

The Life of

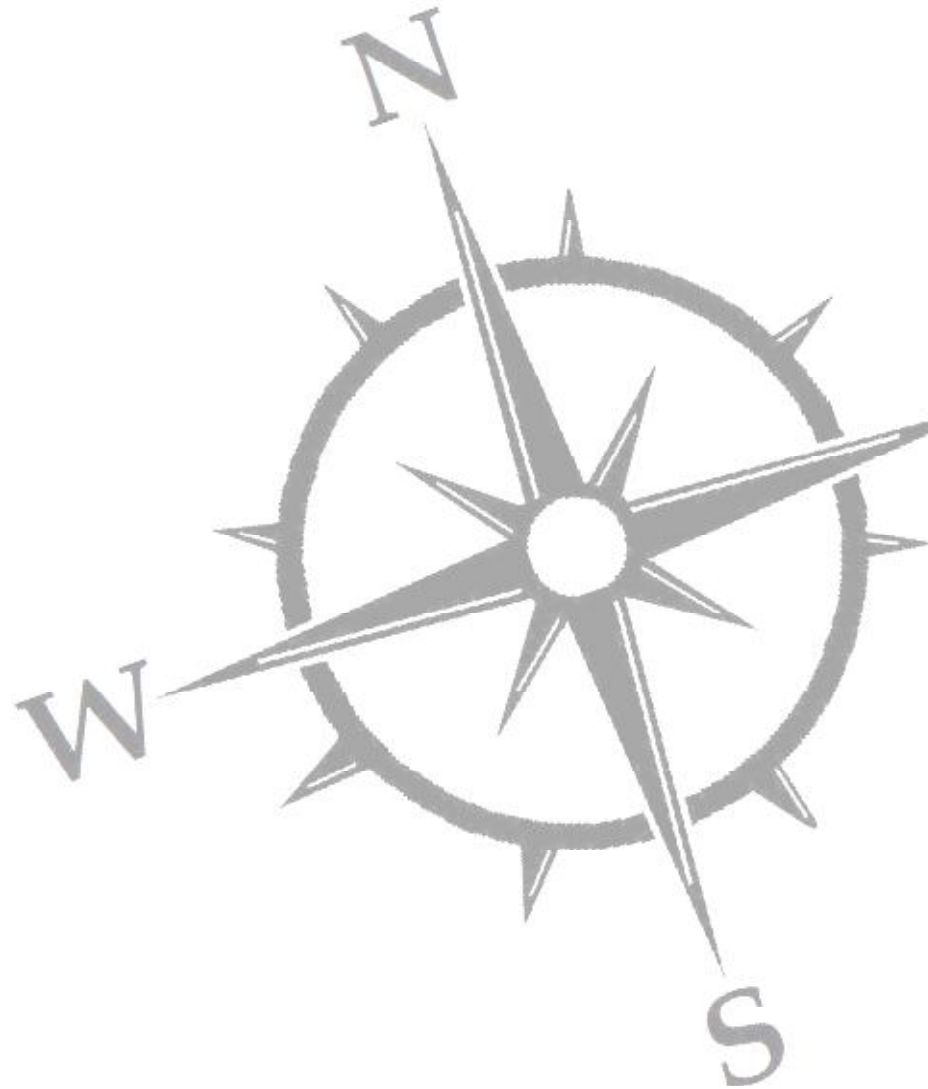
George Grenfell

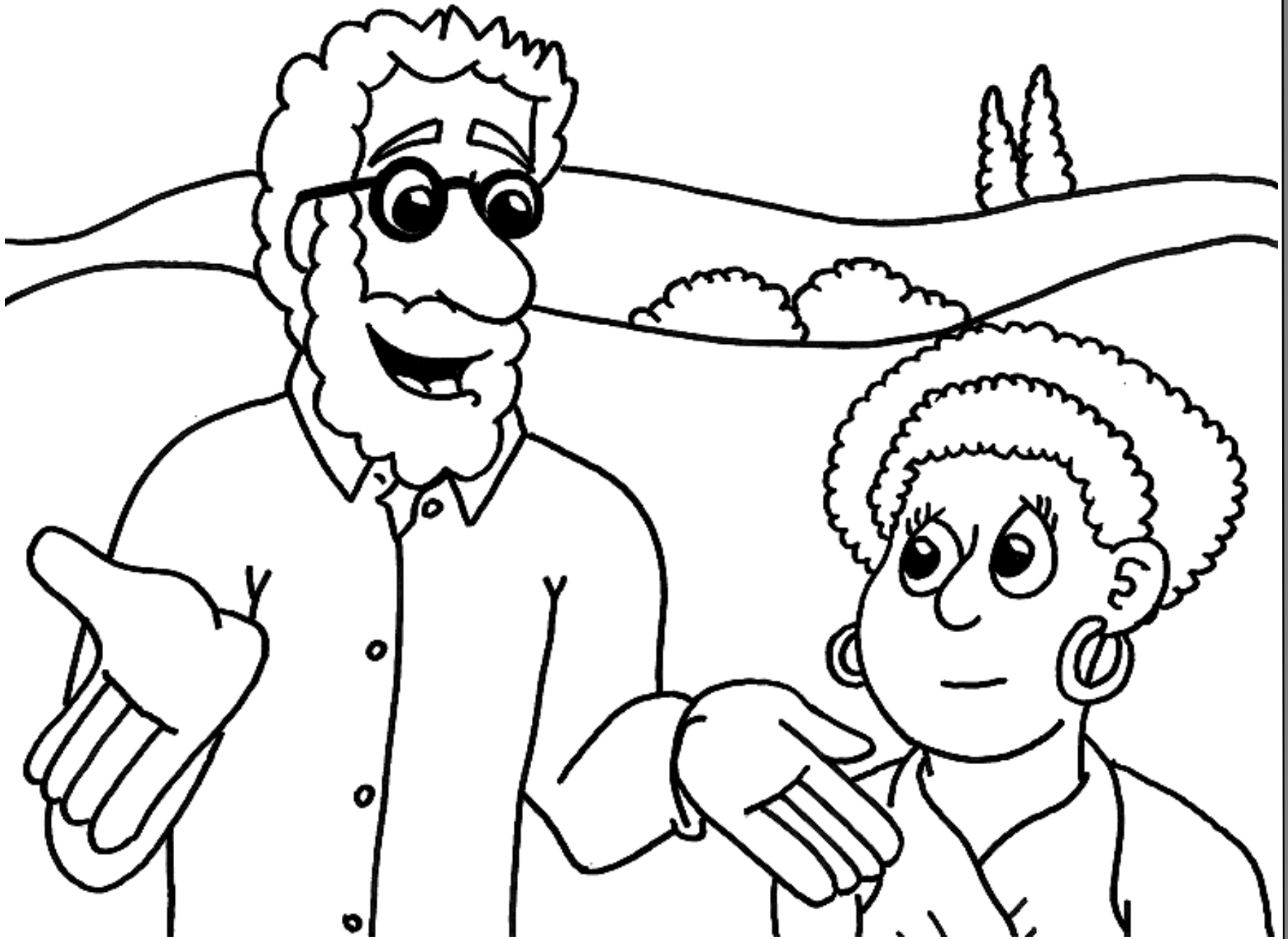
(1849-1906)

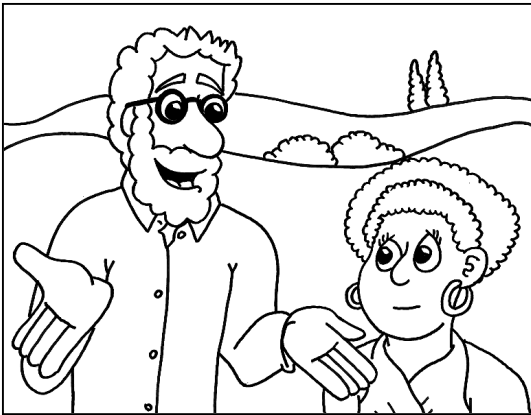
Lesson: 4.23 – Safety Missionary Snapshot Series

This lesson 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. Having Jesus in our heart is like wrapping us up in the biggest and strongest football pad in the world. Nothing can harm us! George Grenfell was about to face some very scary things. He would have to trust in the Lord to protect him and keep him safe.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”- Psalm 46:1







Introduction:

Have you ever seen a bank vault in a movie or perhaps a picture of one? Bank vaults are made of thick layers of metal. The vault has a huge metal door. It takes a special key or code to open the door to the vault and there is usually a guard or two there as well. Banks want to make sure that what is inside of that vault is safe. Our story today is about a missionary to some fierce tribes in the African jungles. This missionary risked his life to go and tell these people about Jesus' love. He is about to find himself surrounded by trouble, will God keep him safe? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about George Grenfell...

Missionary Story:

CHUG! CHUG! CHUG! I watched the large crocodiles who had been sunning themselves on the muddy banks of the mighty Congo River suddenly sit up and look closely at the strange monster that was coming up the river towards them. The crocodiles weren't the only ones surprised by this strange river monster. The Africans often

would run off into the jungles or grab their spears and climb into their canoes to fight it. But it wasn't a monster at all...it was my steamship, called the *Peace*. It was, however, the first steamship to ever come to this part of Africa and the people did not know what to make of it.

As we came around a bend in the river, a large village came into view. I looked closely at the villagers on the shore. They stood frozen staring at the steamship. Not one of them reached for their spear as some tribes had done. I hoped that they would be friendly. I told my small crew of natives to stop our boat a little ways from the shore and then we climbed down into the ship's canoe and slowly paddled ashore. It wasn't long before a large crowd of natives surrounded me and began to touch my face and my arms. "My friends," I said, "I have come to bring the light and love of God to you."

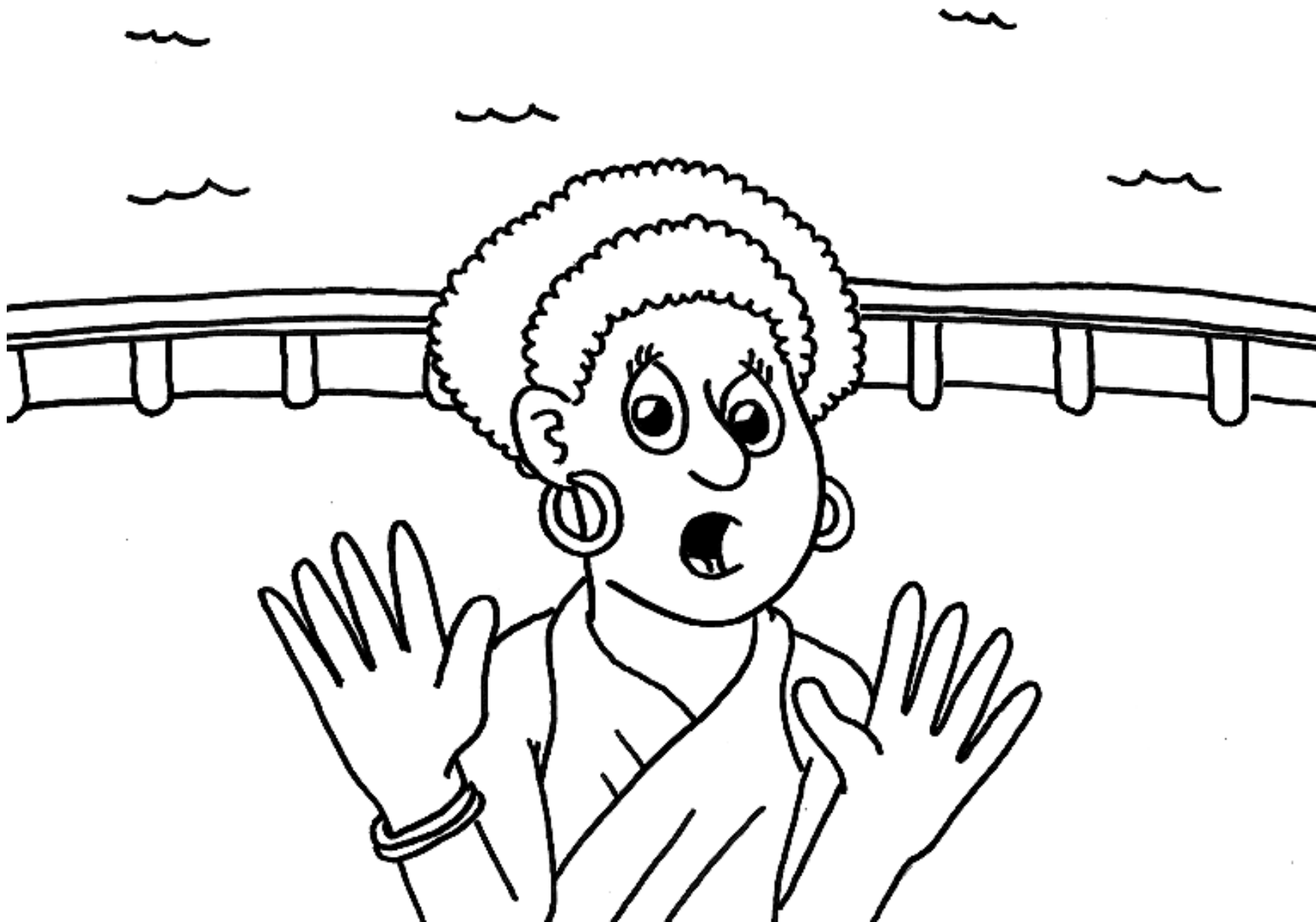
Just then I heard someone crying. I pushed through the crowd and found two young girls bound with cords and tied to a tree. "What does this mean?" I asked the chief. The chief proudly shared how his warriors armed with spears and bows and arrows had just returned from raiding another tribe. "They brought many things back," continued the chief, "these girls are slaves that we captured from the raid. They will stay tied up here until somebody buys them." I looked down at the girls and felt very sad for them and wanted to do all I could to set them free. I reached into my pocket and pulled out some beads and a brightly colored cloth. "I would like to buy them," I told the chief. The chief took the beads and cloth and examined

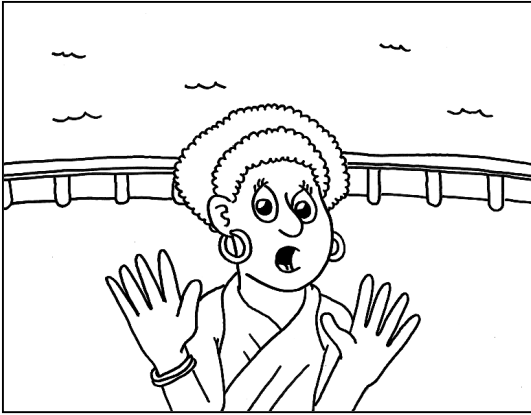
them. He then smiled and ordered his men to untie the girls and they followed me back to my canoe.

As the steamship's engine began to rumble and we began to move forward, the girls seemed to be very afraid, but very soon after they became very excited. They darted all over the deck smiling, pointing, and touching parts of the ship. I knew this was the first ship they had ever seen. I chuckled to myself as I remembered back to when we first brought the *Peace* to the Congo River. When I first came to Africa, I was determined to reach the peoples deep in the jungles with the gospel. I noticed that many tribes lived along the Congo River and realized that if I had a steamship, I could easily travel up and down the river and reach these people for the Lord.

In 1882, I traveled back to England to oversee the building of my steamship. After it had been tested on the Thames River in England, it was taken apart, put in 800 boxes weighing 65 pounds each, and shipped to Africa. It took a thousand men to carry all the boxes past the rapids and waterfalls and up to Stanley Pool where it would be put back together. It was a long journey through tall grasses and ravines. We had to use ropes and pulleys to get the boxes up the steep cliffs, but finally, everything was ready for it to be built.

I had brought a young engineer with me whose job was to put the steamship together and then keep it in good running order. Soon after reaching Africa though, the engineer died. Two other engineers were sent out from England, but both of them also died





before they even arrived. I did the only thing I could do... I prayed and then set to work building the steamship myself without any directions to follow. "It's alive, it's alive," cried one of my native helpers several weeks later when he saw the steamer moving in the water.

Some tribes were friendly. Other tribes threw rocks, spears, and fired arrows at us when we got near. I chuckled as I remembered one tribe of friendly cannibals who offered to give me a wife in exchange for a very fat boatman who worked for me on the *Peace*. I was pretty sure they wanted to have him for dinner, so I decided not to make the trade.

"Look! Danger! Warriors!" one of the crew shouted as the *Peace* came around a bend in the river. I looked up and spotted a whole fleet of canoes filled with fierce-looking warriors, some holding spears, others with bows in their hands and poisoned arrows drawn and aimed right at us.

We were in trouble. There was no way we could turn our steamship around, we were already too close to them. At a signal

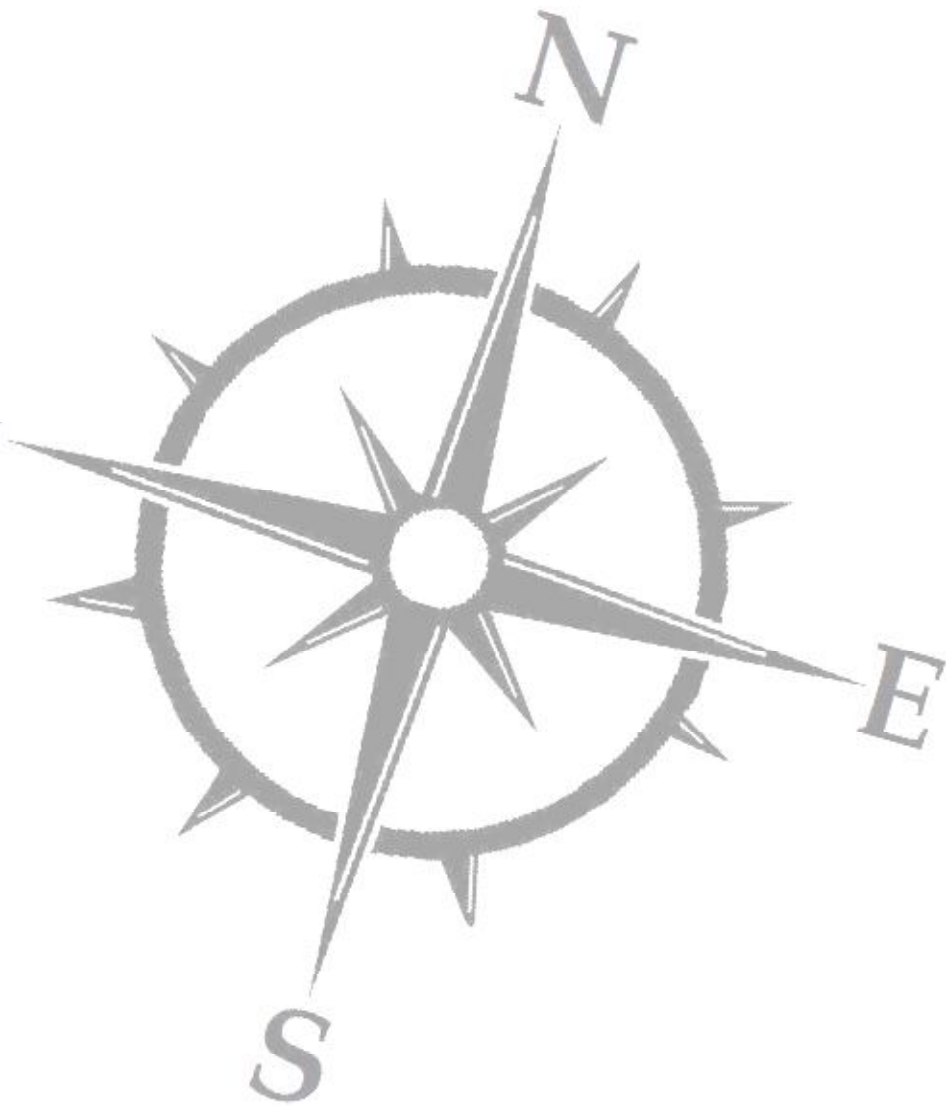
from the chief, the fierce battle-cry of the tribe was sounded and a shower of spears and arrows struck the steamer. One of them whizzed past me missing me by just a few inches. Suddenly, one of the little slave girls began to shout and wave her hand. "What is it?" I shouted to the girl. "See!" she answered excitedly, pointing to a warrior who was standing up in a canoe and preparing to hurl another spear. "That is my brother and this is my village!" "Shout to him and get his attention!" I said. The little girl shouted as loudly as she could, but the African warriors were screaming and shouting so loudly that no one heard her. Then I had an idea. I signaled one of my men and a second later, a loud shriek blasted out through the air. The warriors stopped screaming and stood still. They had never heard the whistle of a steamer before! "Shout again-quickly!" I said to the little slave girl. Her small voice rang out across the water, calling first her brother's name and then her own. The astonished warrior dropped his spear, grabbed his oar, and then quickly paddled to the steamer. The girl told how the man in "the big canoe that smokes" had found her and the other girl in the village of their enemies, had saved them from slavery, had brought them safely home, and now was going to set them free. The story passed quickly from one canoe to another. Before long, all the warriors who, only a few minutes before, had tried to kill me, were now welcoming me onto the shore and into their village. "Why have you come?" one of the villagers asked me. "I have come to tell you a very, very special message." I began.

Application:

You know, boys and girls, Psalm 46:1 tells us that God is like a strong castle that we can run to for protection. The safest place that we can be is right where God wants us to be. God protected George Grenfell as he worked with many of the dangerous tribes in Africa. God kept George safe from the many animals, warriors, witchdoctors, and situations that could have easily taken his life. George trusted God to protect him.

George Grenfell traveled up and down the Congo River for nearly 28 years. He was the first man to travel the Congo River by steamboat. He was given a gold medal in 1886 by the Royal Geographic Society for all of the exploring he did in Africa. George stood against warriors and witch doctors. He stopped wars and helped do away with many evil practices that the people had. He fought against slavery and taught people to live peaceably with each other. George Grenfell saw himself as a candle. What does it cost a candle to give light? It costs everything! The candle gives all of itself so that there can be light. George Grenfell gave himself up like a candle so that the light of the saving gospel could reach into the dark Congo.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to **lesson 4.26 on page 90** in your *India 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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