



# GEORGE MÜLLER

ROGER STEER







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1805–1898

Delighted in God



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**CHRISTIAN FOCUS**





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## INTRODUCTION

George Müller has a special claim on your attention. It is not just that he believed in a God who answers prayer – even in today's rather secular world there are many people who believe that. What is unique about Müller is that he put his belief in the reality of God publicly to the test. Thousands of people in Müller's day, and in the years since his death, have grown convinced that – if I may say it reverently – God passed the test with honours.

I am an even greater fan of George Müller today than I was thirty years ago when I wrote the first edition of this biography. I see him as a humble man who thought of himself as a hell-deserving sinner, but who is now rightly seen as a giant of church history who offers unique inspiration to a new generation of seekers after truth. I have no hesitation in agreeing with W. H. Harding who wrote in 1914 that the story of Müller's life presents 'one of the most striking testimonies to the faithfulness of God that the world has even seen'.

George Müller's efforts to demonstrate the truth of his assertion that God answers prayer brought him international fame during his lifetime. A letter from a doctor telling him that his life was 'the most wonderful and complete refutation of scepticism' he had ever come across was typical of many he received. But I suspect that in his modesty he would have regarded these verdicts on him as exaggerated and insisted that all the honour for anything he achieved should go to God.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, prayer is back on the agenda. In September 1999, a group of young people





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at a church on the south coast of England had what seemed to many the crazy idea of trying to pray non-stop for a month. They reported that 'God turned up and we couldn't stop till Christmas!' From there the prayer meeting has spread into many countries, denominations and age-groups. Hundreds of non-stop prayer meetings now link up on the Worldwide Web to form a unique chain of prayer. 24-7 has become a worldwide, non-stop prayer movement with a network of people in prayer rooms across the world determined to pray as if it all depends on them, and live as if it all depends on God.

Right now, as I write this on the two-hundredth anniversary of George Müller's birth, someone, somewhere is praying 24-7. The dream is to turn the tide of our culture back to Jesus in the knowledge that things change when God's people pray. 24-7 has captured the imagination. Young people today are as likely to turn up at a prayer meeting at 3 a.m. as at 7.30 p.m.! They dare to be alone with God for a whole hour even in the middle of the night. Very few of them 'pray and stop', the vast majority 'pray and go' – the 'going' involving a renewed vision for local mission, or social involvement in local communities or wider mission teams.

Imaginatively decorated prayer rooms have been opened in a barn in the English countryside; a skate park in Switzerland; a bus in the slums of Delhi; a police station in London; an office in Tulsa Oklahoma; the U.S. Naval Academy; a brewery in Missouri; in tents; in student basements; campus chaplaincies; and of course in church buildings. You can find out more about this exciting enterprise to move the hand of God by visiting [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com) or by ringing +44 1243 531898

In heaven, George Müller must be delighted by all this. The last person he spoke to at the end of his long life on earth was a young student teacher who was singing with happiness after a prayer meeting. Müller loved to quote the words of Jesus: 'Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened' (Matthew 7:7-8). 'Do not be anxious about anything,' said the





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Apostle Paul, 'but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God' (Philippians 4:6).

There was nothing magical about Müller's answers to prayer. In the famous story from Arabian Nights, Aladdin discovered that when he rubbed the magician's lamp, a genie appeared who said, 'I am the slave of the lamp. Command me and I will obey.' The power through prayer which Müller discovered didn't work like that at all. For him, prayer was supernatural but not magical and his success was a consequence of a life-time's walk with God.

Like the organisers of today's 24-7 movement for non-stop prayer, George Müller believed he was putting into practice basic Biblical principles which are available to every Christian believer. The principles involved marvellous promises to be claimed and quite demanding conditions to be fulfilled. These promises and conditions are set out in the second half of chapter 20 below. If you believe the promises, study the principles and conscientiously resolve to put them into practice I believe that your life of prayer will be transformed. That's not to say that you will no longer find prayer perplexing at times, that you will suddenly know all the answers, or that prayer will cease to be a mystery.

For George Müller, putting Biblical prayer principles into practice resulted not only in spectacular answers, but also a growth in an attractive personal holiness. Those who knew him spoke of a 'smile which so habitually lit up his eyes and played over his features that it left its impress on the lines of his face'. And although he relished a joke which was wholesome and free from malice, nobody was inclined to engage in idle chatter in his presence. They sensed that he walked with God.

Müller knew his God. He enjoyed spending time in his presence. He believed God's promises. He approached his heavenly Father in the name of Jesus, his Saviour, friend and master. In obedient trust, he expected answers to his prayers – and, as the world knows, he got them.

Few sagas in the history of the Christian church can equal the excitement and drama of Müller's life which spanned nearly the whole of the nineteenth century. Few men or women have





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touched more hearts or inspired more commitment to Christ. In the years since Müller died, the work which he established has adapted to meet changing needs, diversifying into new areas, but the principle of never appealing for funds has not been broken. I am so grateful to Julian Marsh of the George Müller Foundation for bringing the story up-to-date by once again revising the final chapter. I am glad that this new edition of a book which has been continuously in print for thirty years will make the whole story known to a fresh audience.

One hundred and thirty-five years have elapsed since George Müller opened the fifth of his large children's homes on Ashley Down in Bristol. He was now caring for two thousand children and employing a staff of over two hundred people. Much has changed since the year 1870, but Müller's God remains the living God. He is alive in the hearts of prayerful people all over the world. I pray that your knowledge and experience of him will grow as you read the remarkable tale which follows.

Roger Steer  
Down St Mary, Devon, October 2005

