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Gordon of Khartoum

Lead: Acting as a magnet, the Chinese Gordon drew the British Empire ever southward up the Nile into the Sudan.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts

Content: One of the most controversial and interesting characters of Victorian England was Charles G. Gordon, nicknamed of "Chinese Gordon" for his service in China in the 1870s. Gordon was the ideal Victorian leader, combining military skill with a deep devotion to

the Christian faith and to English political institutions. During his service as governor general of the Sudan in eastern Africa Gordon helped bring an end to the slave trade.

In 1884, an Egyptian army led by British General William Hicks was wiped out by the troops of Mohammed Ahmad, an Islamic prophet who claimed to be Mahdi, the expected spokesman and successor to Mohammed.

Under intense public pressure a reluctant Prime Minister William Gladstone sent Gordon back to the Sudan to evacuate the garrison trapped there by the Mahdi. When Gordon arrived in Khartoum, it

became clear that was impossible. He then refused to leave Khartoum and eventually forced the British government to send an army to rescue him. They were too late. On January 26, 1885, thousands of the Mahdi's followers attacked the city and captured it. Gordon was killed. His head, for many days, was mounted on a tall pole next to the Mahdi's tent.

Gordon's attempt to lure the British government into the Sudan succeeded and Britain eventually assumed control of that country, and he died as he lived, a faithful servant to the Empire which sought to bring Christianity and British civilization to the world.

**The Mahdi died within six months,
a victim of typhoid fever.**

**"A Moment in Time" is produced
at the University of Richmond. This is
Dan Roberts.**

Resources

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