



NOTE: In our previous issue we mistakenly identified Part XXXII as Part XXXIII. This issue contains Part XXXIII (33).

AMONG ANTI-CHRIST'S MOST effective weapons to corrupt mankind has been warfare—particularly warfare between “Christian” nations. But there had never been a war of such destructive force in all of history leading up to “the war to end all wars.” And there had never been an unleashing of inhibitions after any war as there was after that war.

The Gay Nineties was a carnal response to the Victorian morality that many felt was repressive. The following decades after the 1890s saw a gradual decline in morals, but with the tension building up to World War I, there remained a soberness that kept much of human nature in check. That soberness dissipated quickly after the war as the tension was relieved by a peace that would prove all too tenuous.

The 1920s was a decade of decadence. Relieved that the Great War was finally over, Europe and America licked their wounds by embarking on a binge of indulgence that dramatically altered their respective societies.

Secular humanism and social Darwinism had already made great inroads into Western Civilization, and with Higher Criticism on the rise God's Word began to take a back seat as secularism drove society greater distances from the Creator.

CULTURE

The Roaring Twenties

The third decade of the 20th century was a time of dramatic change, not only in society, but in politics. America's wealth was on the way to doubling by the end of the decade as consumerism assuaged people's desire to distance

themselves from the horrors of that awful conflict. Large chain stores began to spring up all over the United States, leading to nation-wide advertising that would push many small and independent merchants out of business.

The 1920s was the decade of mass culture where mass communications and the entertainment industry influenced the population's thinking and conduct as never before. This was just what anti-Christ needed to begin his last-days onslaught against the truth of God's Word and His righteousness.

With the increase in mass communications, people all over America were listening to the same music, doing the same dances, and adopting a new language called “slang.” Night life surged as people sought venues for gaiety. In 1923, the Charleston dance craze took the nation by storm.

Many members of the older generation became alarmed at what they perceived as debauchery taking over society. But the younger generation opened themselves up to whatever became popular as admen for entertainment told them what they must do to be popular themselves. This was especially true of those living in many nations' big cities. The free-spirited departure from convention during this decade gave it a distinctive name: The Roaring Twenties.

Flappers

One of the most familiar and compelling figures of the Roaring Twenties was the flapper. The anti-Christ spirit of rebellion took hold of many women's consciousness. Eschewing the past ideal of womanhood expressed as demure, chaste, and at least outwardly innocent, young women took on many of the trappings of men, engaging in drinking, smoking, and sexual license. Bobbed hair and short skirts made a statement that the “New Woman” was nothing like mom, and certainly nothing like grandmother.

Although this was not the norm for most young women, flappers became a favorite topic of newspapers, magazines, and motion pictures because of their dramatic departure from convention. And although the flapper was in a minority and largely the product of big city culture, the flapper wardrobe was adopted by many women everywhere, not only in the United States, but in Europe.

The 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote, further emboldened women to assert themselves in every area of society. A burgeoning economy coupled with the need for women in the workforce during World War I opened many doors of opportunity for women to leave the home. Wives worked alongside the husbands of other wives, creating many opportunities for adultery. The availability of birth-control devices made promiscuity all the more inviting, and allowed women to concentrate on earning money instead of raising children. Technology provided labor-saving appliances such as the washing machine and vacuum cleaner which gave more free time to women who did keep their homes.

Anti-Christ's efforts to debase women and cause them to behave like men had an effect on men that caused them to shrink from the position of heads of their households and churches and turn over the reins of leadership to women.

With the growing economy many found themselves with discretionary funds that could be spent on consumer goods and entertainment. The first commercial radio station in the United States, KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had gone on the air in 1920. By 1923 there were more than 500 commercial radio stations in the U.S. By the end of the decade, 12 million households sported radios. It is estimated that by then some three-quarters of Americans frequented movie theaters every week. With the invention of talking movies (1923), they were exposed to worldly philosophy mingled with a mixture of wholesomeness and worldliness.

In 1927, the first feature-length motion picture with synchronized dialogue sequences, *The Jazz Singer*, starred Al Jolson as a Jewish young man whose father wanted him to be a cantor in his local synagogue. Taken by the era's music, the young man, Jakie Rabinowitz, leaves home, changes his name to Jack Robin, and becomes a popular nightclub singer. Incorporating dance into his act, Jolson's terpsichorean abilities suggest an earlier version of Elvis Presley.

Automobiles made mass culture all the more widespread as individuals enjoyed the freedom to move from one location to another quickly. Soon, young people would be fleeing their homes to engage in pleasurable activities (many not so wholesome), and to be on their own without parental oversight. Here, too, over time, anti-Christ developed wedges that would eventually minimize the nuclear family and leave children—young girls especially—open prey to unsavory characters they were ill-equipped to resist.

Prohibition

For almost a century the American Temperance Society, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Anti-Saloon League and other temperance organizations had been fighting to turn Americans away from the use of alcohol. And for good reason: many husbands and fathers were spending inordinate amounts of their time in saloons and income on alcohol at the neglect of their family responsibilities. It is not normally stated, but the turning of women away from their previous innocence may have played a part in many men's departure from family life.

In any case, the temperance movement worked to get the government involved in the crusade against drink. As a result, several states imposed laws that prohibited the manufacture and sale (but not the drinking) of intoxicating beverages. But that wasn't enough; the movement wanted to impose morality upon the entire country through national legislation. In 1919, after several years of effort, the Congress of the United States passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, declaring illegal the production, transport, and sale of alcohol (though not the consumption or private possession). The Amendment took effect on January 17, 1920.

The Volstead Act (named for Andrew Volstead, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who oversaw the legislation) had been enacted in 1919 to carry out the intent of the 18th Amendment. The Act allowed alcohol for a select number of purposes including scientific research, the development of fuel, dye and other lawful industries, and certain practices such as religious ritual.

Although the intent of the temperance movement was noble, it did not take into account man's sin nature that would find ways to circumvent the law. Thus there sprang up speakeasies, where people could indulge in illegal drinking and give greater abandon to their sin nature than they had in previously legitimate saloons and taverns. And now more women joined them.

The origin of the name "speakeasy" is found in the *Online Etymology Dictionary*:

speakeasy (n.)

"unlicensed saloon," 1889 (in the New York "Voice"), from verbal phrase, from speak (v.) + easy (adv.); so called from the practice of speaking quietly about such a place in public, or when inside it, so as not to alert the police and neighbors. The word gained wide currency in U.S. during Prohibition (1920-1932). In early 19c. Irish and British dialect, a speak softly shop meant "smuggler's den."

Prohibition induced many average citizens to become lawbreakers in order to indulge in the vices of those days. This was a great victory for anti-Christ, even as prohibition did seem to have a sobering effect in some areas while contributing to more drunkenness in other areas.

Gangsterism

The promise of easy money through the sale of illegal alcohol gave rise to gangs that used violence to enlarge their territories. Large sums of money bought “protection” from unscrupulous cops and politicians who looked the other way as the gangs pursued their ill-gotten gains. Bloodshed became widespread in the cities as rival gangs fought one another over lucrative territories. The media often romanticized gangsters, portraying them as basically good guys gone wrong because of the government’s bad policy against alcohol. Gangsterism was yet another way anti-Christ could corrupt the morals of our “Christian” society.

Jazz

Although by today’s cultural standards the jazz of the 1920s era seems tame, for its day it represented liberation and sensual indulgence. Eschewing traditional structure for improvisation, jazz was a radically different music form. With its roots in Black culture, many considered jazz primitive and even barbarian. Well-known Americans spoke out against it as “the Devil’s Music.” These included such notables as Henry Ford and Thomas Edison, the latter stating that jazz sounded better when played backwards.

Yet jazz gained in popularity as it was played in speakeasies and other social clubs. Like most music since then, jazz represented rebellion against the strict morals of a “repressive” society.

Earlier in the century, New Orleans became the first center of jazz as “honky-tonk” clubs sprang up throughout the city’s red-light district called “Storyville.” Thus, the association of jazz with immorality was imprinted upon the nation’s consciousness. But that didn’t matter. It sounded good to the soul—fertile ground in which anti-Christ works to instill rebellion against godliness.

Even so, I must admit that some jazz is good music. Especially as it began to take a more conventional and ordered form through the rise of big bands, jazz developed into a less anti-social genre that today represents the best in musicianship. Big band jazz is second in many eyes only to classical compositions. This perhaps resulted as practiced musicians developed their own styles of jazz that incorporated structure learned from their classical training. This was especially true of the white bandleaders, the most popular during the 1920s being Paul Whiteman.

TECHNOLOGY

The First Television

Television was a much earlier invention than supposed by many. In 1920, then 14-year-old Philo Farnsworth discovered a cache of science magazines in the farmhouse into which his family had recently moved. With a sense of awe at technology from an even earlier age, having experienced the marvels of the telephone and electric light, Farnsworth became an avid investigator into scientific discovery. Even as a teenager he envisioned a device that would transmit

pictures and sound. In 1927 he unveiled his prototype for television using a video camera tube. He had sketched this device as a teenager in his chemistry class.

RCA made an offer to purchase the rights to his device, but he turned them down, instead accepting a position at Philco in Philadelphia. Shortly after this in 1929, a Russian inventor, Vladimir Zworykin, invented the cathode-ray tube called the kinescope. Eventually coming to work for RCA who funded his research, Zworykin improved the device using an imaging section similar to Farnsworth’s patented dissector. Farnsworth and RCA engaged in litigation throughout the late 20s and early 30s, with RCA eventually being forced to start paying Farnsworth royalties.

As wonderful an invention that the Mormon Farnsworth produced, through it anti-Christ has found perhaps the most effective means to transform the thinking of people around the world from right thinking to ungodliness. Cable television, not controlled by the Federal Communications Commission, has introduced some of the worst programming imaginable, almost as bad as some from European countries that have little or no censorship.

SCIENCE

Edwin Hubble

In the early 1920s, one of the puzzles that confronted astronomers was the nature of nebulae—cloudy patches of unknown matter in space. It was commonly believed that they were all part of our Milky Way Galaxy. Having been hired in 1919 as a junior astronomer at Mount Wilson Observatory in Los Angeles shortly after the 100-inch reflector telescope had been constructed, Edwin Hubble worked to solve the puzzle. As he took photos of these objects, Hubble became convinced that at least some of them existed well outside the Milky Way. What he was observing were other galaxies far beyond the known universe at the time, revealing that the size of the universe is 100-fold what had been believed. Additionally, by measuring the distances and motions of the galaxies he discovered that the universe is expanding, thus surprising the scientific community, including Einstein, which had assumed that the universe is static.

On October 4, 1923, Hubble was comparing a photograph he had taken of the Andromeda Galaxy with photos taken on earlier nights. In the process, he discovered in Andromeda a Cepheid variable star—the only kind of star that could allow for determining the distance to the galaxy. His calculations determined that Andromeda was approximately 900,000 light years away.

Previously, the diameter of the Milky Way, also a spiral galaxy, had been determined to be 100,000 light years. Thus, Hubble’s discovery revealed that Andromeda (as are all galaxies) is far beyond the Milky Way. It was later discovered that Hubble’s calculations were wrong. He had unknowingly compared the bright Cepheid star in Andromeda with a dimmer Cepheid in the Milky Way,

which meant that Andromeda was some 2 million light years away—twice as far as he first calculated.

In spite of that error, Hubble's work led to the eventual determination (according to present knowledge) that the universe is at least 30-billion light years across and growing. This suggests strongly that the universe is far more ancient than is traditionally accepted by most Christian religions.

The discovery that the universe is expanding gave rise to the Big Bang Theory—the idea that the universe sprung into existence from a pin-point of matter that had existed from time immemorial. Anti-Christ has been quick to use the Big Bang Theory as the basis for denying the existence of God.

Of course, the Big Bang Theory immediately caused consternation among Christians who believed that God created the universe as it exists by speaking it into existence in six twenty-four-hour days. They were not prepared to think that God could have created the universe from a central point and flung it outward billions of years ago. Young earth creationists still insist that scientists have miscalculated and misunderstood what they have observed. Some even insist that the earth is the center of the universe and that the sun, stars, and galaxies all revolve around us—the pre-Galileo theory called geocentricity.

In many Christian circles, belief in anything other than a young (approximately 6,000-year-old) creation is tantamount to denying the Word of God and allying oneself with Darwinian evolutionists. This has caused rifts in the Body of Christ between those who accept the evidence of science for an ancient creation and those who accuse them of selling out to secularism.

It isn't the purpose of this article to defend either position. My focus is on how anti-Christ has pitted brethren in Christ against one another, even to the point of breaking fellowship, over how one perceives the evidence in Scripture regarding the creation of the cosmos. The important issue is the creation of man as a unique being in the image and likeness of God. Whether the six days of Genesis describe the original creation or its re-creation from chaos doesn't bear on our relationship with our Father in Heaven. But to suggest that man evolved from a lower life form is to denigrate not only all mankind, but Jesus Himself.

Whatever one believes regarding the creation of the cosmos, I do not disqualify him as a brother in Christ. We may have all knowledge, but if we do not have love, we are nothing. We cannot allow Satan to drive this wedge between us as brethren in Christ.

ECONOMICS

Stock Market Crash Ignites the Great Depression

The god of this world is Mammon—riches placed in the hands of unscrupulous men to do the bidding of Satan. Riches in themselves are not evil; God has blessed many of His people with riches for their faithfulness if it suited His purposes. But the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil,

and anti-Christ knows how to manipulate the riches of this world in order to wage warfare against God and His people. Yet anti-Christ can do nothing unless God permits it.

As America and Europe were basking in their newfound license throughout the Roaring Twenties, offending the God whose name the West for centuries claimed for its basic religious philosophy, the affront could not last long. For all intents and purposes it seems as if our holy God said, "Enough!" As His Word says, "Those who would be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful desires that drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Timothy 6:9).

The economic boom during the 1920s that took stock prices to peaks never before seen—some even quadrupling in value—created a false sense of security and confidence in capitalism. Many average people, believing they could strike it rich by investing in the "Cash Cow" of Wall Street, dumped their life's savings into the Stock Market. But just as all schemes designed to provide wealth sans hard work are doomed to failure, so the Stock Market would prove a path to financial ruin for most. At the same time, however, some insiders, particularly those behind the scenes of the world's financial system, gained considerably.

In 1929, the financial bubble burst and stocks began to rapidly decline in value, dropping precipitously to the loss of 80% of their value. Because many people had borrowed money to invest in the Market, they found themselves bankrupt and heavily in debt. This, in turn, had a devastating effect on the economy. People could no longer afford to purchase the goods that were being produced, thus leading to layoffs and further economic suffering. Fearing further losses, no one would buy stocks, so there was no capital to invest for further economic growth.

Now, banks tried to collect on loans made to those who had invested in the Stock Market, but the borrowers could not pay back the loans. Worse, many banks had invested depositors' money in the Market and were also in deep financial distress. Many banks failed, causing depositors to lose \$140 billion. No longer were checks acceptable for payment to creditors because no one knew which banks were on the verge of failing. It became cash-only for transactions in many instances.

Because people were rushing to withdraw their money from banks that could not give it to them, two days after taking office in 1933, President Roosevelt declared a bank holiday, after which banks reopened with a limit on how much any depositor could withdraw at any given time.

But there was little Roosevelt could do during his tenure in office to right the economic ship of the United States. The Great Depression, which began with the 1929 Stock Market crash would last until World War II imposed necessary government spending to finance the war effort.

Western Christianity's proud flaunting of its wealth was brought to humiliation by anti-Christ at the behest of a holy God. Yet in spite of the economic deprivation suffered, there always seemed to be enough to support the liquor, illicit drug, and prostitution trades. Anti-Christ knows how to assuage the appetites of the sinful soul.

In 1930, following the Stock Market crash, John Maynard Keynes published his *Treatise* of economics based on socialism. According to Keynesian economics, the state must intervene and control the financial and business systems of the nation in order to moderate "boom and bust" cycles. After World War II, leading western nations would adopt Keynes's policies, which included the idea of deficit spending with the false assumption that this would keep a nation financially stable under adverse conditions. In the United States, this policy of deficit spending has resulted today in a national debt of close to \$20 trillion.

Anti-Christ knows how to use these socialist policies to destroy "Christian" nations, and today we are seeing the fruits of his labors paying off big time.

Kemal Atatürk founds modern Turkey

During World War I, the Ottoman Empire allied itself with Germany and Austria-Hungary, leading to its decline after the victory of the Western Allies. The postwar peace treaty of August, 1920, stripped the Ottoman Empire of all Arab provinces, established independence for Armenia, and, among other debilitating provisions for the Ottomans, left the Allies in economic control of what little was left.

Out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire arose the independent Republic of Turkey in 1920, founded by an ex-Turkish Army officer named Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which eventually resulted in Turkey adopting many western cultural and economic policies and a primarily secular political philosophy. Eventually, Turkey would become the bridge between the Muslim Middle East and "Christian" Europe (the old Roman Empire). Scripture tells us that Pergamum in Turkey is the seat of Satan. What better place than Turkey for the man anti-Christ to rise from?

1922 Mussolini marches on Rome

Having formed the Fascist Party in Italy in 1919, Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini, much like Adolph Hitler, capitalized on public discontent with his country's weakness following the nation's defeat in World War I and the sanctions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. He had organized a paramilitary unit called the "Black Shirts" in 1919, that terrorized political opponents, increasing his party's power. By the end of 1922, the Black Shirts, largely made up of disgruntled soldiers, numbered some 200,000 members. Mussolini was emboldened by this to stage a grand display of his power by marching on Rome from October 22-29, 1922. On October 28, Italy's King Victor Emmanuel III handed over power to Mussolini. Gradually dismantling all democratic institutions, he made himself dictator, assuming

the title, "Il Duce" ("The Leader"). Mussolini would later become one of anti-Christ's allies along with Hitler to bring the world to the brink of utter desolation.

Hitler jailed after failed coup

During the early 1920s, Hitler's Nazi Party grew as Germans became dissatisfied with Germany's democratic government, especially after the government resumed payment of reparations to Britain and France for Germany's part in World War I. On November 8, 1923, Adolph Hitler and his *Sturmabteilung* (SA), the original paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party, stormed a public meeting at a beer hall attended by some 3,000 people. The "Beer Hall Putsch" was the Nazi's first attempt to seize the German government by force, hoping that the dissatisfied German army would get behind him. However, the Nazis were immediately suppressed, and Hitler was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for high treason. His sentence was reduced to one year, during which he dictated most of the first volume of *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) to his deputy, Rudolf Hess. The book presented Hitler's plans for establishing a racially purified Germany society.

Mein Kampf was published in 1925, and became much of Germany's inspiration for asserting Aryan supremacy, outlining Hitler's plan for the "Final Solution" of Germany's alleged problem with the Jews. In it Hitler proposed that Europe must be totally purged of all Jews, hoping to send them east into Russia, and the island of Madagascar.

Thus was germinated anti-Christ's largest assault against the Jews, hoping to eradicate them from the face of the earth, thus nullifying any hope of God's Word of prophecy concerning Israel's regathering into the Promised Land coming to pass.

V.I. Lenin dies

In May, 1922, U.S.S.R.'s Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin), suffered the first of three strokes, the second coming in December of that year. Debilitated and on the verge of death, Lenin reflected on his dictatorial leadership and came to regret much of what had transpired under his leadership. He was especially wary of Josef Stalin, the general secretary of the Communist Party, who had begun to amass great power. Lenin suffered his third stroke on March 10, 1923, which left him without speech, thus ending his political efforts.

On January 21, 1924, he died, leaving Josef Stalin as absolute dictator over the U.S.S.R. Lenin's reign had been brutal, particularly in the early stages as he sought to establish his absolute power. But Stalin's reign proved far more brutal, and under his watch communism amassed far more millions of victims than even Adolph Hitler's Nazism.

Yet for most westerners, Hitler is the poster boy of Evil Personified, thanks to the mostly Marxist-leaning mass media in the West. It's possible that more Jews perished under

Stalin's pogroms than under Adolph Hitler's, pleasing anti-Christ further.

In 1930, Stalin began collectivizing agriculture in the U.S.S.R., taking almost all the land from its owners and centralizing the nation's crops. This led to years of famine and deprivation. The history of the U.S.S.R. is a bleak reminder that collectivism doesn't work, and no wonder. God's Word does not allow for it. But anti-Christ loves any system that will demean and impoverish mankind, made in the image of God.

CHRISTIANITY

During the decade of the 1920s, two major personalities came on the scene who would have tremendous impact on Christianity.

Essek William "E.W." Kenyon

E.W. Kenyon founded Figueroa Independent Baptist Church in downtown Los Angeles in 1923, where he pioneered in radio evangelism on the secular station KNX. After moving to Seattle, Washington, he began a daily program, *Kenyon's Church of the Air*, there. This led to the founding of a new church in Seattle by the same name as his L.A. church, which would later become known as New Covenant Baptist Church.

Kenyon is considered the father of the Word-Faith (aka, Positive Confession) movement with such devotees as W.J. "Ern" Baxter, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Charles Capps, Joseph Prince, and many others who have gained tremendous popularity.

Although not a Pentecostal, Kenyon is highly revered in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. His belief that Jesus died spiritually originated in Gnosticism. His proponents argue that because Kenyon believed that Jesus also died physically and rose physically, his beliefs are not Gnostic. However, that anti-Christ philosophy is at least partially evident in the Jesus-died-spiritually teaching which has been widely adopted within the Word-Faith movement.

Kenyon's positive confession views are traced to his attendance at Emerson College of Oratory in Boston, a spawning ground for New Thought philosophical ideas. New Thought's major tenets center on health, prosperity, and happiness.

New Thought is traced to Phineas P. Quimby (1802-66), who gained prominence toward the close of the 19th century. Quimby was immersed in spiritism, occultism, hypnosis, and other aspects of parapsychology. He is said to have healed Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, in 1862. By using scientific language he attempted to bring witchcraft into acceptance among mainstream religions. Thus, Quimby called his formulation the science of Christ. This prompted Eddy to adopt the term "Christian Science" for her mind science cult. Quimby's faulty concept of "God" was adopted by John G. Lake, who brought it into Christianity along with William Branham and E.W. Kenyon—

a concept also espoused by Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Frederick K.C. Price, and the late Charles Capps.

John G. Lake asserted, "Man is not a separate creation detached from God, he is part of God Himself...God intends us to be gods. The inner man is the real governor, the true man that Jesus said was a god."

We see how anti-Christ has influenced Christianity greatly through these men. Yet those who follow their anti-Christ doctrines, blinded by their desire for blessings above obedience, become angry when confronted with the truth.

Aimee Semple McPherson

As a seventeen-year-old girl, Aimee Kennedy was torn between Darwinism and faith in God. Drawn to a revival meeting, she heard (and instantly fell in love with) a handsome Irish preacher named Robert Semple. She made up her mind that Christianity is true, and Darwinism false. After their marriage, they went to China as self-proclaimed missionaries. But Robert died a scant two months later. Even after his death she felt they had a call from God, although no fruit came of their work. As a money raiser for the Salvation Army, she met her second husband, an accountant named Harold McPherson, and agreed to live a normal life with him in Providence, Rhode Island. But the role of wife didn't suit her, so she left him to pursue her "ministry." With no income, no savings, and no backing, she set out to make a name for herself as a female preacher, contrary to Scripture. Although it seemed as if she started with nothing, when she needed money her mother provided it.

Aimee was a mistress of theatrics and flamboyance, adeptly mixing religion with entertainment which attracted tens of thousands. She built a religious empire as one of the first female pastors and teachers by appealing to people who succumbed to her emotional message during a time of worldwide turmoil, war, disease, and human calamity. There is no shortage of photographs of Aimee in action, whether on stage or among the masses, which made their way into mainstream publications. She is often seen with outstretched arms, gazing fervently into the heavens in obviously staged postures. She even made sure to have a black man baptize her daughter Roberta as a show of her desire to reach out to all races.

Eventually, Harold McPherson followed Aimee on her campaign trail for a time, but couldn't take the role of second fiddle to his wife. He eventually left her and filed for divorce. Aimee continued "serving" God.

Because of her popularity, McPherson held credentials with several other churches which allowed her to strike out on her own. She had enjoyed for several years great acceptance as an itinerant preacher that took her across the United States. In 1921 she decided to build her own church which would be interdenominational and ecumenical, focusing on world-wide evangelism. In 1922, as an "evangelist"

with the Assemblies of God (a Pentecostal denomination), Aimee turned in her credentials rather than cede to the church the title to the then-under-construction “tabernacle” called Angelus Temple in Los Angeles. The 5,300-seat building, sporting a statue of Aimee in one of her classical poses with uplifted hand and face above a theater-styled marquee, was dedicated on January 1, 1923, and became McPherson’s permanent home where she pastored her growing flock. There she hired press agents and engaged in publicity stunts to draw attention to herself. Considering the (for its time) grandiose and costly “temple,” one critic exclaimed that Aimee “had put the ‘cost’ in Pentecost.” As she entered the auditorium to conduct services, the 5,000-strong audience would rise and applaud her wildly.

Eventually, Aimee embarked on a “healing” ministry, claiming it was forced on her by public demand.

During the 1920s, “Sister” as she was affectionately called, wrote several works, including *Divine Healing*. She even started her own denomination, The International Church of the Four Square Gospel, which continues today. As she gained tremendous popularity, Aimee would bring local politicians onto her stage, and eventually came to declare that Christians must take control of government and rule the nation. Her foray into politics eventually caused politicians to consider her a threat.

In spite of her wide-ranging fame, Aimee was lonely, with no friends. But she did develop a close friendship with her radio engineer, Kenneth Ormiston, a married man. Unaware that the acoustics in her auditorium were so good that their conversations over the intercom could be heard throughout the room, Aimee and Kenneth would speak in intimate terms that raised concerns among some who overheard them.

On May 18, 1926, Aimee went to Venice Beach with her secretary. As her secretary watched Aimee swimming, she lost sight of her. Aimee had inexplicably vanished among the beach-going crowd. When Aimee didn’t appear for her sermon that evening, news went out that she had drowned in the Pacific Ocean. Not everyone was convinced. One reporter suggested the event was a publicity stunt, and that Aimee would come back, ostensibly as part of a “resurrection” story.

For over a month her followers held a vigil at the site of her disappearance. Interestingly, Kenneth Ormiston had also disappeared at around the same time that Aimee had gone missing.

Then, on June 23, 1926, Police came to the church’s parsonage and told Aimee’s mother Minnie Kennedy that Aimee had been found at a hospital in Arizona, having walked out of the desert in Mexico. She claimed to have been kidnapped by a couple named “Steve” and “Mexicali Rose,” but managed to escape. Investigators stated that her clothes and shoes didn’t fit the conditions of those that had

been worn on a long trek through the desert. Some speculate that she was so exhausted from her work that she just wanted to escape for a season. Despite several holes in her story, and the concurrent disappearance and reappearance of Kenneth Ormiston, her devoted followers then, and even today, refuse to believe she would have had an adulterous affair. Some 30,000 people were on hand to greet her at the train station when she returned to Los Angeles to pick up where she had left off. But within weeks of her return, the Los Angeles District Attorney launched an investigation into her disappearance. The D.A. charged Aimee with fabricating a hoax, among other charges. It was suspected that his purpose was really to discredit her by revealing a sex scandal because of her political involvement that had turned the previously amenable politicians against her. Ultimately there was insufficient evidence to make the charges stick.

As she tried to regain her reputation that had been soiled by the publicity of her relationship with Ormiston and her alleged kidnapping, Aimee produced a theatrical show about her life, which flopped. She entered into a brief marriage with a singer from one of her productions, Dave Hutton. This horrified some of her church members, but did nothing to significantly affect her religious empire. Some did break away to form another denomination.

During the future Great Depression, Aimee found new grounds for her work among the disenfranchised, returning to her Pentecostal roots which she had previously abandoned in order to appeal to a wider audience.

Aimee Semple McPherson died at age 54 on September 27, 1944, from an overdose of barbiturates while on tour in Oakland, California. Although initially reported a suicide, the official coroner’s report was that her death was accidental.

There is no question that Aimee’s theatrics, by God’s grace alone, genuinely touched hearts and brought many to Christ, at least outwardly. But anti-Christ knew how to use her as a poor role model for other women who would consider their own marriages expendable, and even commit adultery if it meant freedom to serve Jesus or, for that matter, their own flesh. Although there were a number of little-known and unknown women who took it upon themselves to assume the role of men in the Body of Christ, Aimee Semple McPherson threw wide open the doors for other women to act contrary to God’s Word by asserting themselves over men and flagrantly disobeying God’s Word.

Even so, the Lord honors His Word no matter who proclaims it. His judgment will be between Himself and those who take it upon themselves to act contrary to His Word. Sadly, many women will find that although they saw “results” in their works, they built nothing but wood, hay, and stubble, which will be burned in the judgment. ❖