

Celebrating Christians

China's

This week, on Oct. 1, the Chinese celebrate a national holiday marking the 75th anniversary of Mao Zedong officially establishing communist rule in China. In 1949, as the communists drove Christian missionaries out of China and persecuted the 1 million Chinese Christians, no one expected Christianity to survive.

To many Chinese, the church had become associated with the Western powers which had humiliated China over the previous century. The traditional religionists who had seen their deified emperor overthrown in 1912 blamed the church for their decline, while the secular communists painted the Christians as enemies of the state. Many Christians died or were sent to prison as communist leader Mao Zedong tried to crush Christianity.

Like the ancient Caesars, however, Mao did not understand that the kingdom of God was on the inside of believers, giving them strength to endure under persecution. The removal of the missionaries did not end Christianity, but simply made the church into a fully Chinese enterprise. When its property was confiscated, it moved into the homes. And when its Chinese leaders were imprisoned, the Holy Spirit provided new leaders.

As it had done during the Roman persecution, the church provided hope in a brutal society and continued to grow. Instead of fading away, the Chinese church has 115 million believers today.

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Even so, the current successor to Mao, Xi Jinping, has renewed the attack on the church, closing churches and persecuting

members. The Communist Party has adopted laws trying to force Christians to secularize their faith and practice core values of socialism, including putting state authority over God. Faithful Christians are subject to loss of homes, loss of jobs and imprisonment. Noncompliant churches are torn down, and the members are scattered.

Still, the Chinese remain steadfast, as expressed by imprisoned Pastor Wang Yi: "The Rulers have chosen an enemy that can never be imprisoned—the soul of man. Therefore, they are doomed to lose their war."

In addition to attacking the church, Xi Jinping has set his country on a dangerous course of internal totalitarianism and international militarism. Many Muslim Uighurs have been sent to concentration camps, and now it has been learned that Tibetans have been sent to forced labor camps. Dictator Xi tore up the Hong Kong treaty, which promised years of freedom, and is threatening Taiwan. His military has had border skirmishes with India and invaded the South China Sea Islands belonging to other countries. It also appears that Xi was complicit in spreading COVID outside China after it was manufactured at a laboratory in Wuhan.

Even darker days may lie ahead for China and its Christians. China's economic growth has stalled as Xi has transferred more economic resources back to the moribund state-owned companies and restricted free enterprise. The disastrous one-child policy is beginning to be felt in the workforce, and demographic collapse is on the horizon.

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To our shame, Americans have not only failed to speak up for the persecuted Chinese church, but many have also sold their souls for a chance to feed at the trough. Tech giants are

actively helping the Communists build a totalitarian surveillance state. American companies continue to buy products made by slave labor of Uighurs and others. The National Basketball Association persecutes its own people who speak out against China. And, to top it off, President Biden's son brought back a billion dollars of Chinese money for his family to "manage" from his time in China with his father when Biden was vice president.

Yet the Chinese church remains as a light in the darkness, standing firm and spreading hope and life in Christ. We thank God for its testimony.

We pray for continued strength in the Chinese church as it faces renewed persecution and dangerous times caused by Communist dictator Xi.

And may we in America learn to be as faithful as God's church in China.

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