

Christian Hypocrisy in America

A Letter published to Christian Leader, March 2002

I read the January 2002 Christian Leader with great interest. This issue attracts me because it mainly discusses the contemporary crisis of American Christianity regarding war and peace. It also differentiates Mennonite tradition as a peace church from the mainstream American Christian communities.

When I was baptized in Japan a decade ago, I was proud of being a Christian publicly because Christians in Japan do not have political or economical advantages as in the West, and Christians in China are not free. I selected a life of a political refugee in the U.S. rather than a nuclear physicist in China or a sociology professor in Japan. I've never regretted that.

However, after living six years in the U.S., I am confused and begin to feel shameful to think myself a Christian. The Sept. 11 incident has deepened my suspicion of American Christianity.

From June 4, 1989 (Tiananmen Square incident), to Sept. 11, 2001, I have observed a huge backward process in human history. We people in the so-called Socialist countries stood up against our regimes, but we were oppressed (as in China) or betrayed (as in the Soviet block). The West holds one of the key factors for the failure of human progress: people in the West, especially in the U.S., did not reform, improve, or oppose their systems. Capitalist powers won the Cold War and they pushed the world to a new period of global war. Especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the only superpower abandoned any kinds of foreign policies but imperialist expansion. The American public was fed the false information that the world had become an American world politically, economically and culturally. Accordingly, Christian rightist figures, such as Billy Graham and Fred Schwarz, banded together with state powers and began to influence mainstream Western Christianity.

The September 11th Incident is a consequence of foreign policy based on imperialism. Americans are seldom reminded of the following facts: the U.S. helped make a Zionist Israel that has occupied Palestine for more than a half-century; U.S. forces divided China and Korea for more than a half-century; the U.S. troops occupied Japan for more than a half-century; the U.S. has continued bombing Iraq for a decade; the U.S. invaded Nicaragua, Panama; the CIA murdered civilians of Columbia, Argentina and other Latin American countries; the U.S. bombed Yugoslavia (and China's Embassy there); and the U.S. also bombed Sudan.

It is natural that many oppressed peoples or groups declare war against the U.S. government and the people who supported this government. If the U.S. government is really serving the American people, if the many American university professors and "think tanks" have an independent mind, they would have better served the American public with information to prevent an attack like the Sept. 11 incident.

The Sept. 11 attack is an extreme military action beyond human expectation, but their demands from the U.S. are all understandable: to stop arming Israel to oppress the Palestinian people, to remove the sanction against Iraq, to withdraw its 5,000 troops from Saudi Arabia, and so on.

How would the Americans react if they experienced one percent degree of these people's sufferings? (American lost about 0.001 percent of it's population in Sept. 11 incident.) Most of the victims of Sept. 11 were innocent people. They did not directly engage in the American policies that oppress and kill millions of innocent people all over the world. They were victims of two enemies: the attackers and the U.S. government.

America and most of the world are engaging in an unjust war. The American public can benefit nothing from the so-called "anti-terrorist" war, which is destroying relevant or irrelevant enemies and innocent people without evidence.

It is difficult to point out the hypocrisy in American Christianity to those who support the current war. I've observed that even many Mennonite communities lack political independence from or enough knowledge of the U.S. foreign policy. Some are seriously confused about the difference between peace and a "just war." I don't deny that in human being's history there were just wars, such as European and Asian peoples' resistance against Nazi Germany and the Japanese invasion, but the current American war has nothing to do with justice. If America really wants peace, it can obtain peace immediately by stopping wars against other countries, withdrawing all its troops back to the homeland, destroying all nuclear weapons (Russia and China will happily follow) and eventually dissolving the Pentagon and CIA.

True American Christians should speak out and take action to show and state to the world our true Christian faith of peace.

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