

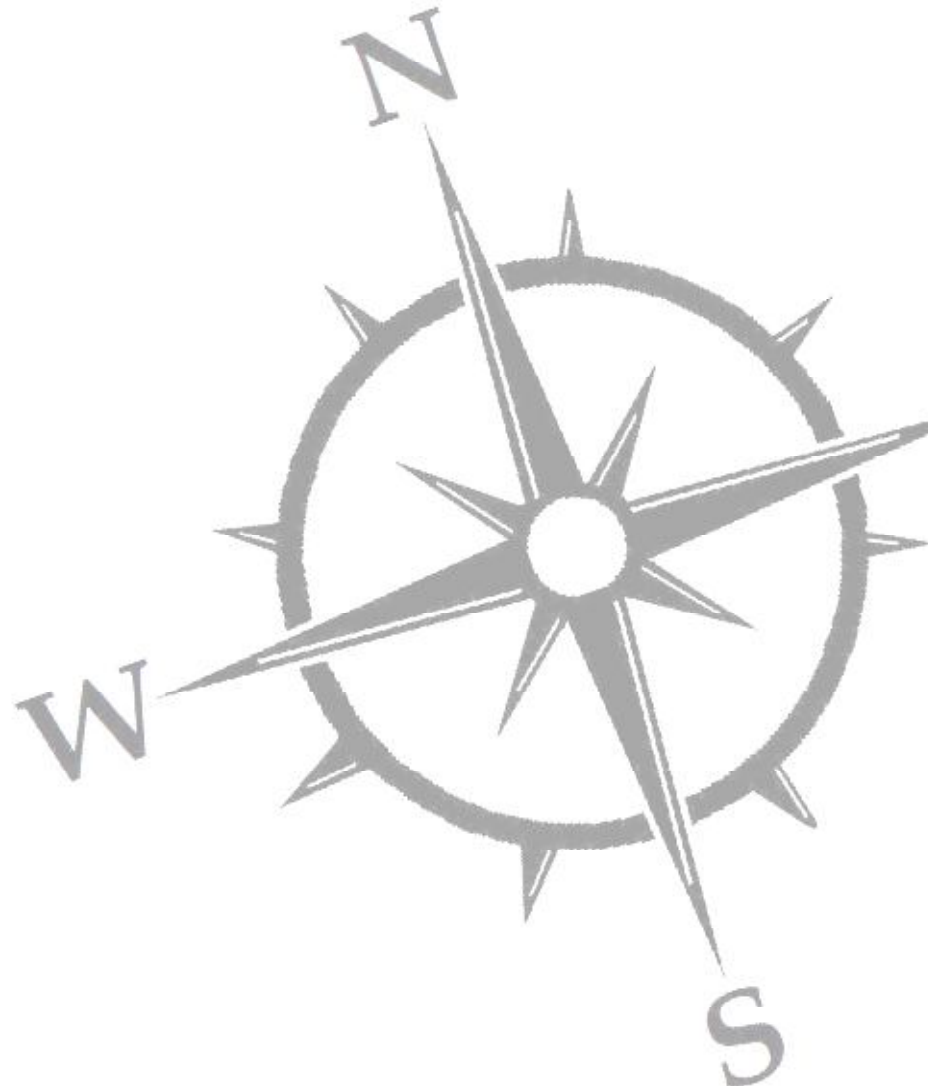
The Life of George Muller

(1805-1898)

Lesson: 1.7 – Provide Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us that the Lord is looking out for His children. God will provide what is needed for those who are serving Him. We can trust the Lord to supply all our needs. God knows the things that we need, and He can provide them for us. God doesn't always provide us with everything we want, but He will give us the things that we need. George Muller needed some things that seemed almost impossible to get.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:19







Who remembers where we left off last week?

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

Out of all the books that I could have picked up from Elizabeth Brinsdon's bookshelf, I somehow found a book written by A.H. Franke. A.H. Franke was the man who had built the orphanage across from Halle University. I had stayed in a room in that orphanage! I had read this book many years before while I was at school there. It was a wonderful book all about how Mr. Franke had built the orphanage and how he had prayed and let God provide all that he needed for it.

As I lay in my bed later that night, I thought about people like Bill Wentworth who thought that God didn't care that he had food on his table. Bill needed to see God provide for someone. I thought about little Freddie in the poorhouse with a bunch of strange, crazy, and sick people all around

him. Freddie needed a safe place to be. I thought about that book by A.H. Franke that had been on Elizabeth Brinsdon's bookshelf. As I lay there, I began to smile. I knew what God wanted me to do. God wanted me to start an orphanage.

A few days later, I stood up before the people in Gideon Chapel and told them about my plans. Our orphanage would not ask for money, but we would just trust God to provide for it. I planned on just opening it for girls at first who were between seven and twelve years old. Hopefully, later we could take on boys and children younger than that.

Many people had questions like where the orphanage would be, and where we would get all of the supplies and staff to run it. Once again, I told everyone that we would have to trust God to provide what was needed for it.

On the way out, many people had bad things to say and told me what an embarrassment this whole thing could be if it didn't work out. I also had others though who said they would pray for me every day. On the way home, Mary and I talked about the meeting. "We'll just have to pray and wait to see what God will provide," I told Mary.

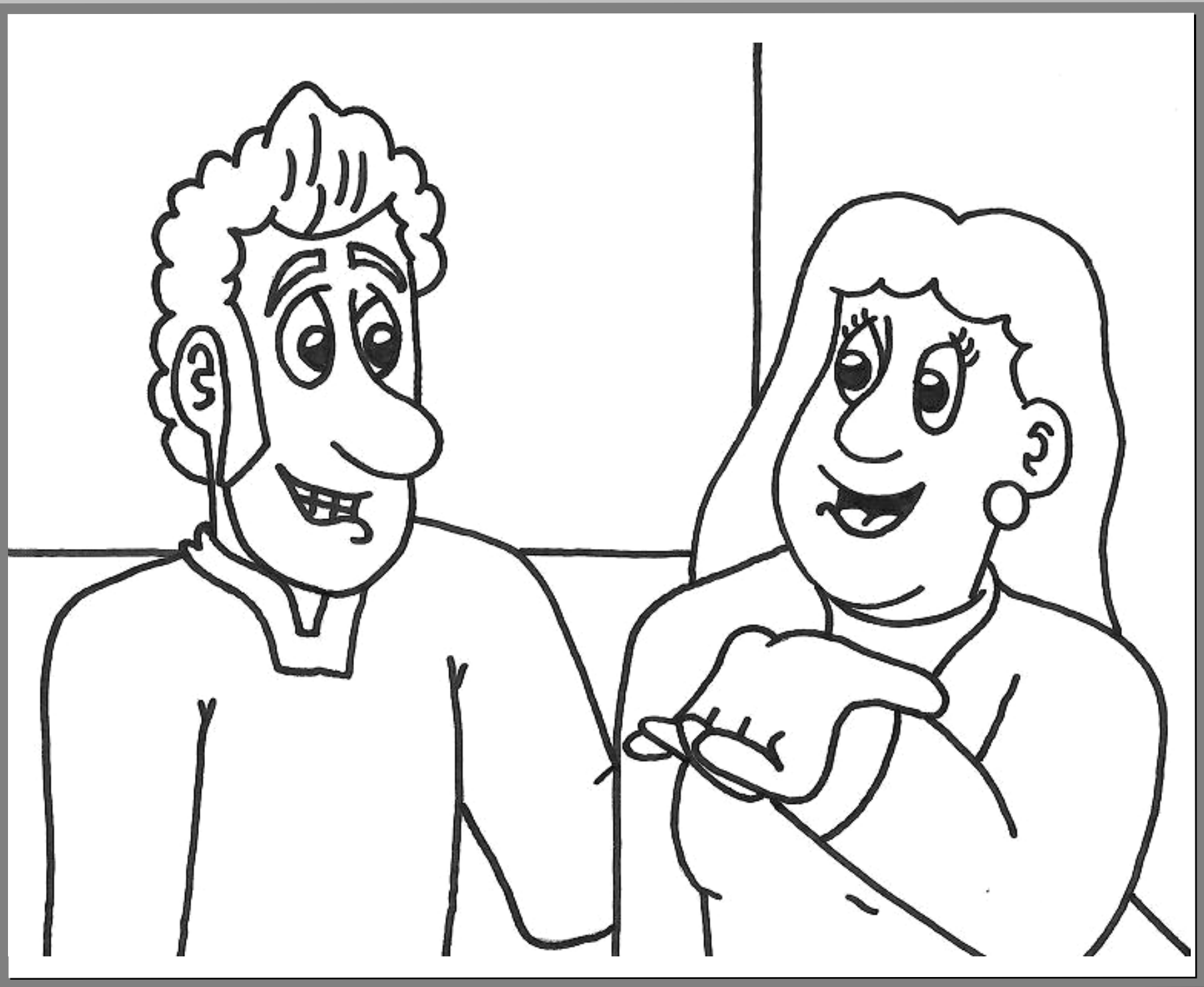
The next day I received a postcard in the mail from a couple who lived one hundred miles north of Bristol. They offered themselves and all their furniture for the new orphanage. "However did they hear about the orphanage?" Mary asked. "We only had the meeting last night. There is no way they could have heard about it in that short of a time." Other letters soon came with others offering to help out in the orphanage as well.

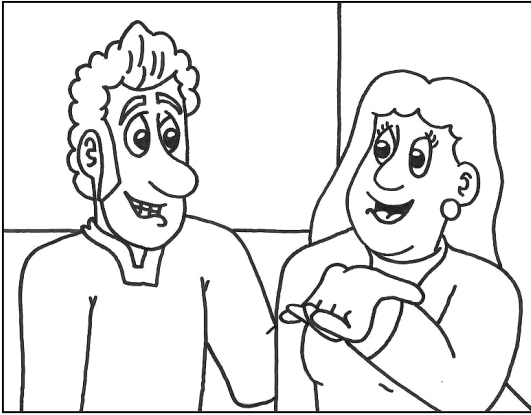
All of the volunteers said they would not need to be paid but would trust God to supply what they would need.

I continued to pray for God to supply and soon things began pouring in. One man from our church showed up with several forks, plates, and basins that he had collected from his neighbors. Over the next few days, blankets, nightgowns, tablecloths, pillowcases, furniture, and silverware seemed to arrive nearly every hour that passed.

But not just supplies came in. People also sent letters to me with money for the orphanage. One day, I received a letter that had one hundred pounds in it for the orphanage. I was excited until I learned that a very poor woman in our church had given us the money. "How can she afford that? Maybe she was just excited about the orphanage and had not truly thought about what she was doing?" I wondered to myself. The next morning I visited the woman. I tried to nicely tell her that I felt her gift was too much for her to afford. "Pastor," she said seriously, "the Lord gave His last drop of blood for me, should I not give all I have to Him?" Then she told me about how she had received a large inheritance. She had given some money to her mother and paid off some debts of her father and wanted me to have the remaining money. "I ended up with five pounds left over and I want you to take that too, to give to the poorest people in our church," she said with a smile.

I was excited to see how God was working in people's hearts. Another morning, I answered to door and found a young boy there. The boy had found a ring that a man





had lost and returned it to the man and the man had given him a coin for his kindness. The boy now proudly handed me the coin and told me that he wanted to give his coin to the orphanage. I was careful to keep track of every gift and every penny that came into the orphanage.

One day, I walked by a building that someone in my church had told me might be coming up for rent. It was the 6th house in a long row of identical houses on Wilson Street and was three stories tall. As I tried to look through the window, a man came up behind me and offered to show me inside. The house was much bigger than it looked from the outside. Not long after looking around and talking with the man about the price, I agreed to rent the house. I hurried home to tell Mary the good news.

February 3, 1836, was a cold morning, but I was excited as I walked to open our new orphanage. It had only been seven weeks since we had announced that we were starting an orphanage, but as I opened the orphanage door and looked around, I was amazed that the house was stocked and ready

to begin taking care of orphans and God had provided everything.

The hours slowly went by, but not a single orphan came to the orphanage. Finally, I went home to tell Mary the bad news. "Maybe this was a bad idea, or maybe I am too proud of what we are doing here?" I wondered as I walked home. I got home and told Mary how not a single orphan had come to the house all day. For a few minutes, we both just sat in silence and then Mary started laughing. "How could she find this funny?" I thought.

"George, how could we be so silly? We prayed for everything that we needed...plates, a house, clothes, workers, but we never prayed for the Lord to send the children!" Mary was right. We immediately got down on our knees and asked God to provide us with children who needed our help.

The next morning, I again happily walked to our orphanage. This time I knew God would provide the children. And sure enough, He did. By the end of the first month, we had twenty-six girls in the orphanage and yet we still had over forty more on my waiting list to get in. Our orphanage was the only one of its kind in England. Every other orphanage would only allow children to come whose families could afford to pay to have them there.

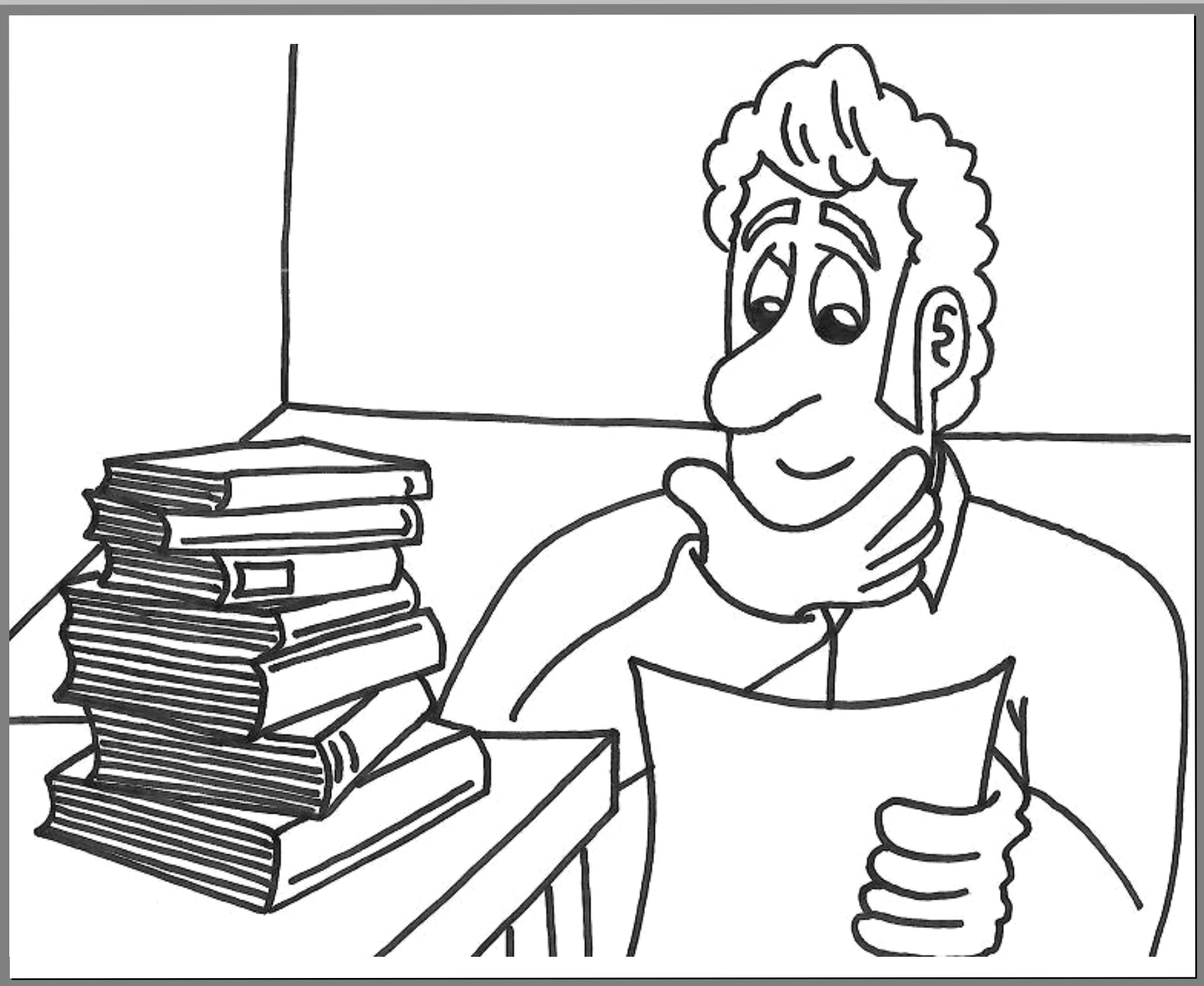
Our first year flew by. Not only were we taking care of the twenty-six orphans at the number six house on Wilson Street, but I was also kept busy being the pastor of Gideon Chapel and furthering the Scriptural Institution for Home and Abroad (SIHA). By this time, the SIHA had over 350 children in

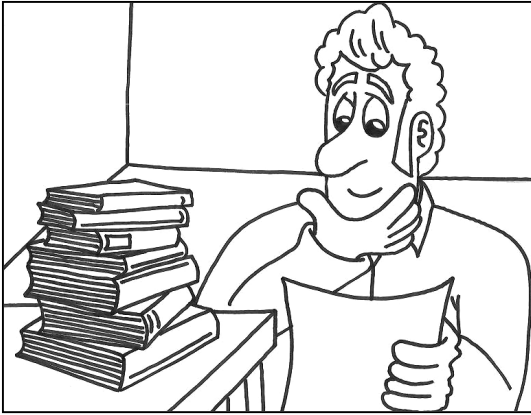
the schools! All the teachers' salaries, classroom rentals, and books were provided by the institution.

It was neat to see all of the help for the orphans that kept coming in. Doctors offered to treat the sick ones for free, and housekeepers and laundry maids offered to help for free or at a much lower cost than they would usually charge. Most people told me they thought the hardest part of running the orphanage must be raising the money for it, but for me, the hardest part was turning away children who needed us.

In October, I decided to rent a second house just down the block at the number one house on Wilson Street (which was at the other end of the row of houses). Number one house had a parking lot beside it. I was able to rent that too and make it into a playground for both orphan houses. We opened the second house in November. We decided that this house would take in some babies and toddlers too. Since most of the girls at the number six house would eventually work as nannies in a house, we thought it would be good for them to learn to take care of younger children.

Christmas time was an exciting time that year. For many of our orphans, this was the very first Christmas they had ever had. Many in our church and community gave us all sorts of food like some ducks and turkeys. The women in town sewed new clothes for the children. Another person sent us an enormous barrel filled with treacle, which is a very sweet syrup. Even a shipment of bananas and oranges arrived from the West Indies for the children.





As I gathered my sixty orphans, the orphanage staff, my family, and my good friend, Henry Craik, for Christmas dinner, I smiled with pure joy. If only those police officers who had arrested me back in Prussia could see me now. Not the thief who only cared about himself, but now a man who was responsible for so many orphans. God had truly done some amazing things in my life.

The month of June brought us some sad news. King William IV had died and his daughter Queen Victoria, who was only eighteen years old, was now ruling over England. Five-year-old Lydia came and asked me if the town's bells were broken because they would not stop ringing. I explained to her that the King had died. I told her that there was going to be a parade on Saturday to celebrate our new queen. Lydia and many of the orphans went to the parade with us. Afterward, I had to hurry home. We were opening a third orphan house on Wilson Street. Many of the boys from the infant house had grown up and I needed a place for them to go. We were able to rent the number three house on Wilson Street and planned on

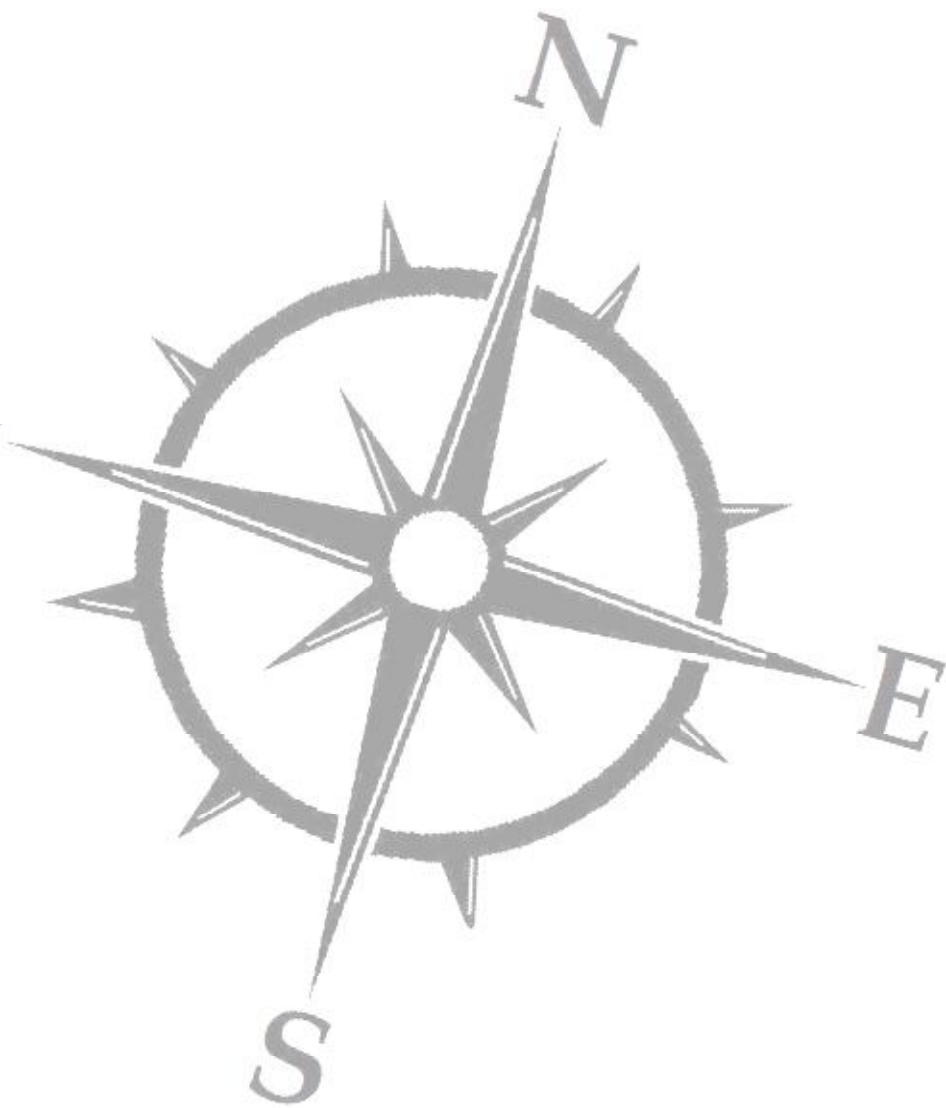
putting around forty boys in the new house.

Later that year, I waited for the first copies of the book I had written to come off the press. It was called *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller*. I had prayed long and hard about writing this book, probably more than any other decision I had made. I had so many people write me and ask me how to live by faith, that I finally decided to write the book instead. But I didn't want them to think I was so great or that had some kind of special faith. I wanted them to know that they too could have the same faith and that God could do those same things for them if they would let Him.

The book sold very quickly and soon letters began arriving from all over England asking for me to come and speak. But I wasn't going to be able to go to the churches that had asked me because I wasn't going to be around. I wasn't going to be in England at all. You see, I had to leave England...and I had to do it right away.

Why do you think that George has to leave? Where is he going to go? To find out come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 1.7 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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