

AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON (1890-1944)

EVANGELIST AND FOUNDER OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF THE FOURSQUARE GOSPEL

Aimee Semple McPherson: This early 20th century evangelist was a pioneer of women in religion. She was born on a farm in Canada on October 9, 1890. While a high school student, she attended a revival service conducted by Robert Semple. Her desire for serving the Lord seemed perfectly fitted to Robert Semple's evangelistic work. They were married shortly before her 20th birthday. Soon after, the young couple embarked on a missionary trip to China. But what started out as a glorious adventure and fulfillment of God's calling, ended with the tragic death of her husband three months after their arrival. Penniless and alone with a one-month-old daughter, Aimee returned to America.

Shortly after returning home, Aimee met and married businessman Harold McPherson, with whom she had a son, Rolf. She tried to settle down to a "normal" home life, but the call to Christian service remained constant. She became seriously ill. Aimee, while on her deathbed after her second operation within two years, answered "yes" to God's call. Almost immediately thereafter, she was healed and began to preach the gospel. Aimee's charismatic personality was a God-given gift, and it drew many people to hear her message.

While holding a revival meeting in San Francisco in April 1922, Aimee became the first woman to preach a sermon over the radio. Later she purchased a radio station, thus making her the first woman to be granted a radio license by the FCC and to operate a station. She was a pioneer religious broadcaster making the KFSG station in Los Angeles the oldest operating religious station in the nation.

In 1923, Aimee McPherson built the famous 5300-seat Angelus Temple Church. It became the spiritual home for thousands of her followers and a base for her evangelistic ministry. What grew out of a desire to have a base of operation to preach the Gospel, quickly evolved into a church organization that supported and sent out missionaries, provided commissary and community services that were more reliable than the city's own relief programs, as well as a full program of church ministries. During the Great Depression of 1933, Angelus Temple provided hot meals for more than 1.5 million people. Aimee became founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, which has now grown to include more than 1,834 churches in the United States, and over 29,973 churches worldwide. Sister McPherson went to be with the Lord on September 27, 1944, while conducting a revival service in Oakland, California. Memorial services were held on her birthday, October 9 at Angelus Temple.

WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON
EVANGELIST AND CHURCH FOUNDER/ANSWERING THE CALL OF GOD
Women's Discipleship Group
Terri McFaddin Series #5-7

Scripture Focus: *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8)*

Opening Statement: Aimee Semple McPherson was a newlywed when she went to China with her husband as missionaries. She returned to the United States poor and heartbroken after her husband became ill and died on their trip. Later she married a successful businessman and was content to live out her days as a wife, mother and homemaker. But the Lord had other plans for Aimee. He revealed to her that He wanted her to preach the gospel, but after all that she went through in China, she rejected God's voice. But when she fell desperately ill, she surrendered her life to the Lord and quickly recovered. She went on to become the founder of the Foursquare Church, a worldwide denomination with more than three and one half million members.

Some of you have been in a similar situation in that you went through a painful experience in life and when God spoke to you about a new adventure, you said: "I don't think so! I learned my lesson the last time out!" Others may be thinking that you would love for God to reveal His will for your life, but you have no idea what He wants you to do because God isn't talking or showing you any signs.

Hopefully as we address the following questions you will (1) discover the road that will lead you to God's will for your life. (2) Find the courage to surrender to God's will for your life.

Observations: Read the full biography below of Aimee Semple McPherson and answer the following questions:

1. What was her initial reaction to God's call on her life?
2. Do you think she envisioned all that the Lord would accomplish through her?
3. What do you see as some of the personal drawbacks of surrendering to God's will?
4. Read Esther Chapter 4. How was God's will revealed to Esther? What was her response?

Interpretation:

Read the following scriptures. How can they help a person discover God's will for their life?

1. Romans 12:2
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:3
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Personalization:

How does the story of Aimee McPherson change your view of women in ministry?