

## Christian Leaders Battle Marxism

In 1921, Communist Party membership in China was about 60; now its numbers are in the millions, made up of cells of approximately 12 men and women. Not all are of one mind, but all are bound by a unifying purpose. They are devoted wholly to the spread of Marxism.

Mao Tse Tung, the Party Chairman, is their leader and inspiration. His teachings are precise. He minces no words. "Make up your minds! We abhor straddlers. There is no middle of the road! Not in all China, not in all the universe. One must be either on the side of imperialism or on the side of Communism."

Out of necessity Christianity opposes communism. It has no choice. Wherever communism gains control, Christianity becomes the religion of the persecuted. For communism, peace with religion is only temporary.

"Scientific Communism is the antithesis of religion. Like fire and water, the struggle for realization of the ideal of communism in the world is incompatible with 'the building of the Kingdom of Christ on earth' " (*Peking Review*, August, 1969).

Will communism conquer Christianity? Not so long as there are dedicated leaders with compassion and courage. Not so long as the Church continues to proclaim that the Truth makes men free (John 8: 32). Christianity can be effective in opposing communism.

But it is not enough to be concerned only with the salvation of souls. Christ's disciples need a world and life view. The Biblical message is not just concerned about the life to come.

A young editor of a radical newspaper told that he thought it was unrealistic of Christians to talk about transforming the lives of individuals when they do nothing to change the structures of society. Christians should reexamine their attitude towards injustice in society. Church leaders should study the teachings of the Old as well as the New Testament on social justice and the denunciations of the evils of injustice.

To dismiss a communist government or party as the work of the devil is not enough. It does not help. We need again the recognition that the best way to combat communism is by loyal, faithful and committed living for the cause of Christ. One of the most tragic comments I have read is "Christianity will not do for Asia; it is not sufficiently sacrificial." True, too few Christians can be found who want to enlist in the struggle for personal rights and dignity of human beings, and have the urge to exercise their personal moral responsibility. We know the parable of the good Samaritan too well, but we would rather walk around the block before we extend a helping hand. Communism gains followers where poverty breeds unrest. With compassion, Christians should help where such conditions exist.

The history of the Church tells of outstanding examples of men and women who have put Christian social principles into practice on an individual day-by-day basis. The trouble is that they stand out; that is, they are relatively few in number.

Church history gives an excellent illustration of what has been done in the name of Christ in needy places. Hospitals and schools have been erected. Literature has been distributed. Missionaries have sacrificed themselves amongst lepers. Millions have been fed. Agricultural methods have been taught. Slavery has been fought. The gospel of peace has been proclaimed. Many have found their satisfaction in Christ.

Outstanding leaders tried to identify themselves with needs and thus made their message credible and compelling. When the young missionary, Hudson Taylor, sailed to China in the 19th century he found people wrestling with opium enslavement, corruption, extreme poverty, starvation, lack of medical care and so on. It was to these Chinese as whole men and not just as "souls" that his message came. He identified himself with the Chinese to such an extent with adopting their dress, habits, customs and culture that he even scandalized his western friends.

Christianity can meet communism head-on. Their discipline and dedication can only be equalled or even challenged and surpassed by true Christian integrity - Christian love, morality, outgoing concern, generosity, and a sacrificial dedication to Christianity - as a world and life view. But all these are not much in evidence at this stage in Western Christianity.

Mao's and any other brands of communism can be overcome only when we hear and do again what Jesus taught in the Sermon of the Mount: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."

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