

## Trade or Christian Principles

Chinese Premier Chou En-lai died at the age of 78. World leaders paid tribute to this remarkable man. "Premier Chou En-lai will be long remembered as a remarkable leader who has left his imprint not only on the history of modern China but also on the world scene," U.S. President Gerald Ford said in a statement from the White House. In Ottawa, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau expressed his "profound sorrow." Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim said that the world would be poorer as a result of this death. Chou En-lai was a great man. He made his impact upon his vast and mysterious home land. He and Chairman Mao have been instrumental in bringing dramatic changes to an ancient culture. Unquestionably there have been some great achievements in China. Many changes have been for the better, but not all what happened have been improvements in any sense of the word. Chou En-lai was not a modern day saint. He and Mao have been ruthless in their struggle for power. And communist leaders have to be brutal in order to remain on top.

The Chinese communist regime has repeatedly declared that their long term goal is to develop a new type of humanity. The Marxist man stands at the opposite pole of either the Confucian tradition and ethic or the Christian faith. Since its seizure of power it has struck at the foundations of ancient Chinese culture and society, trying to destroy the family and social norms and moral virtues by ideological purges and "brainwashing campaigns."

Liu Shao-ch'i, a veteran communist and theoretician wrote in *'How to Be a Good Communist'* that the communist undertaking is "to reform mankind into the completely selfless citizenry of a Communist society."

How do communists try to usher in their "selfless" society? Mao Tse Tung wrote, "Counterrevolutionaries must be suppressed whenever they are found, mistakes must be corrected whenever they are discovered." He also stated that "as a scientific truth, Marxism fears no criticism. If it did, and could be defeated in argument, it would be worthless."

From what has been happening in China it is clear that criticism is feared. Chinese communists do not tolerate religious freedom. Their basic policy is to destroy all religious traditions, but they have not succeeded. The Christian church, though persecuted and battered, is still in existence.

The Chinese church has to pay a tremendously high price for their convictions. But the church is surprisingly youthful. From reports received in Hongkong, we can say that the majority of those worshipping in small and secret gatherings are young people. Materialism cannot defeat the spirit.

A young Christian, a new member of a commune, was paraded before the portrait of Chairman Mao. As he was led before the picture he refused to bow before it. The "young reactionary" as he was called, was taken to the young, local Red Guard Chief.

Asked to explain his action, the young Christian replied, "I am a Christian. I will not bow before anyone but the true God." Angrily he was told, "We will give you one more chance." Once more he refused to bow before the portrait of the Chinese leader. Following a severe beating, he was again ordered to bow before the picture. He refused. In rage the Red Guard leader gave orders to break the stubborn young Christian's legs just below the knees. The leader was not satisfied until he was propped up on his broken bloody stubs before Mao's picture. The young man's, faith remained unbroken.

These incidents of brutality and persecution have been repeated throughout China. But despite horrendous actions, Marxism has been unable to wipe out the small Christian church.

When I read all the glowing tributes paid to Chou En-lai my thoughts went to the forgotten people in China - the Christians. But which world leader is interested in Christian minorities? Trade seems to be more important than justice and the freedom of worship for a few million people.

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