

# *JUDSON*

**A MUSICAL STORY ABOUT ANN, EMILY, SARAH AND ADONIRAM JUDSON  
First Overseas Missionaries from the USA**

**First Presented at Second Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO on Oct. 11, 2009  
Dramatic Script written by Dr. Stephen D. Jones ([steve@2ndbc.org](mailto:steve@2ndbc.org))  
Musical Selections by Brad and Marilyn Short**

**Permission is granted to produce this musical in local congregations  
provided that appropriate credits are included in the printed program.**

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Narrator 1          | Narrator 2          |
| Adoniram Judson     | Ann Judson          |
| Emily Judson        | Sarah Judson        |
| Adoniram's Father   | Innkeeper           |
| Seminary Student    | Woman 1             |
| Woman 2             | Woman 3             |
| Father 1            | Commissioner        |
| Congregationalist 1 | Congregationalist 2 |
| Congregationalist 3 | Baptist             |
| Burman 1            | Burman 2            |
| Burman 3            |                     |
| Captain             | King                |
| Karen Leader 1      | George              |
| Karen Leader 2      | Karen Person 3      |
| Karen Person 4      | Karen Person 5      |
| First chanter       | Second Chanter      |
| Third Chanter       | Fourth chanter      |
| Fifth Chanter       | Sixth Chanter       |
| Karen Child 1       | Karen child 2       |
| Karen Child 3       | Karen Teen          |

**Piano plays: “*Standing on the Promises*,” Words and Music by R. Kelso Carter, arr.  
by Carol Tornquist. Published in, *Hymns Re-Harmonized*, Word Music, 2006.**

*(Adoniram, in a twin bed, with a wall beside him; an empty bed on the other side of the wall.)*

Adoniram: “Lost?? Lost!!”

Narrator 1: Adoniram Judson was listening to the sounds of a man about to die. Their beds were separated only by the thin wooden wall of the country inn. Adoniram lay awake listening to groans and the sound of footsteps coming and going.

*(gasps, groans, and people coming and going, one obviously a doctor, others with towels, pan of water, etc.)*

Narrator 2: He found the sounds disturbing.

Adoniram: What if this poor miserable man isn't ready to die? How would I face death if in his shoes? Am I prepared to die? My father, he'd welcome death.

Adoniram's father (voice): Death is a merciful door to eternal life. It is a door to unending glory. Adoniram, I welcome death! I welcome heaven!

**CHORUS: "When We All Get to Heaven," words by Eliza E. Hewitt and music by Emily D. Wilson, arr. by Carol Tornquist. Published in, *Hymns Re-Harmonized, Word Music, 2006.***

*When we all get to heaven,  
What a day of rejoicing that will be!  
When we all see Jesus,  
We'll sing and shout the victory.*

Adoniram: My father is such a sentimental old fool. Heaven! Who believes in that any longer? Father, I need no such shallow comfort to keep me strong.

Father's voice: Heaven is not shallow, Adoniram. It is where you spend eternity.

Adoniram: Trying to reason with him, the ardent Congregational minister, is next to impossible. Our words got a little heated. But his faith makes no sense against the philosophy I learned at the university. I am no longer bound by my father's ideas. I live in a new world!

Narrator 1: After their war of words, Adoniram left home. He went first to New York, to look for a brilliant, free-thinking society. But all he found was a shabby group of actors.

Narrator 2: For weeks he had wandered around with them looking for work. He became disgusted with their empty life; finding lodgings where they could, then escaping without paying. Finally, one night, Adoniram ran away from the group and his journey took him to a country inn.

*(groans emerge from the other side of the wall; activity from care-givers)*

Adoniram: I came here to find peace. What is going on over there? Must this man die on the only night I am a guest in this god-forsaken place? Death. Death. Is death nothing more than a door to a darkness darker than the night? What follows death?

Probably nothingness. But what will happen to that part of me which I call 'Me'? Will it get blown out, like a candle-flame? Oh, these midnight fancies! What would my classmates think of these nightmares? They had admired my fearless free-thinking spirit! Where is my bravery now? *(more groaning)*

Adoniram: Would someone help this man! Anyway, I shall stick to the beliefs of my good friend, Jacob Eames—who led me away from my childish belief in Christ. Eames, my dear friend, if you could see me quivering in my boots at the thought of death, you'd be making fun of me!

Narrator 2: The next morning, it seemed to Judson that his fears had been a dream. He could not understand how he had given in to such weakness.

Narrator 1: When he found the innkeeper and paid his account, Adoniram spoke casually,

Adoniram: Is the young man in the room upstairs feeling any better this fine morning?

Innkeeper: He is dead.

Adoniram: Dead?

Narrator 1: For a moment, the fear of the night tripped Adoniram's heart again. But only for a moment. Quickly, he recovered and asked,

Adoniram: Do you know who he was?

Innkeeper: Oh yes. He was a young man from the university. His name was, let me see, yes, here it is. His name was Eames. Jacob Eames...

Narrator 2: The news was such a shock that Adoniram was in no state to leave the inn. (staggered around) When he found himself on the road later in the day he did not even know how he got there.

Adoniram: How could my best friend have died in the bed next to mine, on the very night I stayed at the inn? Could this possibly be a coincidence? Is Someone trying to speak to me? What if my beliefs are wrong? If God is real, then poor Jacob is lost.

Ad's Father: If God is real, then your friend, Jacob, now knows his error and is already regretting it with a bitterness no living human being can imagine. He stands before the gates of hell and there is no going back.

Adoniram: Surely it is not chance that my dearest friend would die in the next bed. Is this not a terrible warning? Is this not a warning for which God had been preparing me?

Ad's Father: How can your godless philosophy make sense of this tragedy?

Adoniram: The God of the Bible must be the true God. If so, he must have a plan for my life, if only I knew what it is.

***Adoniram Solo: "Take My Life," words by France R. Havergal and music by Craig Courtney, published in Music for the Master, Beckenhorst, 1988.***

*(leave the bedroom scene; now seated at a student's desk with books)*

Narrator 1: In Sept., 1809, young Judson, at the age of 21, began to ponder foreign missions seriously. He had just finished his first year at Andover Seminary. A printed sermon describing the progress of the Gospel in India fell like a spark into the tender of Judson's soul.

Adoniram: It was during a solitary walk in the woods behind the college, that the command of Christ, 'Go into all the world' was presented to my mind with such clearness that I came to a full decision to obey it.

Narrator 2: At this time, overseas mission was unheard of among American Christians. Even the students thought his talk about foreign missions was crazy. But Judson met six students at Andover who shared his passion.

Narrator 1: Someone gave him a book about Burma – one of the most isolated countries in Asia.

Adoniram: What a strange feudal empire. The Burmese can read and write and their literature is well-developed. And yet they are all slaves of their emperor. The emperor believes that the whole world is at his feet. He rules over 17 million people, more than twice the population of the States. Burma – what a place of missionary service. Could God be calling me to Burma!?

Narrator 2: Everywhere Judson went, he became a recognized leader. He was brilliant, forceful and an indomitable worker. Judson was offered the associate pastor of the finest church in New England, Park Street. He was offered a tutor's appointment at Brown University. He declined them both.

Ad's father's voice: Please, Adoniram, re-consider and stay in New England. Conduct your ministry here, as I have.

Narrator 2: But Judson was determined.

Adoniram: Finally, we found a receptive pastor who invited us to the Association of Congregational Churches in New England. The Assembly listened as each student told why he should become a foreign missionary.

Student: It is my duty to give up home and friends and go on the long, perilous journey to the heathen world. For God, I can do no less.

Narrator 1: That night, Adoniram and the other students were guests at the home of Deacon John Hasseltine

Adoniram: From the moment his daughter, Ann, walked in the room, I could not take my eyes off her! I had never seen anyone so captivating. I must have made her self-conscious because I stared at her throughout the night.

*(Piano background: "Getting to know you, getting to know all about you" 8 or 16 bars of the melody)*

Narrator 2: Judson was smitten. First, he asked Ann to marry him and go with him as a missionary to Asia. No woman in America had yet been asked to do such a thing.

Woman 1: It is altogether preposterous for a woman to consider such a rash undertaking!

Woman 2: It is utterly improper of him to ask you!

Woman 3: It is wild and romantic!

Woman 1: It's dangerous and unsettling!

Father 1: I would tie my daughter to the bedpost before I would let her go.

Narrator 2: Eventually, with Ann's blessing, Judson asked her father for her hand in marriage:

Adoniram: I have now to ask, sir, whether you can agree to part with your daughter, to see her no more in this world, whether you can agree to her subjection to the hardships of a missionary life; whether you can agree to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate; to every kind of lack and distress, to degradation, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you agree to all this, in the hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with the crown of righteousness, brightened with the shouts of praise which will come to her Savior from souls saved from never-ending misery?

Ann: Adoniram!!

Narrator 2: Even with such an absurd request, Ann's father gave his blessing and Ann and Adoniram were married Feb. 5, 1812.

Narrator 1: The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions suggested that the seven students approach the London Missionary Society for funds. Judson argued his case before the London Missionary Society and they agreed to sponsor him as a missionary if he would agree that he was fully their missionary and not the Americans.

Narrator 2: Adoniram returned to Boston and once the American Board of Commissioners heard of the ploy by the English to take over the American missionaries...

Commissioner: My boy, reckon anything them Britishers can do, we can do. We will send you to the mission field. You will be the first American to take the Gospel overseas! You will make history for New England!

***(Piano background: “Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better” 8 bars from the beginning of the chorus)***

Narrator 1: In January, a ship called the *Caravan* was sailing from Philadelphia to India and on Feb. 5, 1812, Ann and Adoniram and Samuel and Harriet Newell, were aboard. For the two missionary couples, the voyage was a long honeymoon. The two couples danced together, partly to keep fit and partly for the joy of it.

***(Piano background: “I Could Have Danced All Night” 30 bars from the beginning of the refrain)***

Narrator 1: On the journey, Adoniram kept himself busy by translating the Greek New Testament into English.

Adoniram: Much to my surprise, I discovered that the literal meaning of the Greek word for ‘baptism’ was ‘dipping in water.’ In my Congregational church I had been baptized as a baby by being sprinkled with a few drops of water. But in the Bible, baptism seemed to occur in rivers to adult believers.

Ann: If you, Adoniram, become a Baptist, I will not!

Narrator 1: But Ann finally agreed and the young couple faced an immediate dilemma.

Ann: A renunciation of our former sentiments as Congregationalists has caused us more pain than anything ever before!

Narrator 1: The Congregationalists of New England had sent them to Asia and now they were Baptists! They were immersed by English Baptist missionary William Carey upon their arrival in Calcutta.

***Chorus: “Come, Holy Spirit, Dove Divine,” words by Adoniram Judson and music by H. Percy Smith. (Tune Maryton).***

***All: Come, Holy Spirit, Dove divine,  
On these baptismal waters shine,  
And teach our hearts, in highest strain,  
To praise the Lamb for sinners slain.***

***Women: We love Your name, we love Your laws,  
And joyfully embrace Your cause;  
We love Your cross, the shame, the pain,  
O Lamb of God, for sinners slain.***

*Men: We sink beneath the water's face,  
And thank You for Your saving grace;  
We die to sin and seek a grave,  
With You, beneath the yielding wave.*

*All: And as we rise with You to live,  
O let the Holy Spirit give  
The sealing unction from above,  
The joy of life, the fire of love.*

Congregationalist 1: They did what?

Cong 2: They became Baptists.

Cong 1: Baptists? That's a step down, if I ever heard it!

Cong 3: Why would they leave the mother church of New England to join a sect?

Cong 2: The Baptists can't possibly raise the funds to support them overseas and they're such a cantankerous lot they'll probably never agree to it, anyway.

Cong 1: You mean, Ann and Adoniram were re-baptized when they arrived in India?

Cong 2: They denounced their first Christian baptism, the baptisms offered by their mothers and fathers.

Cong 3: What insolence!

Cong 2: What an insult!

Baptist: Guess what?

Cong 1: What, now?

Baptist: We have foreign missionaries.

Cong 2: Oh, you do, do you? And just who are your foreign missionaries?

Baptist: Adoniram and Ann Judson.

Cong 3: So, you come around here gloating that you have taken from us our first foreign missionaries just as they step off the ship?!

Cong 2: And you don't even believe in foreign missions.

Baptist: Well, we didn't. But you changed your minds; so can we.

Cong 1: How are you going to support them?

Baptist: Well, we haven't quite figured out that one. Say, you folks wouldn't be interested in...

(glares)

Baptist ...No, I didn't think so.

Cong 1: You owe us for their ship ride to India, you know?

Baptist And don't think for a moment that we don't appreciate it. Anyway, we've got more urgent matters. The Judsons need our support. We can't leave them hanging over there.

Cong 3: How do you think they left us?

Narrator 2: The American Baptists found themselves thrust into foreign missions, racing to catch up to a mandate laid upon the heart of the Judson's.

Narrator 1: The East India Trading Company was not pleased with their arrival. They did not want the Indian people converted to Christianity. Suddenly, all American missionaries were expelled.

Ann: Our heavenly Father, direct us aright! Where wilt thou have us go? What wilt thou have us do? Our only hope is in thee.

Narrator 2: Yet, after 18 months of traveling, the Judsons had no doubt that Burma was the place God wanted them to go.

Narrator 1: Adoniram searched the Madras harbor for a ship. He finally came to the last ship in the harbor.

Adoniram: Where is your ship sailing?

Captain: This is the Georgiana and it is headed to Rangoon.

Adoniram: Then you can carry us, my wife and I?

Captain: Of course, for a fee. But they don't take to foreigners there. I hope you're not planning on staying.

Adoniram: You will take us to Rangoon?

Captain: Yes, I said, yes.

Narrator 2: During violent storms, Ann arrived in Rangoon weak and unable to walk. Late in the afternoon, Judson saw a flash of gold above the jungle tree-tops. The sun's rays were catching the tip of a gleaming spire, the top of the great Shwe Dagon pagoda.

Narrator 1: Four Burmese men carried Ann sitting in an armchair on two long poles. The streets were crowded with people who had never seen a foreign woman.

Ann: I gave birth to our first son, Roger, on Sept. 11, 1815. The climate was so difficult for Westerners. By Spring, our baby died. We laid little Roger to rest in the garden of the mission-house. We felt so distraught. I had befriended the governing viceroy's wife. Upon hearing of Roger's death, she sent an elephant and handler to our house. Adoniram and I climbed into a colorful shelter on the elephant's back and went into the jungle until we reached an area of wild fruit trees. When we arrived back home, the viceroy's wife had planted a circle of mango trees around little Roger's grave.

Adoniram: I began writing tracts in Burmese.

Ann: And I wrote curriculum. The Careys in India sent a printing press and thousands of copies of our works were distributed around Rangoon.

*(A zayat is the setting for the next scenes, a hut-looking structure)*

Adoniram: I started to build a meeting place, called a zayat. There were zayats all along the busy Pagoda Road. Travelers could rest there, meet for conversation and teachers could teach. The first service was held on April 4, 1819. 15 adults came in during the service.

Burman 1: What is this place? It doesn't look like our zayats.

Burman 2: And look at the teacher's dress and manners.

Burman 1: Very strange, very strange, indeed.

Burman 2: I really don't know what to make of this.

Ann: Adoniram added a porch to his zayat. He sat in it every day calling out,

Adoniram: "Ho! Everyone that thirsts for knowledge!"

Narrator 2: More came until the teacher was fully occupied with his visitors. On June 6, 1819, the first Burmese man, Maung Nau, professed his faith and asked to be baptized.

***Karen/Burmese faith song "Standing on the Promises" (1<sup>st</sup> verse) arr. by Tornquist sung by only two or three of the actors playing the new converts in Karen language.***

Narrator 1: Soon, however, a new viceroy placed restrictions around the missionaries making the people scared to visit their zayat.

Adoniram: I became convinced that the only way around this difficult situation was to travel to Ava, the Court of the Golden King. After a month's travel, we finally were given permission to see the king. High above our heads was a golden dome, supported by hundreds of pillars. Days went by negotiating with the king and his counselors. Finally, the king said,

King: What! They have come presuming to convert us to their religion! Let them leave our capitol. We have no desire to receive their instructions. Perhaps their countrymen in Rangoon may be willing to listen to them.

Narrator 2: Judson had failed to gain the king's protection. Eventually, they returned to Rangoon but Ann fell so ill that there was no other solution than for her to return to America to regain her strength. Their two year separation was very difficult for them.

Adoniram: It felt as if I was cutting off my right arm and pulling out my right eye. To escape my loneliness, I concentrated on translating the Scriptures.

Narrator 1: Soon, another missionary couple, the Price's, arrived and he was a medical doctor. News of his healing ability reached the king.

Adoniram: On July 20, 1822, an order came from the emperor commanding the doctor to appear. I agreed to translate. We were well received by the king. I had many faith

conversations with royalty. But then I returned to Rangoon to await Ann's arrival from America.

Ann: Our reunion and return trip up the river to Ava was like a second honeymoon.

Adoniram: "What do you think of floating on the Irrawaddy on a cool, moonlit evening, with your wife by your side? I can never regret my 21 months of misery when I recall that one delicious thrill. I think I now have had a better appreciation of what heaven might be like."

Narrator 2: En route, they passed a fleet of golden war-boats. Somehow, they were allowed to pass through but Dr. Price met them and told them the discouraging news that now all foreigners were out of favor with the king.

Narrator 1: The East India Company had sent an army to take Rangoon, and to everyone's surprise, the city easily fell into British control.

Ann: While we were getting ready for dinner one night, an official forced his way into our house and took Adoniram in chains to a deplorable jail. (*show Adoniram and Price with their feet chained to a high bar, legs elevated – perhaps at the back of the stage with a special light*) His legs were elevated in the air and he was left hanging upside down throughout the night. Adoniram's health declined rapidly.

Narrator 1: Ann visited officials and eventually was given permission to visit him in prison. When Adoniram crawled to the little gate in the wall to see her,

Ann: I could hardly recognize him. It seemed impossible that only two nights of restless torture had given him this death-like appearance.

***Ann Solo: "He Hideth My Soul" (1<sup>st</sup> verse) words by Fanny J. Crosby and music by William J. Kirkpatrick, arr. by Carol Tornquist. Published in, *Hymns Re-Harmonized*, Word Music, 2006.***

Narrator 1: Adoniram had been in prison for seven months when Ann gave birth to a daughter, Maria. The order came for all foreigners to be marched out of the city.

Ann: Adoniram's shoes were taken from him and blisters formed on his feet as they were marched across a scorching desert. Burning sand turned his feet into raw, open sores. Somehow, he survived the march to Death Prison in Amarapura.

Adoniram: The next evening, a cart came bumping up the country road to the prison. There was the sound of a baby crying. I couldn't believe my eyes: I saw Ann standing before me holding little Maria.

Ann: There was no place for me to live until a prison guard took pity and took me into his humble house.

Narrator 2: But Ann fell extremely ill and was no longer able to breast-feed her infant daughter.

Adoniram: Surprisingly, the prison warden gave permission for me to take the baby around to nearby young mothers. I carried the baby in prison chains until the infant had enough milk to stay alive.

Narrator 1: Adoniram was eventually freed and the Judson's settled south in Amherst. But soon he was taken by the government to translate a peace treaty between the English and the Burmese since no one else could read both languages. Adoniram was successful in negotiating a peace treaty and then a trade agreement for the King.

Narrator 2: While he was gone, Ann took a turn for the worse and died.

Adoniram: I swiftly returned to Amherst to find my beloved wife buried in a grave in a little field in the village.

Narrator 2: Her grave still stands to this day.

Adoniram: O, with what meekness and magnanimity she bore her sufferings! She was singularly qualified to serve in Burma by her natural disposition, her winning manners, her devoted zeal, and her perfect acquaintance with the language.

***Adoniram Solo: Reprise "He Hideth My Soul" (2<sup>nd</sup> verse) words by Fanny J. Crosby and music by William J. Kirkpatrick, arr. by Carol Tornquist. Published in, *Hymns Re-Harmonized*, Word Music, 2006.***

Narrator 1: Baby Maria Judson lived a while longer until she was two years old, and then she died and was buried next to her mother in the shadow of a tree called hope.

Adoniram: Grief drove me to take my Bible and go into the jungle for forty days.

Narrator 2: Gradually, the widower climbed out of his gloom.

Adoniram: I wanted to do more pioneering work to take the gospel where it had never been heard.

Narrator 1: Now in good health, his face was almost unlined, his body vigorous, his step quick. In September, 1831, he went up the Dagaing River, where the first members of the Karen tribe were baptized. At one village, a Buddhist Karen sent a message to Adoniram...

Karen Person 1: I am not going to invite you to my village but neither am I going to stop you from coming.

Karen Person 2: In our village, the chief himself asked for baptism. During the six-week journey, 25 converts were baptized and many more of our Karen people became 'hopeful inquirers.'

***Karen song: "Standing on the Promises" by the Karen cast in Karen language***

Karen Child 1: Dr. Judson is coming! Dr. Judson is coming!

Karen Child 2: Can you see him? Is he here yet?

Karen Child 3: Dr. Judson is here! He's finally here!

Karen Teen 1: Our village was so excited because of the missionary journey of Dr. Adoniram Judson visiting every village in our area.

Karen Person 3: Word had already reached our village of his visits to nearby villages.

Karen Teen: Everywhere he went, he told the Karen people about a Gospel of love and a Gospel of peace. In each village, he told the people about Jesus of Nazareth, and about his love for every child and every adult.

Karen Person 3: And in each village, many of the Karen responded to his invitation and became baptized as followers of Jesus Christ. And new churches were formed in many of the villages and people began worshipping every Sunday and singing God's praises.

Karen Child 3: Dr. Judson is here! He's finally here!

All 3 Karen Children: Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Narrator 1: George and Sarah Boardman were the first American Baptist missionaries to work among the Karen.

George: I was near death when they carried me by cot, at my insistence, into the jungle where 34 Karens were to be baptized. We had worked and prayed for this day and I wanted to be there.

Karen Person 3: George didn't survive the trip, leaving Sarah a widow but she remained in Tavoy, considered by our people as their spiritual mother.

Sarah: When I first stood by the grave of my husband, I thought that I must go home to America with my three-year-old son. But these inquiring Karens would then be left without any one to instruct them. How then can I go? We shall not be separated long. A few more years and we shall all meet in yonder blissful world.

Narrator 2: Sarah Boardman made long tours into the Karen jungles. With her little boy carried by her followers at her side, she climbed the mountain, traversed the marsh, forded the stream and threaded the forest.

Sarah: When I read Judson's translation of scripture, I was moved to tears. Adoniram had been a widower for 8 years. I a widow for 3 years. On April 10, 1834, we were married.

**Chorus: "Gift of Love" (1<sup>st</sup> verse) words and music by Hal Hopson.**

*Though I may speak with bravest fire,  
And have the gift to all inspire,  
And have not love: my words are vain;  
As sounding brass, and hopeless gain.*

Narrator 1: Sarah gave birth to their first child, Abby. By this time Judson had spent half his life in Burma and could hardly put three English sentences together he so seldom spoke his native tongue.

Sarah: The birth of a son, Adoniram, followed, and then Elnathan, and Henry.

Narrator 1: Henry was the next to die.

**(Piano plays background: "Jesus Loves Me" played slowly and softly)**

Sarah: I was working on a translation of *Pilgrim's Progress*, but my health began to seriously deteriorate. The only solution was for our family to return to the United States.

Adoniram: It is the unanimous opinion of the medical doctors that nothing but a voyage beyond the tropics can possibly protract Sarah's dear life.

Narrator 2: On their return, Sarah died near the Cape of Good Hope.

Adoniram: She sleeps sweetly here, on this rock of the ocean  
Away from the home of her youth,  
And far from the land where, with heartfelt devotion,  
She scattered the bright beams of truth.

**Solo "Softly and Tenderly," words by Will Thompson and music Raymond Brown, arr. by Mark Hayes, Triune Music, 1981.**

Narrator 1: Adoniram was a widower again.

Adoniram: After six weeks at sea, I returned to Boston and unexpectedly found myself something of a celebrity throughout the United States.

Narrator 2: Crowds gathered in city after city to hear the great missionary to Burma. But his lung disease was so advanced he could barely whisper.

Adoniram: While traveling around America, I met Emily Chubbock, an accomplished author. She agreed to write a biography of Sarah Judson with me. She had once said when she was younger,

Emily: I have felt, ever since I read the memoir of Ann Judson when I was a small child, that I must become a missionary. I fear it is but a childish fancy, and am making every effort to banish it from my mind.

Narrator 1: Soon the two fell in love and to the shock of many, they were married. He was 58 and she was 28.

Adoniram: Those in the literary world were shocked that such a brilliant young writer would throw herself away in marriage to an old missionary.

Emily: Those in support of Adoniram were shocked that he would marry such a young woman, a mere chit of a girl, and a writer of light fiction at that! We left for Burma on July 11, 1846.

Narrator 2: Adoniram developed the first English-Burmese dictionary, highly regarded with his Bible translation as elegant examples of their language.

Narrator 1: But illness and frailty took over Adoniram and the doctor ordered him to go on a boat and get away from the damp climate of Burma.

Emily: I was very reluctant to see him go and the Burmese Christians did not want him to die at sea.

Burmese: Do not leave us, Dr. Judson. If heaven awaits you, you should be buried on Burmese soil.

Emily: But the doctor said if he was to survive, he had to leave by ship. The ocean breezes had never failed to invigorate him before.

Burmese: Yet, Adoniram Judson died five days out on the voyage and was buried at sea on April 12, 1850.

Narrator 2: Emily wrote home to Adoniram's sister,

Emily: There was something beautiful in the decline of your brother's life—more beautiful than I can describe, though the impression will remain as a sacred legacy until I go to meet him where suns shall never set and life shall never end. He had been an uncommonly spiritual Christian... Last year, Adoniram said to me, 'What deep cause we

have for gratitude to God! Do you believe there are any other two persons in the wide world so happy as we are?’

**Chorus: “When We All Get to Heaven” words by Eliza E. Hewitt and music by William Kirkpatrick and Henry Gilmour, arr. by Carol Tornquist. Published in, *Hymns Re-Harmonized*, Word Music, 2006.**

*Sing the wondrous love of Jesus,  
Sing His mercy and His grace;  
In the mansions bright and blessed  
He’ll prepare for us a place.*

*When we all get to heaven,  
What a day of rejoicing that will be!  
When we all see Jesus,  
We’ll sing and shout the victory.*

Narrator 1: Adoniram Judson laid the foundations of Christianity deep down in the Burman heart where they could never be washed away. The Karen people began responding to the Gospel by 1827. The Chins began to turn to Christ five years before Adoniram’s death, and the Kachins started to follow their example 21 years later.

Karen Person 1: My Karen people lived in the jungles in small villages, not in towns or cities. While there were Karen Buddhists, more Karen were animists and this made it easier for us to accept Christianity.

Karen Person 2: We had an ancient cultural legend of losing our holy book and that a light-skinned man would someday arrive and bring it back to us.

Karen Person 3: Judson seemed like a fulfillment of that legend.

Narrator 2: Judson was once asked what the future held for Christians in Burma. He answered:

Adoniram (offstage voice): The future is as bright as the promises of God.

Karen Person 4: Not many years ago, my people became oppressed by the Burmese army and our villages were burned and we escaped into the forests only to be hunted down.

Karen Person 5: For years, we lived on the Thai border in refugee camps before coming to America.

Narrator 2: The Karen people have come full circle, voyaging halfway around the globe as did Adoniram and Ann Judson, as did Sarah Boardman Judson, as did Emily Chubbock Judson, residing as new immigrants in Judson’s homeland, bringing joy and vitality to many churches in America.

Karen People: Making a new start with our lives, our faith has come full circle. Truly, our future is as bright as the promises of God!

***Chorus: “These Judsons Were a Storied Clan”***

(words Stephen Jones; tune Truro “Ride on Ride on in Majesty”)

*Amazing race this family ran  
These Judsons were a storied clan  
Such words and acts, a mighty sum  
Remembered for the years to come.*

*They could inspire you to be bold  
As frontiers God calls you to hold  
To change the face of history  
When God’s dream reaches you and me*

*We then could be called Judsons, too  
They’ve more than earned this right, it’s true:  
Illumine darkness, stand for Right  
As we walk with the Lord of Light.*

***Finale: “Standing on the Promises of God” arr. Torunquist.***

Sources: *Storming the Golden Kingdom, A biography of Adoniram Judson* by John Waters, STL Books, 1989  
*Jungle Trips through Burma, 1921-1941*, Gertrude Anderson  
*Adoniram Judson, Missionary to Burma*, Moody Press, 1955, by Faith Cox Bailey  
*The Life of Adoniram Judson*, by his son, Edward Judson  
*Ann of Ava*, by Ethel Daniels Hubbard, American Baptist Publication Society

**Staging Notes:**

1. We performed this musical with an intergenerational cast about evenly divided between the Karen participants of our church and the other members of our congregation. It was written with such a mixed cast in mind. The musical is less of an actual musical and more of a dramatic way of telling the story of the Judson’s life. Judson, his wives, and the narrators carry a great deal of the story.
2. We put together a power point slide show using photographs of the Judsons, and artistic renderings we found about the various chapters in their lives. It enhanced the musical to have these photographs projected in the background.
3. We built one “wall” with one side to be used as Adoniram’s bedroom wall in the hotel in the opening scene. And then, we turned the wall so that the other side was a background for the rest of the musical and we painted a very large map of Burma on that side and printed, “Judson’s Burma”.

4. In order to involve our teenagers in the musical, we asked them to sing a song that they enjoy singing and the teenagers not in the musical came up out of the audience to sing their song.
5. We created a zayat simply using several bales of hay.
6. Each time one of the main characters died or went away, we had them exit by walking slowly up the center aisle of the church and exiting the sanctuary. Ann Judson exited half-way on her trip back to America and then returned to the stage when the script called for this.
7. For most of the musical, we had the cast sitting off to one side and they came onto the stage for their particular parts. This musical doesn't call for too many "total cast" scenes. After the solo, "Softly and Tenderly", we had the cast come on stage for the remainder of the musical standing in a "U" shaped formation surrounding Adoniram and Emily and the rest of the action to the close of the play.

The closing song actually was written with seven stanzas but we chose only to include the final stanzas in the musical. Here are all the stanzas:

### ***These Judsons Were a Storied Clan***

*Tune: Truro (Ride On, Ride On, in majesty)*

*Lyrics: Stephen D. Jones, 2009*

A life that told a salient tale  
Intriguing story without fail  
To shine a light throughout the earth  
No darkness can o'er-take its worth

To Ann, and Sarah, Emily,  
His three life-partners faithfully  
This Judson man stood tall and true  
As children born, were loved and grew

To Burma they set forth to sail  
They blazed a most unusual trail  
Baptized by Carey's Baptist hand  
Surprising all in their homeland.

For years they worked with no convert  
The king, unyielding, meant to hurt  
Chained and marched on blistering sand  
Suspected as a treasonous band

Amazing race this family ran

These Judsons were a storied clan  
Such words and acts: a mighty sum  
Remembered for the years to come.

They could inspire you to be bold  
As frontiers God calls you to hold  
To change the face of history  
When God's dream reaches you and me

We then could be called Judsons, too  
They've more than earned this right, it's true:  
Illumine darkness, stand for Right  
As we walk with the Lord of Light.