

Saturday, 13 July 2013 will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival in Burma of Adoniram and Ann Judson. A PowerPoint presentation of this article can be viewed on

[www.frontline.org.za](http://www.frontline.org.za)

, click

[here](#)

. Dr. Hammond's lecture on the Life of Adoniram Judson can be heard on

[Sermonaudio.com](http://Sermonaudio.com)

## **Missionaries to Burma**

Adoniram and Ann Judson had the distinction of being America's first foreign missionaries. Adoniram Judson was the son of an austere Congregational minister. Adoniram learned to read by age three. From the beginning it was clear that he was destined for an exceptional life.

## **Conversion**

When he entered Brown University on Rhode Island, he became enchanted with Deism and unbelief and slipped into a restless life. After graduation he wrote for the stage in New York. Then he chose to head West for the frontier. En route, at an Inn, he listened all night to a man dying in the next room. In the morning he was shocked to learn that the deceased man was one

of his closest companions at college, an outspoken unbeliever who had opposed the Gospel of Christ vehemently. Adoniram knew that Jacob Eames was lost, but he also recognised that the same was true of himself. The West lost its allure, he turned his horse around and enrolled at a Theological Seminary. He was converted to Christ there, in 1808.

### Called

The conviction grew that he was called to be a Missionary to Burma, but there were no missionary societies in America yet. So Adoniram travelled to England to consult with the London Missionary Society.

### Captured

His voyage by sea involved being captured by a French warship and imprisoned in France. Adoniram showed the kind of ingenuity which was to characterise his whole missionary life, by escaping from this French prison and making his way back to America, arriving 8 months after he had left. Despite opposition from family and friends, Adoniram lost no time in making preparations.

### Courtship

Adoniram courted Ann Hasseltine who was generally accepted as *"the most beautiful girl in Bradford, Massachusetts."*

His letter to her father is a classic:

*"I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter, whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and suffering of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of ocean, to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India, to every kind of want and distress, to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death?"*

John Hasseltine consented and Adoniram married Ann Hasseltine.

### Commissioned

They were consecrated for missionary service the day after their wedding, and within 2 weeks they were sailing for India - sent out by the newly formed American Board of Commission for Foreign Missionaries.

### **Conflict**

Adoniram and Ann spent much of their honeymoon arguing - about baptism. By the time they had reached Calcutta, Ann had also come to agree with the Baptist position and they sent a resignation letter back to the Mission Board that had just sent them out! They then convinced the Baptists to adopt them with the formation of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

### **Carey**

En-route to Burma, the Judsons visited William Carey – the Father of Modern Missions - in India. There they were baptised by immersion, by Carey's co-worker, William Ward.

### **Tragedy**

En-route by ship to Rangoon, their first child was stillborn during the voyage. In July 1813, the Judsons reached Rangoon. Their hearts sank at the sights and the smells of the place. Burma was a resistant Buddhist nation, under a cruel and despotic king, who viciously opposed their work. The Judson's 7-month old son died.

### **Tribulation**

Adoniram was struck by fever, which left him close to death. One missionary excursion dragged into a nightmare that lasted 7 months, much of it afflicted by fever. Back in Rangoon, Ann was subjected to severe harassment and withstood a devastating plague of cholera which swept the

city.

### **Perseverance**

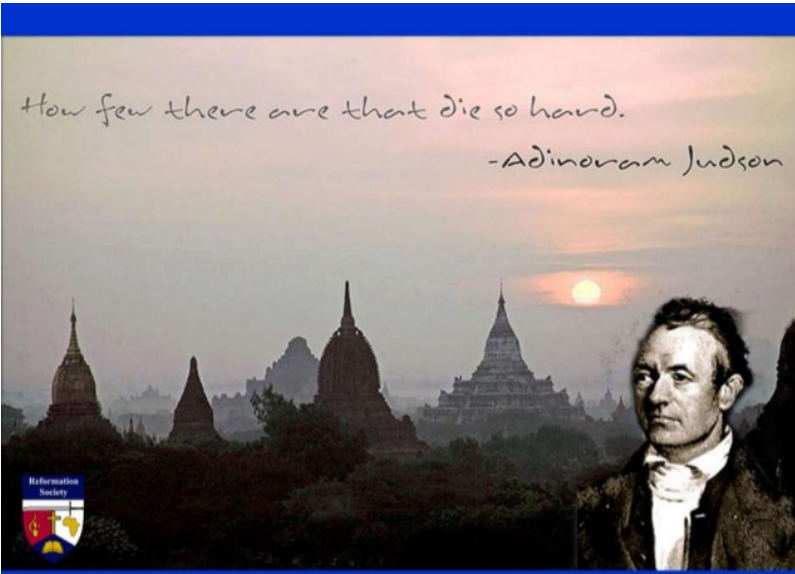
The Judsons used a *Zayat* (a shelter) to provide rest for travellers, where discussions took place. It was at this *Zayat* in June 1819 that the Judsons were blessed, after 7 years of labour, with the first Burmese convert, Maung Nau.

### **Resistance**

At one point, Adoniram Judson sought an audience with the Emperor, to present the Gospel to him. His attempt was abruptly dismissed by the Emperor. The Judsons battled discouragement and ill health.

### **Reinforcements**

At one point Ann had to be sent back to America to recover from a debilitating fever. She returned with more missionary volunteers.



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