

ADONIRAM JUDSON AND THE MISSIONARY CALL

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Dedicated to Pastor L. R. Shelton Jr. and Michael Snyder of Chapel Library, with gratitude for their fellowship in the missionary vision.—*Erroll Hulse*

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ADONIRAM JUDSON AND THE MISSIONARY CALL

Adoniram Judson,¹ the first foreign missionary from the United States of America, was born in Malden, Massachusetts, in 1788. His father was a congregational minister. Judson became famous as the senior Baptist missionary of Burma, pioneer to the Burmese people and translator of the whole Bible into Burmese. Fame accrued to him through the severity of his sufferings and his devotion exemplified in their midst. The only time he returned to America was toward the end of his life, when he was constrained to do so by the illness of his wife. That was in 1845. He returned to Burma in 1846, and died there in 1850.

This booklet sketches his early life up to the time of his settlement in Burma. It then follows his life, concentrating on four areas of conflict which tested his devotion to the full.

1. Early Life, Conversion, and Missionary Calling

From his early years Adoniram revealed the gift of a brilliant mind. Encouraged by his father, he excelled in everything he did. At 16 he attended Rhode Island Christian College. There he fell in with free thinkers and atheists. He was influenced by the powerful personality of a fellow student, Jacob Eames. Eames derided faith; a poured scorn on the gospel message. Did not the new rationalism show all that to be out of date? Adoniram imbibed this unbelief. He graduated with a BA degree in September 1807. On his return

¹ Most of the material for this biography has been gleaned from Francis Wayland who was Judson's official biographer. Two volumes of over 400 pages each were published in 1853 by James Nisbet. I am thankful to the Evangelical Library, 5/6 Gateway Mews, Ringway Bounds Green, London, N11 2UT, for the loan of these and other valuable volumes including the *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, edited by James D. Knowles, London, 1830. Wayland's work together with Ann Judson's memoirs form by far the richest source of original data. The most recent biography is *To the Golden Shore* by Courtney Anderson, 530 pages, Judson Press, USA. Anderson's work is well researched and he supplies a bibliography. The book is concerned with the story and the drama of it all rather than with the spiritual values. Francis Wayland's biography is spiritual in its approach. It provides the crucial letters in full. Wayland was influenced by both Judson and Luther Rice. Rice was preaching when Wayland was converted. The intensity of Judson's dedication to the missionary cause inspired Wayland. Unfortunately after the death of his wife Ann, Adoniram had his letters destroyed together with his papers of a personal character.

home he opened a private school in the town of Plymouth. At about that time he wrote and had published two high quality text books, one on English grammar and the other on arithmetic, a remarkable achievement for one so young.

It was at this time, at age 20, that he dogmatically denied and rejected the gospel. This broke the hearts of his parents. His father rebuked him and remonstrated with him; a mother wept. Like the prodigal son, he left home in quest of an exciting life he wanted to escape parental restraints.

The Lord, however, heard the prayers of his distressed parents and moved quickly and powerfully. Soon after leaving home, Adoniram arrived one evening at an inn. It was late. Only one room was available. The innkeeper warned him that this room was adjacent to one where a critically ill young man lay. Disturbance during the night was highly likely. And so it turned out; through the night Adoniram could hear groans and comings and goings. He wondered—What is the state of the sufferer’s soul? What kind of eternity awaits that groaning man? Adoniram was unsettled. He simply could not control his thoughts about death and eternity.

In the morning he asked the landlord about his fellow lodger:

“He is dead!”

“Dead!?”

“Yes, he is gone, poor fellow! The doctor said he would probably not survive the night.”

“Do you know his name?”

“Oh yes. He was a young man from Providence College—a very fine fellow; his name was Jacob Eames.”

This was like a thunderclap. Judson was shattered. His admired mentor was dead! Adoniram struggled to pull himself together. The awesomeness of death and eternity devastated all his philosophical arguments. His mind was in turmoil. He was filled with dread. Lost! Lost! Adoniram knew the Bible to be true. His friend was eternally lost! The Holy Spirit was laying hold on Adoniram. Immediately, he abandoned his worldly journey and turned back home.²

At this stage he received and accepted an offer to enter Andover Theological Seminary. Since he did not make a profession of faith, he had to be registered as a special student. The advantage of instruction by godly and gifted men was great. Gradually he came to assurance of personal salvation. At this stage he read Boston’s *Fourfold State of Human Nature*.³ On December 2, 1808, he made a solemn dedication of himself to God.

² Wayland, Vol. 1, p. 12.

³ **Thomas Boston** (1676-1732) – Scottish church leader. Born in Duns, his father and mother were both Covenanters. He was educated at Edinburgh, and licensed in 1697 by the presbytery of Chirnside. In 1699 he became minister of the small parish of Simprin, where there were 90 examinable persons. In 1704 he found a book brought into Scotland by a commonwealth soldier. This was the famous *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, by Edward Fisher, a compendium of the opinions of leading

He joined the Third Congregational church in Plymouth, of which his father was the pastor. While at Andover, he became anxious about his physical weakness, evident in a tendency to consumption (tuberculosis). To combat this, he engaged in regular breathing exercises, vigorous walking, and daily sponging his body in cold water.

By February 1810, Adoniram had resolved to become a missionary. A missionary society had been formed in the seminary by Samuel J. Mills, who inspired men who later became household names: James Richards, Luther Rice, and Gordon Hall. It is likely that this society was born out of a prayer meeting that had taken place when a small group, caught in a thunderstorm, had taken refuge under a haystack. They turned the time into a prayer meeting.⁴

At this time there were *no* American missionaries abroad. Some had gone to the North American tribes on the frontier, but none had ventured over to Africa or Asia. Adoniram was deeply stirred by a printed sermon by Dr. Claudius Buchanan, a Church of England minister, who took as his text, “We have seen his star in the east”. He described how, as long ago as 1715, Ziegenbalg had fashioned the New Testament into Tamil, and how a German missionary, Schwartz, had spent fifty years teaching the gospel in India.⁵ Adoniram read avidly all he could lay his hands on concerning India, China, and what was then known as “The Golden Kingdom,” or Burma. He was amazed at the complacency and seeming lack of concern of so many Christians in America. In a magazine article he wrote:

How do Christians discharge the trust committed to them? They let three-fourths of the world sleep the sleep of death, ignorant of the simple truth that a Saviour died for them. Content if they can be useful in the little circle of their acquaintances, they quietly sit and see whole nations perish for lack of knowledge.⁶

The Holy Spirit was powerfully at work. In the Northeast of the United States this was a time of revival. Gardiner Spring, describing this period, wrote:

“From the time I entered college, in 1800 down to the year 1825, there was an uninterrupted series of these celestial visitations, spreading over different parts of the land. During the whole of these twenty-five years, there was not a month in which we could not point to some village, some city, some seminary of learning, and say: ‘Behold what hath God wrought.’”⁷

Adoniram’s father was always ambitious about his gifted son. One of his friends was Dr. Edward Griffin, minister of the largest church in Boston, and one of the most eminent preachers and leaders of that time. Griffin had noted the young man’s ability, and proposed to Judson Senior that Adoniram should become his colleague in the ministry.

Reformation divines on the doctrine of Gods grace and the offer of the gospel, which set off the Marrow Controversy. Boston became an effective writer and church leader.

⁴ Courtney Anderson, *To the Golden Shore* (Judson Press, Valley Forge, USA, 1989); p. 61.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

⁷ *Personal Reminiscences of the Life and Times of Gardiner Spring*, New York, 1866, Vol. 1, p. 160, cited in *Revival and Revivalism*, Iain Murray (Banner of Truth, 1994), p. 118.

This underlines Adoniram's exceptional qualities. It was an outstanding opportunity. Adoniram's parents were delighted, but Adoniram strongly rejected the proposal. It contradicted his missionary call and was repugnant to him.⁸

Adoniram's single-minded commitment to take the gospel to the unreached was matched by an identical commitment in a small group of his seminary friends. Tirelessly they lobbied the Congregationalists to establish an agency for overseas mission. On June 28, 1810, four students appeared before the General Association of Congregational Ministers in Bradford, stating that they felt compelled to offer themselves for a lifetime commitment to take the gospel overseas to the heathen. This resulted in the appointment of a Board of Commissioners responsible to promote missionary endeavor.

However, matters were not straightforward. The financial means were not available. The Board looked to the experienced London Missionary Society (LMS) for help. Adoniram was appointed to sail to London and there present the case to the LMS. The English ship was captured by the French and there ensued, in microcosm, what was to take place over a longer period of Adoniram's life in Burma. I refer here, in particular, to the experience of sudden arrest and imprisonment. The French sailors incarcerated him in the ship in the most appalling conditions. He was rescued from the hold and brought among the crew, when one of the officers saw him reading his Hebrew Bible and was able to communicate with him through their common knowledge of Latin. He was imprisoned in France. On his way to prison he shouted as loud as he was able. French bystanders thought him crazy. However, an American was passing by. He was both intelligent and compassionate and devised a way to smuggle Adoniram out of prison and set him on his way to London. This escapade was surely designed in God's plan to equip him for much more severe trials to come.

The LMS were sympathetic towards Judson and the American vision but deemed it impractical to conduct a joint venture. The Congregational Board in America had to reckon either on full support of the young missionaries or surrendering them to the sole responsibility of LMS. The American board chose the patriotic course and decided to fund the mission.

The meeting of the General Association on June 28, 1810, had taken place in the home of a deacon, Mr. Hassletine. His daughter, Ann, age 21, was at home. A month later Adoniram formally wrote to Ann asking if they could commence a courtship. She replied that her father's permission would be needed. Ann wrote in her diary that she would indeed be willing to spend the rest of her life taking the gospel to the lost. Adoniram promptly wrote what must have seemed the most extraordinary letter to Mr. Hassletine.⁹

⁸ *The Life and Sermons of Edward D. Griffin* were published by The Banner of Truth in 1987, two volumes of about 600 pages each, material of the highest quality. This material reflects generally the doctrine which was imbibed by Judson.

⁹ Sharon James, *Ann Judson: America's First Woman Missionary* (Reformation Today, Number 137); p. 12.

I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next Spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God?¹⁰

Friends who heard of this regarded it as insane. One said if Ann were his daughter he would tie her to her bedpost rather than let her embark on such a harebrained scheme! However, Ann's parents were cautious, and left it for her to decide. She resolved to give herself to Christ and to Adoniram, and leave all she knew for the unknown. To quote again from her journal:

Jesus is faithful; His promises are precious. Were it not for these considerations, I should, with my present prospects, sink down in despair, especially as no female has, to my knowledge, ever left the shores of America to spend her life among the heathen; nor do I yet know that I shall have a single female companion. But God is my witness, that I have not dared to decline the offer that has been made me, though so many are ready to call it a "wild, romantic undertaking."¹¹

In February 1812, Adoniram and Ann were married, and that same month they sailed for India, together with Samuel and Harriet Newell. Harriet was only 16 and frail. The dangers of sea travel were such that the other missionary candidates were sent in another ship.

These young pioneers were risking everything for the gospel of Christ. They did not go on a return ticket. They went fully expecting never to see America again. There was certainly no possibility of any visit from relatives or friends; the voyage was far too long, perilous, and expensive for that. Sea communications were much the same as in New Testament times. This was before the days of the steam ship, long before the days of telephone and fax communications. Letters took months, and might well never arrive. There was no American Embassy in Asia from which they could claim protection. The British East India Company dominated in the East. For selfish reasons of trade, this powerful company was totally opposed to missionaries and was determined at all costs to keep them out. That was one obstacle. Another was the monolithic character of unevangelized nations. The Chinese authorities decreed death to converts to Christ. The Emperor of Burma threatened torture and death to any Burmese who forsook the religion of Buddha.¹² Felix Carey had written to Serampore describing how the houses of Rangoon were miserably built, the streets were filthy with vermin, the rents wickedly

¹⁰ Anderson, p. 83.

¹¹ James, *ibid.*

¹² Aparna Mukherjee, *British Colonial Policy in Burma, 1840-1885* (Riverdale, Maryland USA, 1988). This book provides detailed descriptions of conditions in Burma. Revolting and barbaric practices of torture and death were commonly handed out to offenders at the Emperor's whim.

oppressive, the taxes absurdly high, and the punishments barbarous, all of which only proved the country's urgent need of the gospel. Felix had saved a man who was being crucified. He pleaded and gained the man's reprieve, saved him from final collapse, and nursed him for a fortnight back to strength.¹³ There was no assurance that there would be a place in which they could safely minister. The parting for these young people and for their families was a painful heart-rending experience.

Devoted for life, Adoniram had set his hand to the plough. He would never look back. As we continue to trace out his life, we will look at four major obstacles which could have deterred him from his course.

2. Facing Great Obstacles

Venturing into an unknown world was extremely daunting for these young missionaries. Little did they expect that the first obstacle to their work was not paganism, but rather the greed of what we would now call "the Western World." Great Britain was already expanding its empire. We will now see how formidable this barrier was to be.

Penetrating the steel curtain of the British East India Company

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Without faith the venture to reach Burma would not have seen the light of day, for the simple reason that the first barrier was humanly impenetrable. But with God all things are possible. The British East India Company possessed both the will and the power to keep out all missionaries from the territory where they had jurisdiction.¹⁴ It was for this reason that William Carey had to work out of Serampore, a tiny enclave owned by the Danes. The Company did not want the natives to learn Western ideas, whereby they would imbibe false notions of equality or notions which would destabilize the current situation, which was of great commercial profit. A seemingly impenetrable steel wall was cast round the areas of self-interest. The effectiveness of this barrier was soon discovered by the young couple. As soon as they landed at Calcutta, they were ordered by the East India Company to return home.

On the five months' sea voyage Adoniram gave himself to an in-depth study of baptism. He was prompted by the question of what procedure he would employ with converts. He was also concerned as to how he would defend paedobaptism¹⁵ when he was with the British Baptist missionaries at Serampore, who practiced believer's baptism. In fact, it was the policy of the Baptist missionaries at Serampore not to contend with missionaries of opposite views on this subject. Adoniram read everything he could find on both sides of the subject. Ann resolutely declared that nothing would change her views. She used every argument she could to dissuade Adoniram from changing his position.

¹³ S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey*, 1923 (reprinted Wakeman, London, 1993); p. 266.

¹⁴ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag – Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Apollos; InterVarsity Press; 1990).

¹⁵ **paedobaptism** – baptism of infants.

But eventually she came to the Baptist position herself. This was seismic in its outcome. It spelled the end of all their support. They had no idea of what help might come from Baptist sources. Adoniram and Ann applied to the British missionaries for baptism. Two days after the ordinance Ann wrote to her parents, “A renunciation of our former sentiments has caused us more pain than anything which ever happened to us through our lives.”¹⁶ In a letter to a friend, William Carey wrote, “Since their arrival in Bengal, Brother and Sister Judson have been baptized. Judson preached the best sermon upon baptism that I have ever heard on the subject, which we intend to print.”¹⁷

In the meantime the East India Company hounded the Americans. The only way to escape an enforced return either to England or America was to sail to Mauritius. After a seven week voyage they arrived to hear the terrible news that Harriet, aged 18, had died together with her first infant.

Luther Rice, known as the strongest protagonist for paedobaptism, had also re-examined the subject. He had changed his views and been baptized as a believer. Suffering from liver disease, he was constrained to return to America. There he became the indefatigable supporter of missions. His impact on the Baptist denominations of America was immense. Rice was an extremely effective preacher and versatile traveler. He swam rivers, braved snowstorms, endured heat waves, escaped bandits and wild Indians, and constantly expended his energies for the missionary cause. He broke, by three miles, John Wesley’s record of 90 miles horseback travel in one day.¹⁸ Through Rice’s ministry came that essential generous financial support upon which the team of missionaries depended.

Adoniram and Ann sailed from Mauritius to Madras. Avoiding detection, they boarded a Portuguese ship which sailed direct to Rangoon. The steel wall of the East India Company was penetrated.

Confronting the terror of despotic rule

The government of Burma was as anarchic as it was tyrannical. It consisted of unmitigated despotism. The king was supreme in his power over the people; torture and mass executions kept the population in utter subjection. No deviation from Buddhism was allowed. One or two Catholic priests ministered to the tiny number of foreigners who ventured into this exotic kingdom, but a solitary Burmese subject who had dared to profess conversion to Catholicism some years before had been beaten almost to death. His life was saved by the mediation of a foreigner with an appeal that the man was insane, whereupon he was allowed to go into exile.

The leaders of Burma were intolerably arrogant. Officialdom was appallingly corrupt. When the country came into conflict with the British, the leaders had no idea of the military strength and experience of the opposition. They vainly imagined that the British

¹⁶ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 82.

¹⁷ Knowles, p. 92.

¹⁸ Leon H. McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Broadman, Nashville); p. 350ff.

would be easily demolished. When defeated by the British in war, several Burmese commanders were executed by beheading within hours of their arrival in the capital.¹⁹

William Carey was well able to give the young American missionaries an accurate assessment of Burma. His son Felix had been there for four years. On account of his marriage to a Burmese woman of European extraction, Felix was the only one to succeed in staying in Burma. At great expense, Felix and a missionary called Chater began their mission in 1807. They succeeded in establishing a large well-equipped home within a compound of two acres. The property, just half a mile from the city of Rangoon, was enclosed by walls and planted with fruit trees. Felix had the advantage of medical skills. He pioneered vaccination in Burma. Like his father, he was able to gain remuneration by secular means.

Felix did well to persevere in Rangoon. Of three missionaries who joined him, one died of fever and two were forced to retreat through failing health. Felix succeeded in establishing good relationships with the officials and with the people. He was a skilled linguist and translated the Gospel of Matthew into Burmese.²⁰ When we take into account the prevailing conditions, we should exercise sympathy and caution with regard to criticism of Felix Carey. His father complained about his demotion from missionary to ambassador. Basically, Judson followed the same method of seeking to win the favor of the rulers. Judson himself was involved in expeditions of diplomacy, and later in diplomatic work for negotiation of a peace treaty with the British after the defeat of Burma in the war. He worked as a translator in this crucial work of negotiation. He was motivated by the hope of securing religious liberty as part of the new constitution. In this he was bitterly disappointed. With regard to missionary involvement in politics, the fact is that, apart from the missionaries, there was nobody else around with either the linguistic skills or the necessary anthropological understanding. The British government remunerated such work highly.

On their arrival in Burma, it was to the mission compound in Rangoon, established by Felix Carey, that Adoniram and Ann were able to come. They were saved the work of finding property. Felix had decided to move his mission to the capital Ava. This ended in the greatest conceivable human disaster when his boat overturned and he lost everything—his wife, three children and all his possessions, among which was his translation work. He himself narrowly escaped death but the others, including most the servants, could not swim and were drowned.

When the Judsons settled in Rangoon, their very first priority was to gain fluency in the language. Adoniram resolved from the beginning to work toward the translation of the whole Bible into Burmese. Parallel with that was the development of a text book for Burmese grammar, which in due course became a first class compact tool of 76 pages. In later years he concentrated on the compilation of a Burmese-English dictionary. Bur-

¹⁹ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 103.

²⁰ Sunil Kumar Chatterjee, *The Life of Felix Carey*, 122 pages, available from Pustak Bipani, 27 Beniatola Lane, Calcutta 700009. This is an invaluable work of research into original sources and provides a mine of information not only on the Carey family but on the background to those times.

mese script was a complex circular writing without punctuation; no word, sentence, or paragraph divisions—a seemingly identical endless flow. To the end of his life Judson labored in linguistic study with eminent success.

Once language was attained, the next step was to evangelize. A principal method used was to build a *zahat*. This was a hut with about a 30 foot frontage raised on posts about four feet above ground level, a verandah across the front and two rooms at the back. Using the verandah, the missionary could invite passers-by to rest and discussion. Buddhist zahats were common.

The Judsons arrived in Rangoon in 1813 and it was not until 1819 that the first convert, Mounng Nau, was baptized. Going back to Felix Carey's arrival in 1807, this was the first Burmese convert in 12 years. Later in 1819, two more were baptized. The first Christian-Burmese prayer meeting began with a nucleus forming and interest being aroused. However it was inevitable that the evangelizing activities of the Judsons would come to the knowledge of the local ruler. Local rulers were all directly responsible to the king, who was greatly feared. Consequently, people were too afraid to associate with the missionaries. The New Testament does not hide the cost of discipleship. The way of salvation is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Burma, it was a case of repent, believe, and face an appalling death. Even mature disciples tremble at the thought of torture and death. It is much to ask of brand new converts from a completely alien society to start with such terms. Judson could see that unless an attempt was made to win the goodwill of the king, progress would be severely restricted.

It was a brave decision of Adoniram to take a boat up the river Irrawaddy. This rivercraft measured 40 by 6 feet. There was a company of 16, including fellow missionary Colman. There was also an Englishman who was in charge of defense. His weapon consisted of a blunderbuss, necessary to drive off robbers. There were ten rowers and three others in charge of different aspects of the trip. In spite of severe difficulty, an audience with the king was obtained. The correct protocol was observed scrupulously. But the mission failed. It proved futile and dangerous. The King disdained these foreign religionists and despised their teaching.

When Adoniram returned, he was encouraged to find that the three converts were not daunted by the failure of his mission to Ava. They affirmed their faith in Christ irrespective of the consequences, but Adoniram was distressed by Ann's ill health. At this time, she was constrained to return to America for medical treatment. Shortly after her leaving (and she would be away for about two years), missionary doctor Jonathan Price and his wife arrived. Mrs. Price, a young woman, lived only five months in Burma. She was buried beside Roger Judson who had died at the age of eight months. Dr. Price's skills soon became well-known, and the news of his abilities, especially eye cataract operations, reached the king in Ava. Ironically one of the king's titles was "Golden Eyes." He sent a command that Dr. Price should come to him. And so Judson set off for a second journey up the Irrawaddy, this time accompanied by Dr. Price.

The king had no interest in Judson. In Price he could see some value. This visit led to friendship with the king's sister and her husband, Prince M. During one of the inter-

views of the king with Judson and Price, two Englishmen also being present, the king questioned Judson closely. This was like walking on the edge of a precipice. Judson recorded the incident in his diary as follows:

The Emperor enquired about the Burmese who had embraced my religion. “Are they real Burmese? Do they dress like other Burmese?”

I had occasion to remark that I preached every Sunday.

“What! In Burma?”

“Yes.”

“Let us hear how you preach.”

I hesitated. An official standing by repeated the order.

I began with a form of worship which first ascribes glory to God, and then declares the commands of the law of the gospel; after which I stopped.

“Go on!” said another official.

The whole court was profoundly silent. I proceeded with a few sentences declarative of the perfections of God, when His Majesty’s curiosity was satisfied and he interrupted me.

Through this second visit, the door to the capital city of Ava was opened. In his pleasure at gaining Dr. Price’s services in the capital, the king granted permission to purchase property in the city where he could carry on his work. The little church at Rangoon had grown to 18 baptized members. More missionaries had arrived to strengthen the work. The way was open to establish the mission in the royal city of Ava.²¹

Judson’s devotion shines in his courageous visits to the king. His purpose, clearly, was to remove the cloud of fear that hung over the people and which isolated them from the message of eternal salvation. His biographer, Francis Wayland, recorded the two visits to Ava with interest, but expressed his disagreement. Clearly Wayland did not concur with the principle of seeking the permission of sovereigns to promote the gospel. He is eloquent in arguing the case from the book of Acts and the example of the apostles.²²

Whatever course is decided upon, the principle of *regnum potentiae* and *regnum gratiae* applies. Jehovah reigns. He reigns in power over civil rulers (*regnum potentiae*), and He reigns in grace to save (*regnum gratiae*). Psalm Two resounds with the truth that Jehovah is in control. “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” He rules the earth. He is our protection and He reigns in power to control all the rulers and kings of the earth—that is *regnum potentiae*. When Pilate said to Jesus “Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above” (Joh 19:10-11).

The Lord also reigns in redemption. “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psa 2:8). Jehovah reigns in grace, *regnum gratiae*—He will give the nations to His Son.

²¹ Ibid., p. 249ff.

²² Ibid., p. 195ff.

Enduring the torments of prison

Ann's return from two years away in England and America brought new heart to Adoniram. While away she had been wonderfully used to increase interest in missionary work. Immediately on her return the couple began to organize their move to Ava. Little did they know that a storm of cataclysmic proportions was about to break on them personally and on the work as a whole. The story which now unfolds takes its place among the great dramas of missionary experience.

Obtaining a suitable property in Ava proved difficult. Just as things were falling into place, the shocking news came that 5,000 British troops had attacked and captured Rangoon. The Burmese were humiliated. They were a proud people. The leaders were furious. They blamed their defeat on spies who had co-operated with the enemy. But the Judsons were American, not British. Suddenly on June 8, 1824, Adoniram was arrested violently and dragged to prison. The reason?—it was discovered that he had received money through a British bank in India. That was a normal procedure; but to the Burmese it was cast-iron proof of collaboration with the enemy. The vile conditions of the prison into which Adoniram was thrown beg description—it was called the death prison. One hundred prisoners were crammed into one room without windows. Those in charge of the prison were murderers, reprieved on condition they would act as executioners.

For the next year and seven months, Adoniram endured the torture of being chained with iron fetters; two months in five, nine months in three and six months in one. During this time, he often faced the threat of execution. Frequently it was thought he would die of fever. The prisoners had to be fed by friends or relatives, or starve. Adoniram could never have survived this ordeal without the constant attention of Ann. She spent her time providing food and attending to his needs, and those of Dr. Price. Wherever possible she organized help for the other prisoners. She continually petitioned those who had the authority to give permission for her husband's situation to be improved. During this time she was nursing an infant, Maria. She also cared for two adopted girls.²³

Ann was constantly harassed by corrupt officials. They sought to take advantage of her misfortune and were always demanding bribes. Some months after the imprisonment, Ann was allowed to provide a little bamboo room in the prison enclosure. This ended suddenly when all the prisoners were crowded together in the original cramped space and given to understand that they would be executed at once. A day passed. They had survived.

At this time the prisoners were surprised by the arrival of a caged lion. The king was known to enjoy his lion. Then it was realized that the lion is a British emblem. That was detestable. Perhaps this lion was on the side of the British! So it, too, has to be sent to prison! At any rate the lion was starved, and when dogs were thrown in, it was too weak to kill them and it died. Adoniram asked for permission to use the lion's cage as his own house. His appeal failed. Ann's plea was successful. The cage was converted into a room where Adoniram could be on his own.

²³ Knowles, p. 281. Ann wrote detailed descriptions of the ordeal in her letters.

In the meantime, a full scale war was in progress. The Burmese were able to marshal a large army. They believed without doubt that victory over the British would be quick and easy. Bandoola was their general. He was regarded as invincible. Suddenly he was killed in battle. A new general was necessary. Superstitiously, the leaders believed that an evil man known as the "Pakan Woon" possessed extraordinary powers. The Pakan Woon, in fact, was a devilish character. His appointment to supreme command was terrifying news for all foreigners. Left without restraint, the Pakan Woon would kill them all! Immediately he ordered that all the prisoners be tied together by ropes and force-marched to Oung-penla. This was a remote spot about nine miles north of Ava. The conditions on the march proved fatal for one of the prisoners. It was agonizing for Adoniram. Only through the generous help of fellow sufferers did he survive. There was more space at Oung-penla, and the prisoners were allowed to work at improving their compound.

Ann immediately followed Adoniram to Oung-penla. There she managed to rent a small room from one of the jailers. Ann was exhausted by the conflict. She was unable to feed little Maria. By making presents to the gaolers, she obtained permission for Adoniram to come out of prison and take the emaciated infant around the village begging milk from mothers who were nursing infants themselves.

Some time after the prisoners came to Oung-penla the Pakan Woon was found guilty of treason. He was executed immediately. He had stolen ten percent of the advance pay of an army of 50,000 that had been gathered to fight the British. The Pakan Woon's reason for moving the prisoners to Oung-penla had been his intention to execute them all there and personally witness the event. As the British army advanced toward Amapoora, the capital, bargaining took place with the Burmese government, which reneged on agreements over and over again. This recalcitrance resulted in further military conquests over the Burmese, and brought the British soldiers closer and closer to the capital. Eventually it was clear to the Burmese that outright defeat was a reality. Adoniram and Dr. Price became extremely valuable as translators and interpreters of British intentions. For this reason, their release finally was ordered.

Now at an all-time low, Ann fell victim to what we now understand to be cerebral meningitis. This is how she describes her illness:

My fever raged violently, and without intermission. I began to think of settling my worldly affairs, and of committing my dear little Maria to the care of a Portuguese woman. I lost my reason, and was insensible to all around me. At this dreadful period, Dr. Price was released from prison; and hearing of my illness, obtained permission to come and see me. He has since told me that my situation was the most distressing he had ever witnessed, and that he did not then think I should survive many hours. My hair was shaved; my head and feet covered with blisters, and Dr. Price ordered the Bengalee servant who took care of me, to endeavour to persuade me to take a little nourishment, which I had obstinately refused for several days. One of the first things I recollect was seeing this faithful servant standing by me, trying to induce me to take a little wine and water. I was in fact so far gone, that the Burmese

neighbours who had come in to see me expire, said, “She is dead; and if the king of angels should come in, he could not recover her.”²⁴

A beautiful tribute to Ann Judson is penned by Francis Wayland, in his biography of Judson, where he refers to the fact that Adoniram could not have survived “if it had not been for an angel ministering to him.” “Mrs. Judson”, declares Wayland, “must be designated one of the most remarkable women of her age. She was the only European female in Ava, and the only foreigner not consigned to prison. Her whole time with the exception of twenty days, when she was confined by the birth of her child, was devoted to the alleviation of the sorrows of her husband and his fellow-prisoners. Perfectly familiar with the Burmese language, of a presence which commanded respect even from savage barbarians, and encircled with a moral atmosphere in which she walked unharmed in the midst of a hostile city with no earthly protector, she was universally spoken of as the guardian angel of that band of sufferers.”²⁵

When we think that during this period of imprisonment seven out of eight British soldiers imprisoned died through maltreatment, we marvel that Adoniram survived.

How did this suffering affect Judson? Devoted for life, he thought only in terms of progress. He did consider taking a ship home to recover his strength. A peace settlement was imperative. His involvement in that was unavoidable. He deeply hoped that his influence and that of Dr. Price would bring a clause ensuring freedom of religion in the new constitution. A primary concern during the prison ordeal was the safety of his translation of the New Testament. Ann had preserved his precious work by sowing it up in a pillow, which she smuggled to him. It represented his life’s work. When the sudden move to Oung-penla was enforced, the pillow was left behind. It was excruciating to him to think that all his work would be lost! But the Lord heard his prayers. It turned out that the pillow was thrown away at the time of the move but some hours later the faithful disciple, Moug Ing, visited the site, found the pillow, and preserved it.

Let us admire God’s providence. Judson and Dr. Price worked to establish peaceable conditions for the gospel in Burma. The only hope for better conditions lay in the will of the king. Just at this point in history, the Lord intervened—the British took over Burma. With this came law, order, and stability. As an outcome of British rule, Ann, writing home, described the future missionary prospects as bright indeed.²⁶ A by-product of British empire-building was a mantle of protection, which contrasted dramatically with the outright despotic and crude tyranny of tribal law.

Surviving the desolation of bereavement

In spiritual terms, the next era of Adoniram’s life was even more agonizing than the prison ordeal. After a short time together, he set off to assist with negotiations in Ava while Ann traveled to Amherst in the south. Amherst was the chosen place for the new British administration. The war had scattered the church in Rangoon.

²⁴ Knowles, p. 314.

²⁵ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 263.

²⁶ Knowles, p. 322.

After several months, a letter with a black seal arrived for Adoniram. He knew that their daughter, Maria, had been struggling for her life. He felt sure as he opened this dreadful letter that it brought the heartbreaking news of her death. However, he was completely overwhelmed with grief to read that, in fact, Ann had died. This, more than any other blow in his life, threatened to unhinge him. The effects of this bereavement marked him for years to come.

A further nadir²⁷ was yet to come in the decease of little Maria. Adoniram and Ann's first child was stillborn while they were still attempting to penetrate the steel curtain of the British East India Company. The second, Roger lived only eight months. He was buried in Rangoon. Adoniram's agony is revealed in a letter he wrote to Ann's mother:

Dear Mother Hasseltine—My little Maria lies by the side of her fond mother. The complaint to which she was subject several months proved incurable. She had the best medical advice; and the kind care of Mrs. Wade could not have been, in any respect, exceeded by that of her own mother. But all our efforts, and prayers, and tears could not propitiate the cruel disease; the work of death went forward, and after the usual process, excruciating to a parent's heart, she ceased to breathe on the 24th instant, at three o'clock p.m. aged two years and three months. We then closed her faded eyes, and bound up her discoloured lips, where the dark touch of death first appeared, and folded her little hands on her cold breast. The next morning we made her last bed in the small enclosure that surrounds her mother's lonely grave. Together they rest in hope, under the hope-tree (hopiá) which stands at the head of the graves; and together, I trust, their spirits are rejoicing after a short separation of precisely six months. And I am left alone in the wide world. My own dear family I have buried; one in Rangoon, and two in Amherst. What remains for me but to hold myself in readiness to follow the dear departed to that blessed world?²⁸

Ann died on October 24, 1826, and Maria on April 24, 1827. The last wish Ann communicated to her medical attendant was that her husband would never consent to enter the service of the British government, but confine himself exclusively to the duties of his religious mission.²⁹ Ann's concern was well founded. Both Dr. Price and fellow missionary Hough resigned from the mission, and went into service with the British Government.³⁰

That same year Adoniram wrote to Ann's sisters:

Death mocks at us, and tramples our dearest hopes and our lives in the dust. Dreadful tyrant, offspring, and ally of sin! But go on now, and do thy worst. Thy time will come. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Yes, awful power, thou shalt devour thyself and die. And then my angelic Ann, and my meek blue-eyed Roger, and my tender-hearted, affectionate, darling Maria—my venerable father, you, my dear sisters, that still remain, our still surviving parents, and I hope, myself, though all

²⁷ **nadir** – the lowest point; time of greatest depression or dejection.

²⁸ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 346.

²⁹ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 333.

³⁰ Robert A. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Judson Press, 1963); p. 333.

unworthy, shall be rescued from the power of death and the grave. And we know assuredly that we shall die no more, we shall make heaven's arches ring with songs of praise to Him, Who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

While he was comforted in these truths, his inward struggle was intense. He became reclusive and ascetic. He had an excellent friendship with the commander-in-chief of the British army, Sir Archibald Campbell. However, he withdrew from spending time with him and other British officers which he had once enjoyed.³¹ He sought to mortify everything to do with pride. He wrote a curt letter to Brown University rejecting the honorary DD that had been conferred upon him five years before. He destroyed letters from British officialdom in which he was congratulated for his work of interpreting at the conclusion of the war. He had accumulated a considerable sum of money by way of life's savings, gifts given him by friends and also his earnings. He wrote to the Mission Board and gave it all to the cause of missionary endeavor.³²

During the grieving time, Adoniram decided to give up all activity for a month and find total seclusion in a bamboo hut in the jungle. At this hermitage, he devoted himself to prayer and the translation of the Scriptures. But at this hermitage he also dug a grave. At nights he sat by its edge and imagined himself in it. The only serious defect in his doctrinal understanding, in the form of a distorted doctrine of sanctification, was now evident. This imbalance resulted in an introspective spiral which was dangerous and will be considered later. At this time his Burmese brethren feared that he would be killed in the tiger-infested jungle. A faithful deacon, Ko Dwah, braved the dangers, followed his teacher, and secretly built a seat in the hut and formed a canopy for him. The natives regarded that place as so dangerous that they believed Judson's survival was a repetition of the miracle of Daniel (see Dan 6:16-24). Judson spent forty days in seclusion there, eating only small rations of rice.³³

This period was the most bitter time in Adoniram's missionary experience. Yet he came through it; he would not give up. He was devoted for life. It was the call to work that brought him out of his ascetic seclusion and severe depression. He continued his work of translating the Scriptures. Only a couple of months after the death of Maria, he wrote home (June 21, 1827) urging missionary enterprise into Siam, with cogent reasons for such a work.³⁴ Devoted for life, his vision was undimmed.

³¹ Ibid., p. 359.

³² Ibid., p. 365.

³³ Ibid., p. 433ff. Wayland discusses this period, describes the habits of Judson and defends him on the grounds of the ordeal through which he had passed in prison and the effects of the trauma of the subsequent loss of his wife and little daughter.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 349.

3. Sowing and Reaping

As we view the work of Carey and Judson in perspective, we note that there was an initial period of sowing without any reaping. Then followed the first sign of the harvest: just one soul. Then two or more. As a foundation was formed, sowing continued. The harvest began to be reaped. These pioneers respected each other and their co-workers. For instance, Judson did not date the first convert in Bengal as eight years after William Carey's advent in India. Rather he looked back to the work of Dr. Thomas beginning in 1783, that is, seventeen years.³⁵

The British had made their headquarters at Amherst, a little town of about 2,000. This was soon abandoned in preference for Moulmein, 25 miles to the north. Well situated on a river frontage, Moulmein had a population of about 30,000. Adoniram saw the need to move and decided to close the mission work in Amherst. With his fellow missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Wade and George and Sarah Boardman, recently from America, Adoniram consolidated the missionary enterprise at Moulmein. He built a *zahat* in the poorest part of the town. He taught there daily. Then he built a second *zahat* in Moulmein and a third in the country nearby. The faithful Moug was an invaluable assistant in the *zahat* work. Enquirers increased and the work thrived. After teaching, reasoning, and questioning, many committed themselves to Christ. In addition to this activity, Sarah Boardman and Mrs. Wade administered a school for Burmese girls.

The missionary enterprise advanced significantly when George and Sarah Boardman moved to the town of Tavoy, from which center they pioneered a work among the Karen people. In the meantime refreshing news came from Rangoon. The small church of 18 members, scattered by the war, was now re-assembled through the work of one of the early converts. Tha-e had not ceased to preach the gospel during his time of wandering. Now he had taken the lead to re-establish the church.

Adoniram traveled to Rangoon and there ordained Tha-e as the first Burmese pastor. He then proceeded on a mission of exploration up the Irrawaddy to the ancient city of Prome. There he labored for over three months. This visit proved successful, but the old Buddhist monopoly, exercised through the power of the king, challenged this advance. Judson was defended by Burney, the British administrator. Nevertheless he was obliged to withdraw.³⁶ Returning to Rangoon, Adoniram was encouraged by the growth of the church there.

From Moulmein, he wrote to the mission board in America in February 1831, with the news of the tragic passing of George Boardman, who died during one of his expeditions to the Karen people in the jungle. Lamenting this severe loss, Adoniram suggested that those with a tendency to consumption should not think in terms of missionary service.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁶ W. S. Desai, *History of the British Residency in Burma, 1826-1840* (University of Rangoon, 1939); p. 163ff. The circumstances and correspondence is presented in detail and illustrates perfectly the difference between outright despotic tyranny and religious freedom.

He noted that four male missionaries including Dr. Price, who had this tendency, had died, and that they were consumptive before they left America. It is interesting to observe that it was not until 1882 that a German, Robert Koch, isolated the bacteria known as *mycobacterium tuberculosis* (related to leprosy). It is that discovery which confirmed the nature of consumption. Not until 1944 was the first effective antibiotic (streptomycin) discovered. Judson was always careful to keep himself in a fit physical condition. Now, with medical knowledge available, we can look back and understand the nature of the sufferings of these missionaries. Some possessed a natural resistance to the disease. Those weakened by stress or lack of nutrition were much more vulnerable.³⁷

That same time, February 1831, Judson was able to report that during 1830, 47 had been baptized: 12 at Maulmein, 7 at Rangoon, and 28 at Tavoy. Five of the 47 were Europeans. In this letter he reported progress in his translation work in the Old Testament. He was about to begin work on Isaiah. On the general state of affairs, he wrote:

The most prominent feature in the mission at present is the surprising spirit of enquiry that is spreading everywhere, through the whole length and breadth of the land. I sometimes feel alarmed, like a person who sees a mighty engine beginning to move, over which he knows he has no control. Our house is frequently crowded with company; but I am obliged to leave them to Moug En, one of the best assistants, in order to get time for the translation.³⁸

His impression of an upsurge of interest was correct. During the year 1832, 217 were baptized as believers. In review, we note that 18 were baptized in the years 1819 to 1822, none during the period of the war. Then just four in the two years at Amherst 1826 and 1827. From 1828 there was a marked increase: 353 from 1828 to 1831. Then beginning in 1828, there were many more. Like Ezekiel's river, the waters rise (see Eze 47:5). In 1836 alone, 1,144 were baptized (Maulmein 54, Tavoy 91, Rangoon 206, Ava 7).³⁹ Up to 1836, 181 foreigners were baptized at Maulmein. It was the presence of the British army that accounts for the high proportion. Of 40,000 men who served in the expeditionary force, no less than 15,000 died through illness of one kind or another. Only about 600 died in battle. These statistics go a long way to show that the high mortality rate among the missionaries was due to lack of medical knowledge to deal with the diseases in Burma.⁴⁰

Adoniram pressed forward, improving his translation of the Bible. Concerning the New Testament, he wrote from Maulmein on January 8, 1829, "I consider it the work of a

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 424.

³⁹ Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 92.

⁴⁰ D. G. A. Hall, *Europe and Burma, A Study of European Relations with Burma to the Annexation of Thibaw's Kingdom, 1886* (Oxford University Press, 1945); p. 119. In the most crucial battle of the war, 60,000 Burmese troops faced 4,000 British, reduced due to illness: 1,300 Europeans and 2,500 sepoys. Ibid., p. 115.

man's whole life to procure a *really good* translation of the New Testament in an untried language" (note his use of italics).⁴¹

Missionary Interest in Your Church?

Question 1. Is there a regular spot at the prayer meeting or in the worship services for a focus on missionary vision, current work, or particular missionaries?

Question 2. Is there a missionary fellowship meeting or a prayer meeting devoted specifically to missions?

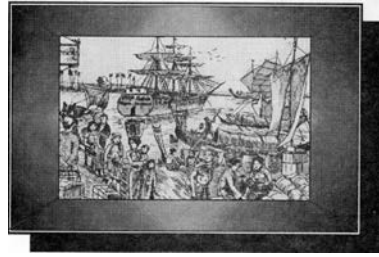
Question 3. Does missionary support form part of your church budget? What percentage of the church budget is devoted to missionary endeavor? Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, gives 34 percent of undesignated gifts to missions. This 1,000 member church, which supports eight full time pastors, has sent out 52 missionaries.

Question 4. Do you write encouraging letters to missionaries? They love to receive letters. Pioneer missionary to China, Robert Morrison, stated that he only received one encouraging letter from his homeland for every 200 newsletters that he posted.

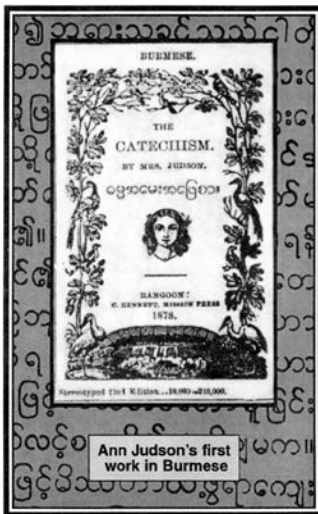
Question 5. Are missionary books displayed on your church book table? Occasionally, are such books reviewed and recommended?

Interest in and support of missionaries cannot be artificially stimulated. The weapons of our warfare are spiritual. Prayer is essential.

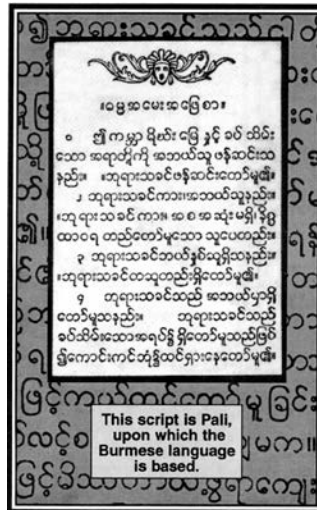
⁴¹ Ibid., p. 376.



Stained-glass window portraying the Judsons The Judsons arrive in Rangoon departing Salem February 19, 1812 July 13, 1813



Ann Judson's first work in Burmese



This script is Pali, upon which the Burmese language is based.

Ann Judson's first work in Burmese, 1818 The script above is Pali, upon which the Burmese language is based



Maung Naw, first Burman to follow Christ, 1819



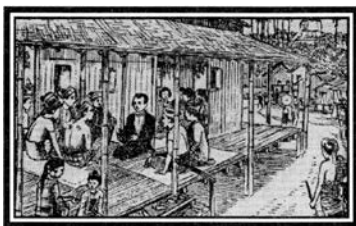
Judson asks for toleration of Christianity, 1820



Disciples urge missionaries not to leave, 1820



Ann brings Adoniram the New Testament hidden in a pillow, 1824



Judson begins teaching in Zayat ("meditation place")



Judson interprets at Treaty of Yandabo, 1826



Judson visit Karen villages north of Moulmein, 1832



Judson dedicates the completed Burmese Bible, 1834

4. Family Life and Concluding Years

In 1834, eight years after the death of Ann, Adoniram married Sarah, the widow of George Boardman, who had died in 1831. No children survived Judson's first marriage. Reminiscent of the book of Job, that loss was more than made good. Of eight children born to Adoniram and Sarah, six survived. Of three born to George and Sarah, one survived.

The years 1831-32 included journeys to the Karen people. In Maulmein and Rangoon, Adoniram always employed assistants, whom he sent out to various parts to evangelize. His practice was to send men two by two into the forests where he was unable to go himself. These would return with their reports.⁴² During 1834, Adoniram reported that he was almost exclusively engaged in revising his Old Testament translation, and in 1839 reported that he felt it his main duty for the rest of his life to perfect his translation of the whole Bible into Burmese. It was in October 1840 that this great work was completed.⁴³ Several years later a missionary described Judson's translation as possessing such all-round qualities as to make it the best translation of all among languages of the East.⁴⁴

From 1839, Adoniram's health declined. The doctors did not know how to cure consumption and usually recommended a sea cruise in the hope that it would improve the health of the patient. Adoniram sailed for Calcutta. At that time Calcutta was regarded as one of the finest cities in the British Empire. He visited the Serampore mission. In 1841 Sarah became desperately ill. She, too, took a voyage to Calcutta. At this time Adoniram was encouraged by the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion of sailors from a ship from Scotland. Adoniram baptized the captain, an officer, and two of the sailors.⁴⁵

Continued decline in Sarah's health eventually necessitated her return to America. Adoniram had no desire to return. But there was no other way. He had to support Sarah and accompany her. When they arrived at Mauritius, Sarah seemed much improved. On this basis she persuaded Adoniram to return to Burma. This he prepared to do, but it was not to be. Sarah relapsed badly and continued to deteriorate. When they reached St. Helena she died and was buried there. Adoniram continued on to America with three children, three younger ones having been left in the care of the missionaries at Maulmein.

Adoniram was not ready for the meetings organized for him in America. His throat was so inflamed that he was unable to preach. He had to be assisted by a speaker who would convey his message like an interpreter.

⁴² Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 3.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 135.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 153.

The Progress of Missionary Vision

As long as Christians heed the words of the great commission as recorded in the concluding paragraph of the Gospel of Matthew (see Mat 28:19-20), they will expend themselves in missionary endeavor. John Calvin trained and sent missionary church planters into his native land of France, by which the Church grew there to over two million members.

The Moravians sent missionaries to Persia, Egypt, Greenland, America, the Caribbean, and many parts of Africa. William Carey (1761-1834), Robert Morrison (1782-1834), and Adoniram Judson represented a new race of pioneer missionaries breaking into new regions. When Robert Morrison arrived in China, he was virtually on his own. When William Burns (1815-1868) arrived in China, there were fifty missionaries labouring in that country. The progress made by these earlier missionaries made it possible for Hudson Taylor to promote a new emphasis of reaching the inland areas of China. This general trend of reaching the heartlands of nations is reflected in the names of missionary societies such as the China Inland Mission, Sudan Interior Mission, and Africa Inland Mission.

In the second half of the 20th century, the inspiration developed that it was possible to translate the Bible into every language. The best known agency attempting to fulfill this vision is Wycliffe Bible Translators. Wycliffe now numbers 5,000 translators dedicated to reach the many languages which remain.

A further modern development is the concept of *people groups*. India for instance represents 3,000 sub-nations or people groups, of which some 2,000 have not been penetrated. They do not have a witnessing church that is native to their particular social group. The northern provinces of India, such as Uttar Pradesh (139 million) and Bihar (86 million), are hardly reached and virtually represent unevangelized nations. A whole new army of missionaries like Judson is needed to undertake this task!

While in America, he met a well-known secular author, Emily Chubbock. She was a dedicated Christian. They married and returned to Burma. Emily proved an excellent helper. The work force at Maulmein was adequate, so the Judsons settled in Rangoon. Here the church was strengthened. The opposition however intensified. It was the old head-on collision of the king's opposition to the gospel. The conditions in Rangoon were extremely exacting. Writing to the Mission Board at home, Adoniram described the vice-governor as, "the most ferocious, bloodthirsty monster I have ever known in Burma. It is said that his house and court-yard resound day and night with the screams of people under torture. Even foreigners are not beyond his grasp."⁴⁶

In 1849 Adoniram's health deteriorated seriously. Sea voyages were the only panacea for consumption. This was not successful. Exhausted through a life of unrelenting toil,

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 239.

Adoniram died in April 1850. He was buried at sea. Devoted for life, he had reached his “golden shore.”

5. The Character of Adoniram Judson

Of medium height, Adoniram was slenderly built. He possessed unusual physical stamina. His hair was chestnut with a little grey as he advanced in age. He loved neatness and order, always dressed immaculately, and delighted in cleanliness. It was especially repugnant to him to endure the filth of prison conditions. He took great pleasure in fellowship with others, and was able to contribute well on a wide range of subjects. He was intensely spiritual and humbled himself to men of low estate, being able to communicate with the poorest people. When late in his life he returned to America, it was truly beyond his understanding to find that he was a famous person, everywhere welcome. He shrank absolutely from fame and craved solitude and quiet.

From his earliest days Adoniram revealed an exceptional intellect. He was meticulous by nature, and admirably suited for the work of Bible translation. As we would expect, he worked from the Hebrew and Greek. It was his nature to strive for excellence. Once he had decided on a course of action, he stuck to it with astonishing tenacity. We have seen this in his determination to penetrate the steel curtain of the BEIC,⁴⁷ his courage in missions to the King of Burma, his endurance in prison, and his recovery from the desolation of bereavement.

Adoniram developed a physical discipline rarely exceeded. He fasted regularly. He could concentrate his mind for long periods of time. Wayland suggests that he was endowed with “a will of the very highest order. It was capable of controlling his physical nature, so that his body would do or suffer whatever it was commanded. It subjected the material to the spiritual in a degree rarely attained.” This, suggests Wayland, “is one of the rarest endowments.”⁴⁸

Concerning his character in the domestic scene, a senior lady missionary well-qualified to make the observation, said, “I have seen something of married life, and I never saw a husband so *entirely* [note her italics] devoted to a wife as dear Judson.”⁴⁹

Judson was compassionate and tender as a pastor. When the wife of Mr. Bennett (a fellow missionary specializing in printing) was weeping in her room after Mr. Bennett had gone on board ship with their children, Elsin and Mary, to sail for America, Adoniram sent the following note:

*Sovereign love appoints the measure
And the number of our pains,*

⁴⁷ BEIC – British East India Company, which controlled the lucrative tea trade at the time.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 314.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 328.

*And is pleased when we take pleasure
In the trials he ordains.*

Infinite love, my dear sister, in the person of the Lord Jesus, is even now looking down upon you, and will smile if you offer Him your bleeding, breaking heart. All created excellence and all ardour of affection proceed from Him. He loves you far more than you love your children: and He loves them also when presented in the arms of faith.⁵⁰

6. The Doctrine of Adoniram Judson

The gospel of salvation

Supreme in Judson's mind was an unwavering belief that all those who die in their sins outside of Christ will suffer eternal misery in hell. He believed that the gospel clearly preached was the means used by the Holy Spirit to save the elect. He preached repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He freely offered Christ to the unsaved. He believed that the Holy Spirit used reasoning and exhortation to draw sinners to Christ.

Every individual was a candidate for eternal life. Wayland describes Judson's attitude thus: "His object was to accomplish the most stupendous revolution of which we can conceive in this whole people; it was nothing less than an entire transformation of the moral character of every individual. The means by which this was to be accomplished was very simple. It was the announcement of the message from God to man, attended by the omnipotent Spirit of God."

He did not look for help by way of wonders, signs, and miracles. The gospel alone was sufficient. Christ indwelling believers would be the means by which "the gospel would spread on every side until the temples of Gautama should be deserted, the moral character of men be renewed, and Burma become a kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."⁵¹

Judson believed in the power of preaching, and sought to use that primary means to persuade sinners. He was himself a powerful preacher. A missionary who knew him intimately wrote, "I fear that no one at home will be able to do him justice on the point of pulpit eloquence." A visitor to Burma portrayed the power of Judson's preaching by describing its effect on the hearers. They were totally absorbed and gripped from first to last by every aspect of the message.⁵²

Believer's baptism and church order

When he gave himself to the study of baptism on the voyage to the East, he began in the Old Testament. He appreciated to the full the crucial importance of the Abrahamic

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

⁵¹ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 122.

⁵² Ibid., p. 323ff.

covenant and its relationships to the Mosaic and New Covenants. If, under his ministry, a tribal chief was converted, what, he asked, would this mean for all the members of his family? What would it mean for that clan, for the wives, for the children, and for the servants? Were they all to be baptized just as all the males in the extensive household of Abraham were circumcised? He proceeded to study all that the Scripture declared on this theme. He examined not only doctrinal themes but passages and contexts including 1 Corinthians 7:14 and Acts 2:39. He scrutinized the etymology of the Greek word *baptize*, and concluded that the word means to immerse. Once convinced, he was prepared to face the consequences, even though it would cost him dearly he would lose all the missionary support which had been so difficult to attain.⁵³

When it came to the practice of this doctrine, he would only accept those for baptism who evidenced a credible profession of repentance and faith. The records show that, together with the leaders of the work, he rarely failed in receiving into membership true converts. He kept back those who were not ready. He maintained consistent church discipline, allowing back into the assembly those who forsook their sins and showed due repentance. Exclusion from the Lord's Table formed part of the disciplinary process.⁵⁴

The means of grace

As far as the use of means is concerned, Judson's method was preaching and church planting, followed immediately by the recognition, training, and equipping of indigenous pastors. Such men are then sent out to evangelize and church-plant. While his fellow missionaries were to some extent involved in schools, that was not Judson's emphasis. There is a contrast here with William Carey. There were three bases in Carey's plan to evangelize India: preach the gospel, translate the Bible, and establish schools—proclamation, translation, education. The mission schools taught a wide range of subjects, but Bible instruction was an integral part of the curriculum.⁵⁵ In contrast to this, Judson emphasized advance by preaching, gathering converts, and church planting. He sent men out two by two, and this proved very effective.

Integral with preaching was the primacy of prayer and the prayer meeting. In his diary for November 10, 1819, he writes, "This evening is to be marked as the date of the first Burman prayer-meeting that was ever held. None present but myself and three converts. We agree to meet for this purpose every Tuesday and Friday evening, immediately after

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 71-86. William Carey was so impressed with a sermon preached on this subject by Adoniram Judson, that he had the work published as a booklet. This came to 88 pages and is titled *Christian Baptism, A Sermon* preached in the Lal Bazar Chapel, Calcutta, on the Lord's Day, September 27, 1812, previous to the administration of the ordinance of baptism, with many quotations from paedobaptist authors. If he preached it all it would have taken about four hours! We may be sure that he preached the main points. He begins with linguistic analysis with copious references to other authors (up to p. 29), then household baptisms in the New Testament are considered (up to p. 33), followed by the covenant and circumcision argument (up to p. 60), concluding with many quotes from other scholars.

⁵⁴ Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 104.

⁵⁵ Timothy George, *The Life and Mission of William Carey* (New Hope, Alabama, USA, 1991); p. 173.

family worship.” Four days later he writes, “Have been much gratified to find that this evening three converts repaired to the zahat, and held a prayer-meeting of their own accord.”⁵⁶

The doctrines of grace

For practical reasons, Judson was constrained to work out baptism and its implications in detail. Even with the best intentions in the world, it is not possible to develop all Christian doctrine with the same precision. When we come to the doctrines of grace, we find that he believed them implicitly, rather than by explicit exposition. He was not to know that a landslide into the natural thinking and reasoning of Arminianism was to come. There was not that self-consciousness about sovereign grace that we have in our generation, in which the truth has had to be re-established at great cost.

It is clear that he certainly did not believe in free will. Commenting on a conversation he had with two Buddhists, Adoniram wrote, “I never saw more clearly the truth of our Savior’s words, ‘Ye will not come unto me.’” Judson’s wholehearted belief in the doctrines of grace is evident in his correspondence, and also in the *Confession of Faith* he wrote for the Burmese in 1829. In the only English sermon he ever preached in Burma, he used Joh 10:1-18 as his text. In this he refers to the electing love of Christ. Irresistible grace and particular redemption are explicit in the sermon.⁵⁷ In creedal statements prepared by Judson for the Burmese Church, the doctrine of election is clearly stated, “God sends the Holy Spirit to enable those to become disciples who were chosen before the world was.”⁵⁸

The doctrine of sanctification

As a translator of the Bible, Adoniram had the advantage of an accurate knowledge of the Biblical text. This should have assisted him greatly in his understanding of justification and sanctification. Especially is this so with regard to the Greek tenses for verbs to denote definitive or positional sanctification (see Rom 6:1-7:6; 1Co 1:2; 6:11; Act 20:32). Judson always enjoyed a full assurance of his union with the Triune God. There was never a time when he doubted this. However, during the extended dark period of depression following the desolation of bereavement, he sought to find comfort in a *felt* knowledge of the love of God. He was seeking a deeper experience. He writes in his diary, “Believe in the doctrine of perfect sanctification attainable in this life” (May 14, 1829).⁵⁹ If we were to transpose this situation into our time and had been corresponding with him, we would have sent by air mail a photocopy of Professor Murray’s, 1975, masterly work on definitive sanctification!⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 190.

⁵⁷ Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory* – A historical, theological, and practical study of the doctrines of grace in Baptist life (Baker, 1986); p. 148ff.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁵⁹ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 382.

⁶⁰ John Murray, *Collected Writings* (Banner of Truth, 1977, Vol. 2); p. 277.

For the sake of clarity, we can look at progressive sanctification doctrinally, practically, and experimentally. Reference has already been made to Judson's seemingly defective understanding about *positional* sanctification. In that respect, we who are in Christ are perfect. We cannot be more in union with Him than we are, and the righteousness imputed to us is perfect. In *practical* terms, we are never perfect, even though we strive for perfection. In this striving, Judson was exemplary. Like the Puritans, he constantly made covenantal pledges. For the period 1819 to 1826, he made eight rules for himself:

1. Be diligent in secret prayer every morning and evening.
2. Never spend a moment in mere idleness.
3. Restrain natural appetites within the bounds of temperance and purity, "Keep thyself pure" (1Ti 5:22).
4. Suppress every emotion of anger and ill-will.
5. Undertake nothing from motives of ambition, or love of fame.
6. Never do that which, at the moment, appears displeasing to God.
7. Seek opportunities of making some sacrifice for the good of others, especially of believers, provided the sacrifice is not inconsistent with some duty.
8. Endeavour to rejoice in every loss and suffering incurred for Christ's sake and the gospel's.

To these he added:

1. Rise with the sun.
2. Read a certain portion of Burman every day, Sundays excepted.
3. Have the Scriptures and some devotional book in constant reading.
4. Read no book in English that does not have devotional tendency.
5. Suppress every unclean thought and look.⁶¹

As far as Reformed literature is concerned, it is hard to find anything substantial on the experimental side of our faith. Apart from Jonathan Edwards and Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, what is there of substance on the theme of joy unspeakable and full of glory? What is there of an experimental nature on "God has poured out his love into our hearts" (Rom 5:5)? In the worst year of his life for temptation and depression, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, 1981, found little to help him. It was during 1949 that he experienced as never before the love of God and joy unspeakable.⁶² We know that the pastoral exposition of Richard Sibbes helped him at that time. Later, Dr. Lloyd-Jones was to write on the theme of experience in detail. We can refer to his work on Romans chapter eight and to his commentary on Ephesians (1:3), and two books, *Joy Unspeakable* and *Prove All Things*. The doctrine proposed and the terminology used has been disputed. However, even though we might not agree about the formulation of the doctrine or the words

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 257.

⁶² Iain H Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Fight of Faith, 1939-1981* (Banner of Truth); p. 207ff.

used, we must concede that Dr. Lloyd-Jones did expound experimental areas of our faith which in our Reformed tradition have often been neglected.⁶³

If Dr. Lloyd-Jones found little literature on the theme of inward experience, we ought not to be censorious of Judson, who read and commended Madame Guyon, the Roman Catholic mystic.⁶⁴ Madame Guyon and the mystics she represented laid great stress upon the inner life and union of the soul with God. They taught that our wills may be completely lost in the divine will, that we should strive after a disinterested love for Him, and that entire sanctification is possible in this world. The aim of every believer is to be entirely at rest in God. Roman Catholic theology is destitute of exposition on union with Christ, let alone the experimental side of that central truth. This bankruptcy characterizes Lutheran theology as well.⁶⁵ It is not surprising then that interest has been shown in those who have been prepared to explore the experimental aspect of this truth. This interest in experience arose out of Judson's genuine spiritual needs. His interest in the mystical writers did not seem to affect him adversely or flow over into other areas of Christian teaching.

As far as Roman Catholicism is concerned, Judson regarded that system as hopelessly given to idolatry. When two of his disciples sought and obtained his good will to visit the Roman Catholic priest so that they might find out what Rome taught, they were shocked. The priest insulted their intelligence by saying that he held under his cassock something very precious. Then gradually he gave them a peek of a little image of Mary. The two disciples came away confirmed that Rome had nothing to offer. They said that as far as idols were concerned, the statues of Buddha were far more impressive than the little image of a Jewish woman!⁶⁶

Eschatology

With regard to the future, Judson's views were post-millennial.⁶⁷ He believed in the conversion of the Jews and took practical steps to promote a fund of 10,000 dollars so that the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions might establish a permanent missionary in Israel. This effort did not succeed. However, Judson was comforted by the knowledge that a tract describing his work in Burma had been translated by a Jew, and that it had been the means of the conversion of a group of Jews.⁶⁸

⁶³ See reviews of *Joy Unspeakable* and *Prove All Things* (Kingsway); reviewed by Victor Budgen in *Reformation Today*, Number 92. See also the book *Crisis Experiences*, Erroll Hulse (Carey Publications).

⁶⁴ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 389.

⁶⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (IVP, 1994); p. 840ff.

⁶⁶ Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 301.

⁶⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *The History of Redemption*. Edwards' work probably was more influential than any other. For up-to-date treatments, see J. A. De Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea—Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions, 1649-1810*, and *The Puritan Hope* by Iain Murray (Banner of Truth), and a paper given at the International Baptist Conference, Toronto, 1988, by Erroll Hulse, *A Christianised World? The Post-Millennial Universal Reign of Christ*.

⁶⁸ Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 23ff.

When he preached and evangelized in the ancient city of Prome, he was deeply conscious of the fact that he was the first ever herald of the gospel in that place. “Thousands,” he wrote, “have never heard of God, nor their ancestors before them...how the preacher has preached, and how the hearers have heard, the Day of Judgment will show.” He believed that his work was only a beginning, and that Buddhism would eventually be entirely removed. This belief in the complete conquest of the gospel over all alien systems motivated his actions and influenced and directed his prayers.⁶⁹

He believed that Burma was to be converted to Christ, just as much as he believed that Burma existed. Just as much as he believed in the Holy Spirit, so much did he believe that in time Burma would be saved. During his visit to Boston in 1846, he was asked by James Loring, “Do you think the prospects are bright for the conversion of the heathen?” “As bright,” was his prompt reply, “as the promises of God!” It was his custom to plead for the fulfillment of those promises.⁷⁰

Speaking in America in 1846, he declared, “The world is yet in its infancy; the gracious designs of God are yet hardly developed. Glorious things are spoken of Zion, the city of our God. She is yet to triumph, and become the joy and glory of the whole earth.” He regarded it as a great privilege to be involved in laying the foundations for such a victory.⁷¹ These convictions bore him along in his constant labors of Bible translation. In the concluding years, he worked hard in forming a Burmese/English dictionary, which advanced far enough to be taken and completed by others.

Mastering the Language

From the beginning of his missionary call, Judson recognized the importance of proficiency in the languages of the Bible: Hebrew and Greek. He worked incessantly to master these. When called to Burma, he regarded proficiency in the Burmese language as an absolute necessity. In the progress of study he wrote a Burmese grammar, which he completed in 1816. This soon became a standard work, a most useful resource for missionaries who followed.

Wayland writes, “Twenty-one years after his first coming to Rangoon, Judson finished his translation of the whole Bible; but, not satisfied with his first version, six more years were devoted to a revision of this great work, and on the 24th of October, 1840, the last sheet of the new edition was printed. The revision cost him more time and labor than the first translation” (vol. 2, p. 138). Such was the quality of his translation that it earned the highest praise from the experts of that time.

Bible translation is a specialized calling, but all missionaries to foreign fields need to follow Judson's example of regarding proficiency in the language of the people as an absolute necessity.

⁶⁹ Wayland, Vol. 1; p. 395ff, cf. p. 333.

⁷⁰ Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 317.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 214.

The place of missionary societies

It should be self-evident that Judson believed in the role of missionary societies. The basis of this belief was the unity of the Church. There are works to be done that can only be achieved by a united effort of churches working in connection with each other. In such work co-operation is essential. While enjoying freedom of enterprise on the field of action, he was always submissive to those who were in charge of the overall strategy. There is the ideal that the local church should direct the affairs of missionary endeavor. As we see from Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the church in Antioch and reported back to that church. That principle is sound, but should not be used to stifle initiative when the only practical way to evangelize a whole nation is through a great concerted team effort. This is something that has been seen over and over again since the rise of the missionary movement in the early 18th century. A missionary now serving abroad told me that if it had been left to his local church, he would not be serving on the mission field. That church has ideals which preclude missionaries working with missionary societies. This friend had no alternative but to align with another church.

7. Burma (Myanmar) Today

To us belongs the responsibility of continuing the work which was initiated in Judson's times. The population of Myanmar is estimated at 46 million. The country is one of the world's poorest nations. Myanmar became independent of Britain in 1947. Elections took place in 1990, when the opposition won 85% of the seats, but the military regime refused to hand over power. In the subsequent repression, democracy leaders were arrested, exiled, or killed.

There is freedom of religion. Buddhism is no longer the state religion. 87.8%, mainly Burmese, are Buddhist. 5.2% of the population is Protestant, and 1.3% Roman Catholic. The Baptist Convention is by far the largest denomination with 1.5 million affiliated members. Assemblies of God number 123,000. There are only 20 Protestant missionaries. All Protestant and most Roman Catholic missionaries were expelled in 1960. Missionaries working in surrounding countries number 2,313, mostly short term workers.

The fortress of Buddhism has not been broken. Buddhist revivalism is making the situation more difficult for religious minorities. The Baptist churches are mostly Arminian in doctrine and there are signs of endemic liberalism. As in most parts of the world, Reformation is an urgent need if all that has been gained in the past is not to be eroded away and lost in the future.⁷²

⁷² *Operation World*, see on Myanmar, p. 398ff.

8. The Missionary Call

Writing to the missionary secretary in America, from Maulmein, Burma, on January 12, 1833, Adoniram Judson protested strongly, on behalf of all the missionaries then serving in Burma, against the appointment of short-term missionaries. These he regarded as mere hirelings. Referring to his own observations of such cases he wrote:

They are all good for nothing. Though brilliant in an English pulpit, they are incompetent to any real missionary work. They come out for a few years, with a view of acquiring a stock of credit on which they may vegetate the rest of their days, in the congenial climate of their native land...As to lessening the trials of the candidate for missions and making the way more smooth before him, it is just what ought not to be done. Missionaries need more trials on their first setting out, instead of less. The motto of every missionary—whether preacher, printer, or schoolmaster—ought to be “Devoted for Life.” A few days ago, Brother Kincaid was asked by a Burmese officer of government how long he intended to stay. “Until all Burma worships the eternal God,” was his prompt reply.⁷³

Judson himself was devoted for life to the missionary cause. Hence he was able to lay down this stern line regarding those who, according to his mind, were prepared only to dabble in the work.

This raises the neglected subject of calling to the ministry.⁷⁴ Basically every Christian should be ready for whatever service is needed within the context of the approval and support of his church. As we will see at the conclusion, the position in Burma (Myanmar) now is totally changed. Today the only way of access is by “Christian Tentmakers,” professional workers, teachers, academics, doctors, engineers, or architects, on contract. These are highly valued by the national Christian leaders. There are about 60 nations in the world where this is the major means for gaining entry—for 33 of these, the only way.⁷⁵

However, it cannot be stressed enough that there are many unevangelized areas of the world that still require teams of missionaries equipped with determination, dedication, and commitment for life, as exemplified by Judson. As Judson was inspired by information, so we ought to encourage missionary vision by use of excellent resources available today.⁷⁶

Writing to the Mission Board in 1832, a joint letter of fervent appeal for more missionaries was made. “We are in distress. We see thousands perishing around us. We see mission stations opening on every side, the fields growing whiter every day, and no la-

⁷³ Francis Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 48.

⁷⁴ See chapter on the call in Spurgeon’s *Lectures to My Students*. Also Joel Nederhood in the book *Preaching* (Evangelical Press).

⁷⁵ *Operation World*, Patrick Johnstone (Zondervan, USA; WEC, UK); p. 614.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, A list of missionary societies is included in *Operation World*. A computer data base for further information, and periodicals which specialise on information about unevangelised countries, are available. SCAN, Society of Central Asian News, is an example: P O Box 151, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9XL, UK.

borers to reap the harvest.” This was followed by details of the call for more missionaries in Burma. In this letter, a description is given of surrounding nations in need of the gospel. The old kingdom of Arracan, then under British rule, is described. This letter, signed by five missionaries, concludes with a prayer as follows:

Have mercy on the theological seminaries, and hasten the time when one-half of all who yearly enter the ministry shall be taken by thine Holy Spirit and driven into the wilderness, feeling a sweet necessity laid on them, and the precious love of Christ and of souls constraining them. Hear, O Lord, all the prayers which are this day presented in all the monthly concerts throughout the habitable globe, and hasten the millennial glory, for which we are all longing, and praying, and labouring. Adorn thy beloved one in her bridal vestments, that she may shine forth in immaculate beauty and celestial splendour. Come, O our Bridegroom; come, Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen and Amen.⁷⁷

Judson, devoted for life, longed for those who were called to dedicate themselves to labor for life on the mission fields. The world has become open to us as never before. An elementary early step on the road to be a missionary is to read all the available material on specific unevangelized areas of the world. A resource like *Operation World* can provide adequate leads for specialized study and preparation (see endnote 71). We know well that whole nations need to be reached, just as Burma needed to be reached. The call to us is for wholehearted commitment to the Great Commission. The call is to devote ourselves to Christ’s cause as Judson devoted himself. There is no doubt that Adoniram Judson was correct in his belief that it will only be through those who are totally committed for life that the strongholds of Satanic darkness will be broken down and won for Christ. Missionary interest in the UK has waned. The British Protestant missionary force has reduced from about 7,000 in 1972 to about 5,400 in 1993. (About 16 percent of all UK missionaries are short-term workers.)⁷⁸

9. Who Will Go?

It is simple to trace out the stages in the development of the missionary call in pioneers like Adoniram Judson and William Carey. Firstly, there is the burden of a lost eternity. What a dreadful reality is the awful lostness and perdition of those in darkness. They *must* be reached with the gospel!

Secondly, there is the primary place of prayer. Basic to all that he attempted was the life of prayer. You can advance by way of your life of intercession, pleading with the Lord to show you the way forward. Joined to prayer is practical effort. You can emulate Judson in the way he developed disciplined habits of concentration in reading and study. He trained his mind to endure hardship. He also exercised common sense to maintain and preserve his physical stamina.

⁷⁷ Wayland, Vol. 2; p. 39ff.

⁷⁸ *Operation World*, p. 559

Thirdly, there is vital place of information. Carey and Judson read everything about the unevangelized world that they could lay their hands on. In this way, their knowledge increased and their source of burden and calling crystallized.

Today, knowledge can be implemented by visiting missionary countries and frontiers, and seeing situations first hand. *Operation World* describes Chad as having more unreached people groups for its size than any other country. It is possible to explore that country and see for oneself. The author knows a missionary that has labored many years in Chad. What was the Soviet Union is now a vast area of many nations including many unreached people groups. A British-based mission produces an information bulletin called *People International* [PO Box 151, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9XL] which describes these peoples and how they can be reached.

Operation World

Published by Zondervan in the USA, *Operation World* is a 662 page book which describes about 200 nations from an evangelical perspective, www.operationworld.org.

Each country is described as to location, area, population, peoples, cities, economy, politics, and religion. This is followed by descriptions and highlights designed to encourage prayer. *Operation World* is outstanding in its usefulness.

Firstly, this book brings home to Christians the magnitude of the unfinished work of worldwide evangelization. Huge areas of the world are yet untouched.

Secondly, the reader learns of revivals and growth. More growth took place in the twentieth century than ever before. This encourages us in the knowledge that the work can and must be done.

Thirdly, this volume expands our knowledge. Both nations and provinces that we did not know existed, come to life through the pages of this tremendous resource.

Mission Frontiers (1605 Elizabeth Street, Pasadena, CA USA 91104) specializes in information in the unreached people of the world. Mission Frontiers calculate that there are still 11,000 people groups to be reached. It is also estimated that for each unreached people group there are 600 evangelical churches. Surely if groups of churches adopted an unreached people group and set about the task in an urgent, practical way, the enterprise would be completed within a generation. As we see with Judson and Burma, the work is too extensive for an individual effort. Teams of missionaries are needed. Language is a foremost factor. A total commitment to master the language is necessary. The work of translating the scriptures into foreign languages, illustrated by the example of Adoniram Judson, is supremely exacting. It is seldom that all the gifts and skills of missionary endeavor reside in one man. Cooperative team work is imperative.

Unevangelized people groups are closely knit, usually fiercely resistant and bound by Satan. The lives of the Judsons and their colleagues illustrate the tenacity and gritty effort required to break through these barriers.

To return to the call, we see that Judson and his missionary companions had to work hard to arouse a sense of responsibility and stewardship in their home churches and in their denomination. The Congregationalists responded to the challenge. When Judson and Luther Rice became Baptists, Rice expended his energies to the utmost to stir the Baptists to overseas missionary commitment. Is your home church committed to missionary effort? Does your home church support any missionaries involved in frontier, pioneering work? Is your home church dedicated and fervent in the support of foreign missionaries? We do support all kinds of existing works as well as ancillary works like Missionary Aviation Fellowship, Tear Fund, medical missions, and teaching missions. But I am speaking now of brand new enterprise, which will realistically advance into the unevangelized parts of the world. Why not work to persuade your church to adopt an unevangelized people group? For more information, write to Mission Frontiers.

Finally, there are practical, determined steps to be made. A field of labor must be decided. Unwavering efforts must be made to get to that field and actually settle there. Once settled, the permanent missionary must persevere with tenacity through several years when little or no fruit is likely. Instances have been recorded of no visible results even in a lifetime of sustained effort. James Haldane labored for 40 years in Morocco and did not see a single convert. We search in vain to find the fault in him. He was an outstanding pioneer with all round gifts and skills. He was not the only one to discover the seemingly impenetrable wall of resistance among Muslim peoples.

Every missionary on the field needs supporters at home. We all have a part to play in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. When William Carey went to India, the image of a gold mine came to mind. “We saw that there was a gold mine in India, but it seemed almost as deep as the center of the earth.” Who would venture down and explore it? “I will venture down and explore it,” said Carey, but he stipulated that his three close friends, Andrew Fuller, John Sutcliff, and John Ryland, “must hold the ropes.”⁷⁹

To sum up the message of Judson’s life for us all today, I will appeal for renewed intercession for reformation and revival, concerts of prayer, renewed Biblical evangelism, and a new awareness of the reality of eternity and the impending judgment. These are the conditions likely to produce a new race of totally committed missionaries after the order of Adoniram Judson—missionaries that are *devoted for life!* ✨

⁷⁹ Michael Haykin tells this inspiring story in his recently published biography of John Sutcliff, *One Heart and One Soul* (Evangelical Press, UK, 1994; 430 pages).



The Baptist Church at Oung-pen-la, where Judson was imprisoned

Chronology of Events in Judson's Life

| | |
|--|------|
| Adoniram born | 1788 |
| Felix Carey pioneers in Rangoon | 1807 |
| Adoniram converted | 1808 |
| Called to be a missionary | 1810 |
| Adoniram and Ann leave for India | 1812 |
| Arrive in Rangoon | 1813 |
| First convert baptized | 1819 |
| British invade Burma | 1824 |
| 19 months imprisonment begins | 1824 |
| Death of Ann Judson | 1826 |
| Death of baby Maria..... | 1827 |
| Adoniram marries Sarah Boardman..... | 1834 |
| Return to America..... | 1845 |
| Sarah dies at St. Helena | 1845 |
| Adoniram returns to Burma | 1846 |
| Adoniram dies at sea | 1850 |



“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”—Psalm 2:8

The Importance of Missionary Biographies

Adoniram Judson was inspired by reading about the pioneer German missionary, Christian Schwartz (1726-1798), who labored in India for almost fifty years. In the Pietist tradition of Spener and Francke, Schwartz had a deep concern for *both* the spiritual and material welfare of the people he served. He was a linguist who worked in the Tamil language.

Judson read about John Eliot (1604-1690), a gospel minister who learned the language of the Algonquin Indians, and began to apportion a significant part of his energy and time to the evangelization of the Algonquin tribe. His work among the Indians prospered to the extent that he was able to train 24 Indian evangelists and also train pastors of Indian churches.

Also there to inspire Judson was the biography of David Brainerd (1718-1747), who devoted himself entirely to reach the unreached North American Indians. He labored intensely among the Indians for just three years, and was the instrument of a powerful spiritual revival. He died at the early age of 29 in the home of Jonathan Edwards (1704-1758), the famous pastor and theologian who used Brainerd's diaries to write his biography. Historians regard this account of Brainerd's life and labors as having a greater influence to inspire missionary effort than any other book.

For reading today, I recommend *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, by Ruth Tucker, published by Zondervan; *A Vision for Missions* by Tom Wells, a small paperback published by the Banner of Truth Trust; also published by the Banner of Truth Trust *Five Pioneer Missionaries (David Brainerd, William C. Burns, John Eliot, Henry Martyn, and John G. Paton)*. Recommended too is *Christian Missionaries* by Owen Milton (Evangelical Movement of Wales). The latter contains 33 short biographies of pioneer missionaries.