

**A CHILLING CONNECTION BETWEEN
NANJING, CHINA (1853) AND MOSCOW, IDAHO (2003)**

The Bible . . . was to propel Hong Xiuquan's transformation of his Society of God Worshippers from a religious movement with political overtones into a full-fledged political rebellion.

--Thomas H. Reilly

I have received the immediate command of God in his presence;
the will of Heaven rests with me.

--Hong Xiuquan

The Taiping Rebellion has been called the "greatest civil war [and] the greatest popular rebellion in history." Between 1852 and 1864, an estimated 10 to 20 million Chinese lost their lives in a conflict initiated by group of militant Christians led by Hong Xiuquan, who, after visiting God's extended family in Heaven in a 1837 vision, came to believe he was Christ's younger brother with a sacred sword to kill all evil doers.

After successfully evangelizing in Guangdong and neighboring Guangzi Province in the 1840s, Hong and his followers raised huge armies that marched northward, taking as many as 600 cities, and eventually conquering Nanjing in 1853.

Hong had already crowned himself Heavenly King in 1851, and he now declared Nanjing as the capital of the New Jerusalem ruling over the 10,000 nations. In Nanking Taiping soldiers preach the Gospel with swords drawn, and converts who committed adultery and other major sins were beheaded.

Hong's religious views have significant parallels to American dominion theologians, of which Moscow pastor Douglas Wilson is a local representative. In both an exclusive Christian identity has been fused with a militant nationalism. Sometimes called Christian Reconstruction, dominion theologians believe that godly men such as they will rule the world enforcing the laws of the Old Testament.

George Grant, a frequent visitor to Moscow on Wilson's invitation, has this to say: "We must win the world with the power of the Gospel. . . . If Jesus Christ is indeed Lord, . . . and if

our commission is to bring the land into subjection to His Lordship, . . . then all . . . our political action will aim at nothing short of that sacred purpose.”

In many pronouncements Hong envisioned that his new dynasty was to include all the nations of the world. Hong claims that he has God’s authority to “unite all elements whether up in heaven, down beneath the earth, or in the human world to be one grand dynasty at all times and in all places.”

Initially European and American missionaries were thrilled to see so many Chinese converted to Christianity. But as the evidence of Taiping brutality came to them, they distanced themselves from Hong and his fanatical followers.

They were also concerned about strange doctrines that were emanating from the Taiping capital. Like the early Mormons, Hong believed that Jesus had a wife and that he, Hong, was the second son of God and his wife. Also like the Mormons, Hong believed that God and Christ had physical bodies and that they dressed as Chinese royalty did.

Hong’s Christian motto could be summarized as “Slay the demons and their followers and worship the one true God.” Once Hong had identified the Qing emperor as the one who “led the people to behave like imps, worships demons and disobey the true God,” the stage was set for a total religious war against any all forces who would dispute God’s will.

Hong’s first encounter with the Devil and his demons was during his visit to Heaven in 1837. After being given a sacred sword and seal, Hong received God’s permission to slay demons, and he is joined by a host of angels in a great battle. With Christ himself holding Hong’s seal, which both bedazzles and blinds, Hong killed demons and forced those remaining in Heaven down to earth.

In Hong’s reading of the Book of Revelation, God and Christ will descend to earth and help both Hong and his son, “the Junior Lord,” govern all the nations of the earth. As the Apocalypse unfolds, Hong will destroy the Devil and his demons and will establish “Universal Peace under Heaven.”

In the early 1860s Hong became increasingly isolated and paranoid in his lavish palace in Nanjing, and his troops, not as disciplined as in the early days, were finally defeated by imperial forces in 1864.

Writing about this same period in America, Wilson and his neo-Confederate associates want us to believe that the Confederate army, dominated, they claim, by born again Christians,

were right in their rebellion against a federal government that had been misled by Christian liberals.

Our history lesson is that we should be ever vigilant about leaders--Christian, Muslim, or Hindu--who wish to fuse religious identity and national identity. In all its possible forms, dominion theology is a recipe for disaster.