

China Without Mao

Mao Tse Tung, the great leader of China, is dead. Thousands of Chinese filed past his body as it laid in state. Mao was a remarkable, unique and brilliant man. His passing away has been the subject of many articles and tributes. Future historians will no doubt write their volumes about this man who led a communist party of 12 people, founded in 1921, to victory and dictatorship in the largest nation on earth.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau said in a personal message to Peking that Mao Tse Tung was "a giant of the 20th century," and the father of the new China. Trudeau also said: "The People's Republic of China stands as a monument to the spirit and political philosophy of Chairman Mao. Though our social and political systems differ, Canadians recognize the path-breaking spirit of community that, under Chairman Mao's guidance, has contributed to the modernization of China."

Chairman Mao has inspired millions for the cause of his brand of communism. During the Chinese civil war a 19-year-old farm boy, just turned communist, had a conversation with a captured missionary, a short time before this young man left to join a battle in which he knew the odds against survival were 20 to one. The missionary said: Sir, the defending army is better equipped than your army. It is protected by a moat, high walls, and iron gates that are heavily sandbagged".

"I know that," the young man replied, "but our enemy has no great cause to fight for and they will turn and, run when the battle warms up."

"What, really, do you have to fight for?" asked the missionary.

"We are going to change the world in my generation."

"But, sir, it won't do you any good if you get killed during your attack on the city tonight." "Chairman Mao has told us we should be willing to die to change the world, and I am quite prepared to die to carry Communism a mile further."

This young man lies buried beneath the soft earth of the plains of central Honan province. His dedication to his leader is typical of that shown by many hundreds of thousands of other youths and idealists Chairman Mao's magnetism goes much deeper than simply receiving intense loyalty and devotion of his followers. Mao became the object of worship. He is the only god million of people have ever known, For millions of Chinese, Mao is the teacher, the way and the truth. His Red Book provides spiritual nourishment for everyone. Immense pictures of him are on display, and slogans such as "Mao is the red sun in our heart! Mao is the sun of all nations!" can be seen everywhere. Children see him in their dreams and talk to their peers about their visions. Hymns are sung to his honour.

China's anthem "The East Is Red" unashamedly declares that Mao is the people's saviour. Mao does not make mistakes. You have to love Mao with all your soul, heart

and mind. The old gods, the household shrines and the temples are gone. They are replaced by the worship of Mao. Today it is the Chairman and not the old gods whom the people thank for their daily food, the birth of each child, a good crop.

What happened to the Christians in China under the leadership of Mao? A feature article in the *Toronto Star* was entitled "Mao: Fierce rebel, with love of humanity, But his love didn't extend to those who disagreed with him. He was ruthless in his opposition. In 1949 one could draw a line across China in any direction, and on an average of 20-30 miles come upon an evangelical Christ-exalting, Bible believing, Christian congregation. Baptized Protestants numbered about one million. Catholics were almost three times that number. Christians have not fared very well under Mao. The Chinese communists have seized power by every means: good, evil and horrible. Mao wrote: "All Loyal, honest, active and staunch Communists must unite to oppose the liberal tendencies of certain people among us, and set them on the right path. This is one of the tasks on our ideological front." Mao believes that violence is a vital ingredient in revolution.

"A revolution," he said, "is an act of violence whereby one class overthrows the authority of another. Revolution is not a dinner party." Millions have lost their lives in Red China. Many Christians have been executed for their faith. A Chinese/ American journalist gave this description of Mao: "Mao looks like a grandmother, writes like a sage, sings like a poet, and kills like a butcher."

Egar Snow, an American journalist, who was in Mao's favour, was once granted an extraordinary interview in January 1965. Snow reported that Mao was then "reflecting on man's rendezvous with death." Two facts were foremost in Mao's mind: his own death, and the future of the Chinese people without him. After telling of numerous brushes with death, Mao observed: "It is odd that death has so far passed me by". He added the amazing statement that he was "getting ready to see God very soon," quickly explaining that he himself did not believe in God.

Mao has his rendezvous with God, as all men do when their time of death comes. He met his Judge. Scripture asserts: "For not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert comes exaltation; but God is the judge; he puts down one, and exalts the other." (Ps.75:6,7)

What will the future hold for China? Who knows? I leave all the speculating to the political experts. At present, Christians should pray for China. A small remnant of Christians can still be found in that vast land. Perhaps Chinese Christians will once again be able to spread the good news of the gospel without any hindrance. God is still Almighty. Prayer is the greatest weapon God has entrusted to His people. I believe that the persecuted Christians in China were asked, "What is your greatest need?," without any hesitation they would reply, " Brethren, pray for us."

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August 1976