

## Mao and Christ: Comrades?

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Outrageous as it may seem, the Vatican is apparently attempting to create some illusory reconciliation with the Communist Chinese by asserting the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung "reflect also Christian values."

The statement was issued by the sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples (SCEP) in its bulletin, *International Fides Correspondence*, reflecting some attempt by the Vatican to ease tensions and establish closer relations with the Communist regime in China.

There is certainly nothing wrong in opening lines of communication with the Chinese Communist regime per se. What is so shocking is that the SCEP claims Communist ideology contains "some directives that are in keeping with the great moral principles of the millenary Chinese civilization and that find authentic and complete expression in modern Christian teachings."

SCEP continues by describing the present day -- Chinese ethic as one "devoted to a mystique of disinterested work for others; the inspiration of justice, the exaltation of the simple and frugal life, the rehabilitation of the rural masses, and the mixing of social classes." The article stated that Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul had both expressed similar social values in their encyclicals, *Pacem en Terris and Populorum Progressio*.

Statements like these display either inexcusable naiveté, borderline moral relativism, or pitiful ignorance. How can highly respected religious leaders assert such similarities between the teachings of Christ and Mao? It testifies to the incredible lack of knowledge about the reality of life under the Chinese Communist regime and the irreconcilable differences between Marxist and Christian doctrine.

The two great ethical obligations which are considered to be the heart of Christian teachings, 1) to love God and 2) to love our fellow man, are both completely contradicted by Marxist doctrine.

First of all, Marxism is rooted in materialism and totally denies the existence of a transcendent God. Consequently, Communists, especially in China, have gone to extreme lengths to eliminate any trace of religion.

The testimony of survivors of Chinese Communism, like Father Raymond de Jaegher, reveal that the Chinese Communists slaughtered thousands of Christian after their takeover on the mainland.

Today hundreds of thousands of Christians, Moslems and Buddhists are imprisoned in various Communist nations -- their only crime being that they desire to freely worship God. How quickly Vatican spokesmen have forgotten these facts!

Secondly, Marxism's view of human nature contradicts basic Christian principles. Whereas Christ taught that men are of equal value and that they should love one another, including their enemies, Marxism claims that men differ in their value and nature according to class background. As one Chinese Communist professor remarked, "I realized there is no such thing as human nature, there is only class

nature."

Therefore, Chinese Communists believe they are morally justified in eliminating so-called "enemies of the people" because of their class background. Estimates range from 34 million to 63 million "reactionaries" were killed after the Communist takeover on mainland China. This blatant disregard for human life, plus the intentional teaching of class hatred by the Communists is fundamentally incompatible with Christian teachings.

Can the SCEP seriously believe Mao's doctrine reflects "the inspiration for justice" when people are murdered, imprisoned, denied the right to education, and stripped of their basic human rights merely because of their religious or social background? Can the banishment of intellectuals, students, professors, and artists to forced slave labor camps be seriously considered "the rehabilitation of the rural masses, and the mixing of social values"? Does the SCEP honestly believe China's ideology contains some directives that are in keeping with the great moral principles of the millenary Chinese civilization" when in just two short years during the Cultural Revolution over 5,000 years of Chinese civilization was virtually destroyed *by* rampaging Red Guards under Mao's directive?

We must not be deceived by superficial observation that professed standards and values in today's Communist China reflect or parallel true Christian inner values. What the Communists have created through mass execution, slave labor camps, repression, intimidation and fear can never be compared to the voluntary communalism of God's love among Christian believers.

Today more than ever before a deep understanding of the fallacies of Marxist ideology is needed. Without this standard to guide our actions and help to formulate our policy, the clouds of moral confusion will paralyze those who would act for freedom - ultimately with tragic results.