

## The Life Story! Part 2

**Last week...** Began a short series, telling the Story of our Church... The Life Story! Not an effort to reminisce “the good old days...” But a desire to help people know what they’re part of, getting into or walking away from! We can’t walk together into our future unless we are agreed! **Amos 3.3**

**The essence of Part One... was that...** Life was birthed prayerfully and prophetically... Lived out our faith practically... *worship, stewardship and fellowship (pictures)*... Attended and affirmed miraculously... Spirit went to work transformationally... *Heart of the Pastors, the congregation, and the place*... Building the church two-generations down (pictures)...

### **Part 2, a focus on Life *Foursquare* Church**

December 9, 1973 First time I had ever been in a Protestant Church... A charismatic Protestant Church... Jack Hayford was speaking about the Holy Spirit... Sounded weird... People weren’t weirded out... More importantly, they weren’t doing anything weird! First exposure to “Foursquare” (ICFG)... Got saved!

**A little ICFG History...** International Church of the Foursquare Gospel! Founded by Aimee Semple McPherson in 1923 (Angeles Temple). Result of the second wave of American Pentecostalism (Baptistic Pentecostals). First wave, 1901-6 Parham/Seymour, Azusa Street Revival, L.A. Pentecostal Holiness, Church of God, COGIC. Second wave, 1914 Durham, A/G, Foursquare and non-holiness Pentecostals.

**Aimee began spiritual life as the wife of China Missionary, Robert Semple...** Married 1908, travelled with Durham 1910, arrived in China, June 1910, died August 19, 1910. By 1916/17 Aimee Semple (now) McPherson was preaching the gospel, with signs following... Corona, NY meetings had opened up a flow of the gifts based on her teaching, “Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today and forever...” Motto in all Foursquare churches

**“Foursquare” came as the result of preaching the word from the vision of Ezekiel 1...** The four faces of a man, lion, ox and eagle... Savior (man), Baptizer (lion), Burden Bearer (ox), Returning King (eagle). And the Four-squares became the meeting point for *interdenominational* fellowship! If you agree with those four items, we can enjoy fellowship with you!

**ICFG Practicals...** “Middle of the road Pentecostals:” Trinitarian v. Unitarian or Oneness... Three separate beings in One God v. One God, Jesus, who takes on differing roles... *Justification* at the Cross but then *sanctification* is a progression... Getting “better” is not a “second part” of salvation... but the result of it... Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate work, not the third part of salvation... With tongues being “one sign...” Most often defined as Charismatics!

“Middle of the road Pentecostals:” Life is fully committed to Pentecostal/ Charismatic theology... We are committed to “Middle Road” in methodology... We want to see all the gifts operated under Holy Spirit control... We never accept, “The Spirit made me do it” abuses... we recognize the difference between manifestations of men and God. We have no fear of Holy Spirit operations... The gifts of the Spirit are for ministry to a lost and needy world... They are not toys for validation... They are tools for salvation... They are the affirmation of God’s word!

“Right shoulder of the road on the Arminius-Calvin scale” #9 on the 1-10 “Once Saved Always Saved” scale... Once saved cannot *lose* your salvation... Can’t *backslide* out of your salvation... But “Once saved, only saved as long as you want to be saved...” “Once enlightened (**Heb 6.4-6**)... once sanctified (**10.26-30**)...” can give it up...  
**Freewill not voided in salvation...**

“Modified Epi-scopal” in government! System of “Overseers...” President and his council/board. Supervisors and Superintendents. Pastors and their councils. Life Council: Jim Barta, Stacy Collins, Ron Eaton, Tom Gaines, Eddie Gentry, Damus Vice, Mandi Carlile (secretary), Sonny Bowman (Admin), ½ serve staggered two year terms with possibility of serving two terms. Often called the Foursquare Gospel...!!!!

Local church properties held by the National Office... Keeps anyone from liquidating church holdings into “Hawaiian Missions!”

Personal Note: Don’t own anything here When Ann and I leave, we can’t sell anything, transfer holdings, receive franchise fees, take anything with us... Right! Not ours, never been ours... Books are closed every day on what we have done to contribute... But it would be heartbreaking to have someone come and dissolve it all!

The greatest reason we brought the church into Foursquare, 1996, They provide a covering and oversight! If we have no successors prepared when we go – District/NCO will step in to help the congregation find someone... “Question” (Do you want to know there is an exit strategy? YES! There is! No surprises!) In the event our church becomes non-functioning, they liquidate and put the money into church planting! Insurance/limited legal counsel/ fellowship of 7.5million people!

**Where we are w/Foursquare, 2014** Of the 1700+ churches we rank #30/2%. Paid \$1m+ in tithes/offerings missions. Currently support “Missions Press...” Helping to send solar-powered printing presses to the four corners of the world... Have served as a District Superintendent, Advisory Council to Foursquare Financial, Now helping District level replants: “Preparing for Growth.” Influence spreading in “obvious” ways!

**Aimee Semple McPherson’s definition!** Aimee’s 1920’s “Foursquare!” Having four equal sides and four right angles; square. Marked by firm, unwavering conviction or expression; forthright: *a foursquare refusal to yield*. Fixed. Well-founded. Solid. Deep-seated. *Adverb*: In a forthright manner; squarely. It’s our 2014 definition too!

**Two Promise’s... First**, Though I have been Foursquare since my new birth in Jesus... Though I love our organization for many reasons... I will not hesitate for a moment to take us out if our denom departs from the Gospel as it was once delivered... If ever our group ever goes the way of so many others... it will go without us! **Second**, though there is coming an even more pronounced cultural shift in the church to accommodate an ADHD society, we will not compromise our study times, or scholarship, to meet the challenge of relevant ministry. Instead we will patiently wait for the realities of life to bring individuals to the place where they will be willing to listen for however long it takes to get their needs met and problems fixed.