



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on July 19, 2011

China's Cold War on Christianity Perpetuates Historic Persecutions

Totalitarians cannot tolerate the free exercise of religion. As so many disillusioned communists in the last century observed, communism, to its disciples, is a religion and a god. One well known book, a collection of the writings of a number of former communists, is called simply *The God That Failed*. Anyone who has attempted to discuss a subject intelligently with a communist quickly grasps that he is talking to a follower of a secular religion.



Sometimes communism has entered into a truce with faith or has loosened the chains on religious people for tactical reasons. During the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, for example, the churches opened again and allowed people to worship without duress. That limited freedom disappeared after the Nazis were defeated. The Soviets also pretended to respect the rights of Jews to worship, although in actual practice Judaism was suppressed (Hebrew, for example, was forbidden while [Yiddish](#), a secular language, was encouraged).

Why the fear of religion? As men such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn knew, faith in the living God reduces all the powers and principalities of man to dust. All things pass but God.

What was true of communists is true of all totalitarians. The Nazis brutally crushed Christianity, sending ministers and priests to concentration camps, raping nuns, and pillaging churches, and cleverly introducing an anti-Christian form of Christianity: the "German Christian" movement. The Nazi plans failed, as only a small number of Germans embraced the new idea. Most of the people either remained the nominal Christians they had been before the Nazis came to power, or joined the overtly pagan movements closely associated with Nazi racial theories.

In Poland, neither the Nazis nor the communists were able to crush the Catholic Church, as Pope John Paul II quietly led the Polish people in a passive resistance of their communist overlords.

Christianity has worked quietly but persistently for centuries to convert China. Missionaries such as [John Birch](#) gave their lives to try to give the Chinese the hope of Christ and the model of Americanism. The obstacles to this work have always been formidable: Japanese imperialists hated Christianity just as much as did Chinese communists. Totalitarians grasped that faith in God is liberating (there is a reason why in Orwell's *1984* as well as in the writings of Nietzsche, God is dead).



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In China today, its communist leaders have copied the example of their totalitarian sibling, Nazi Germany, and created a statist, nominal form of Christianity. Pastors and priests are arrested and tortured. Genuine Chinese Christians worship secretly in "house" churches. But operating underground is nothing new to Christianity: The Christians' Sign of the Fish is as ancient as brutal, pagan Rome.

The Communist leaders of China have also usurped the right of the Pope to designate bishops and cardinals. [Cardinal Joseph Zen](#), Archbishop of Hong Kong, the titular head of the legitimate Catholic Church in China, noted in *Human Events* recently: "All examples in history show that when the bishops are under control of the government, the Church goes wrong."

The cardinal then cited examples of clergy who have been bought by the Chinese communists and those who have remained independent:

There are three kinds [of clergy] who participated: those brought by force, those brought by heavy pressure and those who went willingly. It's very bad that people have to be forced, but it is even worse for us — much more sad for us — that some went willingly. Some bishops who go get paid a good sum of money. We know one bishop who received 200,000 renminbi and for another it was 300,000. We know many things in Hong Kong about what is going on. It is no longer possible to keep things secret.

Cardinal Zen also spoke of the torture of priests in communist China:

When they arrest a priest they don't put him in prison. They put him in a guest house of the police. Unfortunately, they are going back to the ways of torture. One priest was kept for five days without sleep and they keep him standing as officials interrogated him in three shifts. Then, after five days, he simply collapse[d] and then they beat him.

In communist China Christians are persecuted, as they are in Islamic lands, as well as in India. Chic disdain for Christianity in most of Europe is growing more blatant, as the effete nomenklatura kowtow to secular progressivism, to radical Islam, and to any other system hostile to the faith of either Jews or Christians. Indeed, as anyone who follows the cynical machinations of atheistic collectivists in America can grimly attest, the persecution of Christians on college campuses and within the federal bench is very real. Devout Christians are indigestible to those who would enslave us.

Photo: Father Miguel Pro's execution in Mexico in 1927, under the rule of the fiercely anti-clerical President Plutarco Elías Calles.



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