind,” I prayed silently.

“It seems very dry for this time of year,” I finally said, trying to calm myself down. “Not for March,” the guard said, “our



# 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 information from:

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