

MYANMAR'S HEROES OF FAITH

Adoniram and Ann Judson

Two hundred year anniversary (1813-2013)

July 13 1813

By Rev Dr. James Humphries

ARRIVAL IN RANGOON

On July 13, 1813 Adoniram Judson took his first step onto the soil of Burma. He had come east from India, across the Bay of Bengal and then headed north up the Ayeyarwaddy River. There may have been four things on his mind at that time. One was his ill wife, Ann still on board ship. Second, there was the missionary who he was about to meet, Mrs. Felix Carey, daughter-in-law of the missionary William Carey in India. The challenge here was that she only knew Portuguese and Burmese. Her husband was up

north at Ava where he had been summoned by the king. The third thing he would have begun to see from a distance while sailing up the river was the Pagoda towering high above the shore line, a symbol that was built to pay homage to the religious faith of Buddhism. The fourth thing that he may not have seen, but surely



was wondering about, could this really be the place that God had now called him to and were these the people that he would give his life for.

He had just spent 60 days at sea travelling from India to Burma. He had been rejected by the Indian government to stay there. He had also spent time with Dr. William Carey and after some discussion, he and his wife decided to go through with adult baptism. This was a subject he had been studying while they were at sea. So then on September 6th, 1812, they both were baptized at the Lal Bazaar Church. The results of this decision meant that they could no longer be Congregationalist Missionaries and he would now lose all his financial support. Their hearts were still grieving over the loss of their son who was stillborn. With heavy hearts they buried their son at sea in the Bay of Bengal.

He now faced a new call and direction and had no finances to carry on this new work that would soon be made real to him by God. Even though he had faced many trials already to this point, he would now be the arrow-head and apostle that Christ would use to penetrate the armor and stronghold of this beautiful land.

FIRST CONVERTS

It was not until July 21, 1822 some nine years after their arrival in Rangoon that they received nineteen members into the church. The church was gathered in the zayat, a little shed beside the Pagoda Road. The first convert was Maung Naw. He and the others would become the foundation the Church of Jesus Christ and would also become a lighthouse that Christ would use to take the message of salvation and freedom to the spiritually bound people throughout the land of Burma. Another key disciple was Maung Shwe Ngong. Judson often referred to him as “the teacher”. He became Judson's right hand man in translating the Bible into Burmese. Often we know the missionaries receive a lot of the credit for things that take place in foreign lands, but if the truth would be known, it is the nationals who become Christians that carry the brunt and pain of bringing the message of Christ to others. The missionaries are the catalyst that gets the process of translation and discipleship equipping going forward, but it is the indigenous people who pay the highest price.

CALL OF GOD

Adoniram was born on August the 9th, 1788. His father and mother were devoted members of the Congregationalist Church. Both his father and his grandfather were pastors and served the Lord with deep commitment. They lived outside Salem, Massachusetts and Judson Jr. showed at a young age both a talent for learning and a desire to preach.

At the age of 16, he was already heading off to Brown University and by 1807 at the age of 19 he graduated and was blessed to be that year's school valedictorian. But it was during his time at the university that he began to have doubts about who God is and how one knows what He wants to do through one's life. He had some friends around him that doubted the reality of God and often challenged him. One in particular was a man named Jacob Eames who was a real philosopher and one who used logic for everything. Because of this uncertainty about things in his heart, Judson decided that instead of being a teacher in a small school, he would head off to New York to become an actor. Of course this did not work out and after a few months and owing money to many people, he headed back to his uncle's place.

On his way back, he decided to spend one night out in the New England countryside in an inn. There was only one small room left but it was right beside a room where a man was sick and lay dying. He thought he could sleep but throughout the night, he heard the man next door groaning and saying, “God, God, lost”.

By morning, things had quieted down. When he got up, and was checking out, he asked the innkeeper, how was the man next door. The inn keeper replied that the man had died during the night. Judson asked the inn keeper what the name of the man was, and with great shock he heard the name “Jacob Eames”, his young university friend. This led Adoniram to walk around for many hours in a daze, contemplating things concerning life and death. His friend had died all alone and was not ready for eternity, and all he could hear over and over again in his mind was the words, “God, God, Lost.”

It wasn't long after arriving home he began to contemplate the idea of seminary, but he thought not right now, so he took up a teaching job in a school. After only a few days of working he resigned and headed off to Andover Seminary. After his second year of schooling, on a cold winter day, he found himself out in the woods behind the seminary and there at 22



In Moulmain there is a graveyard where over 55 missionaries are buried who gave their lives to blaze a trail for Jesus Christ and for all those who would follow after in their footsteps. The Heroes of Faith.



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Most pictures were taken by Dr. James Humphries