

BAPTIST HERITAGE

Ann Judson*Karen O'Dell Bullock—Godley, TX*

Divacious Nancy" Hasseltine was the most beautiful girl in Bradford, Massachusetts! Born as a Christmas gift to her family on 22 December 1789, she attended schools in her New England village and dreamed of dresses and parties. God was shaping her character, even from childhood, for ministry that would impact the world!

As a teen, Ann was troubled about her relationship with God, although she pretended nothing was wrong. Her schoolteacher, Mr. Burnham, explained that people often hid from God because they were afraid of what He might do in their lives. Ann knew this was true of herself. Her thoughtful search for Him led to her conversion and church membership when she was sixteen. Ann's faith grew as she began teaching school in the surrounding villages. She prayed that God would use her life in His service someday. That day was not far away.

In the summer of 1810, several young Congregationalist seminarians came to Bradford to petition the churches of Massachusetts to send missionaries to the lost peoples of the world. Although no American denomination had done such a thing, the churches agreed to form a mission society - The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. When the young men came to dinner at the Hasseltine home, their spokesman Adoniram Judson met Ann for the first time and determined to win her heart. Adoniram was a brilliant, energetic, and deeply spiritual man. Within months Ann and Adoniram married, answered God's call to missions, and sailed to India, devoted to the people of Burma "whom, not seeing, I love," she said.

The Judsons spent the rest of their lives among the Burmese, becoming Baptists soon after their arrival. Obedience to God was costly. Years of harassment, deaths of children, confiscation of property, and imprisonment followed. At one time, Ann camped beside the Ava Death Prison for almost two years while negotiating Adoniram's release. She also saved precious translations of the Bible, the result of ten years' labor. Then the harvest began.

The Bible was translated into Burmese (Pali), men and women came to know Christ as Savior, churches were planted, and schools offered spiritual training. In the midst of these fruitful days, Ann contracted dysentery and died on 24 October 1826. She had lived more fully than most people twice her age. God had made her ordinary life extraordinary!



The story of Ann Judson reminds us today that each act of obedience to God impacts eternity and gladdens the heart of Him "who, not seeing, we love."

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