

KEPT SAFE THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

--Irma B. Williams

Missionary Lydia Lauster's world seemed to be falling apart. The year was 1938 in Nazi Germany. The Gestapo had tracked down her husband, Herman, had arrested him for the crime of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and sent him to the concentration camp at Welzheim. Lydia was left with three children to raise, Walter, Mary, and Paul the baby.

Lydia earnestly prayed to God through her fear and anguish, "What shall I do?" Her husband was missionary to his own homeland, preaching salvation through Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A growing number of followers were experiencing the delivering power of Jesus.

In her booklet, "Herman Lauster," (a Church of God World Missions Missionary Hero Series) his daughter-in-law, Bobbie Lauster, writes, "God strengthened Lydia, and she continued carrying on as head of the church. It was not unusual for her to walk twenty miles to attend a service and encourage the saints. Great precautions had to be taken, but the services were continued...meeting places were changed often because the Gestapo was always watching."

Through continued prayer and fasting, Lydia learned to hear the quiet direction of the Holy Spirit. One evening, services were scheduled again in Lydia's home in the village of Krehwinkel. The shutters were closed over the living room windows. People entered unobtrusively. O how blessed they felt that evening as they worshipped in whispered tones. As the service closed, Lydia felt led by the Holy Spirit to ask the congregation to leave one by one by another door. "Do not go out the same door in which you entered," she whispered, showing each member where to slip out.

Lydia later learned that two neighbors, spies for the Gestapo, were hiding outside her house in the shed keeping close surveillance, but they could only see the main entrance. They were unable to see anyone leave or to take down the names of the congregation. God protected the undaunted band of Christians.

In spite of overwhelming difficulties, Lydia continued her life of prayer and service. The life of her husband was spared, and her three children were called

into Ministry. They and their spouses have served as missionaries in the Church of God with distinction. When the war was over, twelve churches were ready to be set in order because of the courage and obedience of one woman's guidance by the Holy Spirit.

Years later, in 1989, my husband, Dr. Eddie, and I were appointed to go to work in Germany at the European Bible Seminary. While there, we had the privilege of meeting Sister Lydia Lauster. Years earlier Eddie had been at Lee College with Walter and Mary, her two older children. I had attended Lee College with the younger son, Paul. They have since all gone to be with the Lord. What rich rewards they all now have for their faithfulness.