

I know an old Christian man who was admitted to the hospital in need of a very risky surgery. Not only was he without fear, but he also tried to comfort a nurse in his ward who was troubled due to family problems. The nurse asked him, "Others would be extremely afraid waiting for this operation. How can you be without fear and with such self-confidence?" He replied, "My confidence is not in me. Look at my body, it is already very weak and is wasting away. I cannot depend on it. I know God and have received his mercy all my life. Only he is trustworthy and dependable." The words of this wise man should provoke deep thought in every one of us. Self-confidence, in fact, is depending on one's talent, beauty, wealth and power. The Bible says: "He who trusts in himself is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26). "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (Proverbs 31:30). "For riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations" (Proverbs 27:24). "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord..." (Jeremiah 9:23-24). "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

Christians seek to depend and believe not in themselves, but God's promise: "For God so loved world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

我认识一位老人。他因心脏病住院，需要接受十分危险的手术，不但自己不惊慌，还去安慰一个在病房工作为家事烦恼的护士。这位护士问他：“要动这样的手术，别人都怕得要死，你怎会不怕，这样自信？”他回答说：“我的信心不在我身上。看看我的身体吧，它已经衰老软弱，是靠不住的。我认识神，一生感受到他的恩赐。他才是信靠得住的。”这位智者的话令人深思。其实，自信就是信靠人的才华，美貌，金钱和权利。圣经说：“心中自是的，便是愚昧人”（箴言 28:26）。“艳丽是虚假的，美容是虚浮的，惟敬畏耶和华的妇女、必得称赞”（箴言 31:30）。

“资财不能永有，冠冕岂能存到万代”（箴言 27:24）。“智慧人不要因他的智慧夸口、勇士不要因他的勇力夸口、财主不要因他的财物夸口。夸口的却因他有聪明、认识我是耶和华...”（耶利米书 9:23-24）。“耶和华说、我知道我向你们所怀的意念、是赐平安的意念、不是降灾祸的意念、要叫你们末后有指望。你们要呼求我、祷告我、我就应允你们。你们寻求我、若专心寻求我、就必寻见”（耶利米书 29:11-13）。

基督徒所信靠的不是自己，而是信靠神这样的应许：“神爱世人、甚至将他的独生子赐给他们、叫一切信他的、不至灭亡、反得永生”（约翰福音 3:16）。

自信者的悲哀

The Sorrow of the Self-Confident

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By Junhui Bian

Man often enjoys believing in himself. Self-confidence not only brings one a sense of satisfaction and achievement, but also makes one boastful and prideful. "There has never been a savior, depending not on God or kings, to make our lives happy, we depend only on ourselves." Millions who grew up hearing and singing this loud song of *Internationale* were once the proudest people on the face of this earth.

During the 1950s, believing that good news would come from countless small steel mills and the goal of passing England and America in steel production, millions of people participated in the "Movement of Great Steel Production." Instead, more than 3 million tons of crude steel and 4.16 million tons of crude iron were useless. The country-wide loss totaled about 20 billion Yuan. In the 1960s, 16 million educated youths joined the "Movement of Going to the Countryside," believing that it was necessary for them to receive re-education from the farmers. In the end, the self-confidence of these youths quickly turned into blindness and loss. After wasting the immeasurable talents of a generation of young people and more than 10 billion Yuan in settlement costs, the movement was terminated. In the 1970s, farms became the experimental grounds for "Learning From Da Zhai in the Agriculture Movement." People deeply believed the claim that "man shall overcome nature." They plowed the fruit forest in mountains and hills, built stair-shaped fields, and planted crops. Again, it ended with great waste of human labor and financial loss. Even the great leader, who made the claim "man shall overcome nature" and called by so many to live for ten thousand years, died of an illness. His wife was jailed and sentenced to death soon after. What is the reason for man's self-confidence to be humiliated in such a way?

Beginning in the 1980s (people, learning from the lessons of the past) began putting their faith not in a group and a leader any more, but rather in their own intelligence and wisdom. It was at this time I attended Peking Union Medical College. We were flatteringly called "the proud sons of heaven" by others. I also considered myself as one of the academic elites in society. One of my classmates had very outstanding academic grades and had been hoping to become an expert surgeon. His self-confidence was admired so much by all our classmates. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with leukemia right after his graduation. As a doctor, he could not cure himself. The knowledge he learned in medical school could not bring him the slightest faith of living, but instead brought deep pessimism and the loss of hope. I did not dare to visit him before his death, fearing to see what it would be like for me when my life ended.

When I saw the endless ocean the first time, it was silent. Thinking that the ocean was just a larger swimming pool and having learned how to swim long ago, I jumped in. Immediately, the ocean threw me hard in all directions and taught me a big lesson. Man's self-confidence cannot stand the trials of life. Those who put their entire faith in themselves or others ought to be pitied since once these are lost, there is no hope left. Every year now in China, 2 million people try to commit suicide and 250,000 people succeed. Suicide has become the most common cause of death for people aged 15 to 34. The sorrow of the self-confident originates from the human factor. Putting your faith in people (no matter how important they are) cannot be depended upon.

人喜欢相信自己。自信既能给人带来满足和成就感，又使人狂妄傲慢。“从来就没有救世主，也不靠神仙皇帝。要创造人类的幸福，全靠我们自己。”在这雄壮的《国际歌》声中长大的千千万万人，曾是世界最自信的人群之一。

五十年代时，千百万人投入大炼钢铁的运动，深信小土窑里必传捷报，超英赶美的目标指日可待。但事与愿违，所炼 300 多万吨土钢、416 万吨土铁根本不能用，全国约损失 200 亿元。在六十年代，又有 1600 万知识青年参加上山下乡运动，深信到农村去接受贫下中农再教育的必要性。结果，这些青年人的自信迅速转变为盲目和失落。在浪费了价值无法计算的一代人的青春和超过 100 亿元的安置经费后，上山下乡运动才收场。七十年代时，全国的农村都成了“农业学大寨”的实验地。人们深信“人定胜天”，在山上平了果园，修梯田，种粮食。这又以劳民伤财而告终。就连人称万寿无疆的，亲自提出“人定胜天”口号的领袖也病逝了。他的妻子后来还被监禁，判以死刑。自信受如此捉弄，原因何在？

从八十年代开始，人们面对先前的教训，不再把信心放到一个人群和领袖身上，而是放在个人的聪明和智慧上了。我就是在这个时候考上了协和医科大学，被捧为天之骄子，当时也自以为是一名精英。有一个同学成绩非常优秀，一直希望成为外科高手。他的自信让同学们都十分钦佩。不幸的是，他刚毕业就被诊断患有白血病。他虽是医生，却救不了自己。对病情的知识带给他的完全不是信心，却是愤世和绝望。在他去世之前，我没有敢去看他，怕正视有一天这也将是我的结局。

我第一次看到大海时，海水一望无际，陈静无声。原以为大海仅是个大点儿的游泳池而已，早已会游泳的我投身入海后却被海浪抛来丢去，恨恨地教训了一顿。人的自信在生活的风浪中都经不起考验。把全部的信心都放在自己和他人身上的人很可怜，因为一旦失掉这些极易失掉的东西，生活就再没有希望了。现在中国每年有两百万人试图自杀，二十五万人自杀死亡。自杀已成为十五岁到三十四岁人死亡的最普遍原因。自信者的悲哀就在于“人”，无论是他人还是自己，都靠不住。