



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on May 15, 2011

China Continues Totalitarians' Historic Oppression of Christians

Writers in imperial Japan before WWII documented this totalitarian control by their own government. In his book [Darkness of the Sun: The Story of Christianity in the Japanese Empire](#), Richard Terrill Baker described the special, virulent hatred the Japanese felt toward Christianity:

Practically every Christian of whom I asked the question in Japan had spent at least hours being questioned by the police. Some spent years on end, others months, others days.... Teachers advised their children to stay away from churches. Children who went to Sunday School were jeered.... Another insistent demand on the part of Japanese educational authorities against Christian schools was that they alter their constitutions to remove all references to Christianity.



One wonders how Christian schools could remain such if all references to Christianity were removed. The Nazis behaved in much the same way in their persecution of German Christians. There is some confusion about the issue because Hitler spoke of the "Almighty"; however, he utterly rejected Christianity. In 1935, Nazi leaders at Darmstadt declared openly:

We employ the term "Christianity" only for convenience, because the word is easily understood in a country in which Christianity is the only existing religion. The struggle against sects is inevitable. It is not only the hundred varieties of Christianity we reject; we reject Christianity as such. And that is not a private opinion; it is the official position of the Party and the Führer.

Likewise, German Jew Ludwig Freund, leader of the Jewish War Veterans until he was forced to leave Germany early in the Nazi regime, wrote in 1935:

The Church is delivered up whole and entire to the crushing force of the heathen state, which is not to be mistaken for Christian merely because from time to time it loudly invokes divine assistance for its profane maneuvers.

1930s' journalist Rom Landau explained how Nazis pretended to the world that they supported a sort of Christianity, while in fact they hated the religion — thus fooling the gullible outside of Germany: "By telling the Germans that Christianity was 'of the devil,' and foreigners that the Nazi state was a Christian one, he [Hitler] followed the same straight path." Edgar Mower, in his 1938 definitive book on Nazi persecution of Christianity, [Germany Puts the Clock Back](#), commented:

Both Hitler and the Party still maintain — at any rate in all statements made for foreign



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consumption — that there has not been any persecution of religion in the Reich.... Inside Germany there has not been much attempt to pretend that the Church was anything but a thorn in the side of the State, to be treated in a language that could only be used upon a persecuted people.

The persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union was just as harsh. The Soviets, in principle, allowed freedom of worship, but church property was confiscated and countless clergy sent to the Gulag. During the “Great Patriotic War,” Stalin reopened the Russian Orthodox churches for the purpose of using them as a means of attacking the Nazi invaders, but that tactic ended after the defeat of Hitler. The Soviets always used the Russian Orthodox Church for their own purposes. The KGB and its predecessors showed no scruples in placing agents within seminaries and into various positions in the church. The values and traditions of historical Christianity were, of course, discarded, but the hollow shell left after Bolshevik persecution campaigns was still useful.

It is not just totalitarian nations which are infiltrated and occupied by Marxists. In the 1960s, mainstream branches of Christianity in the United States hired Saul Alinsky, the radical socialist who dedicated one of his books to the devil, to speak on “social justice” and other issues. The National Council of Churches became a sick joke as an organization which never found an atheist dictator it didn’t like. Some American Presidents have attended “churches” whose ministers damn America and heap scorn upon their own nation, while lauding socialism in different forms.

Small wonder, then, that there can be seen today the same pattern in communist China. This massive totalitarian regime sponsors government “churches,” such as the Three-Self Patriotic Movement; however, believing Christians across the country belong to underground “house churches” whose flock is regularly harassed and imprisoned. One woman spoke of the internment of church elders this past Easter: “I called one elder and learned that he has been put under house arrest over one week, never being able to leave his apartment. Another elder said that one policeman sat and lay too close to the door of his apartment, which made it absolutely impossible to open his door.”

Shortly before that report, police arrested leaders of Beijing’s Protestant Shouwang Church, although these clergy were later released. This church, with more than one thousand congregants, has been blocked from finding a place to worship in the city. Christians have been told that they can no longer worship at places such as the Old Story Restaurant in Beijing. Fellow believers from across China are rallying behind their Beijing brothers and sisters in the faith: A petition written by underground pastors Xie Moshan and Li Tianen to the National People’s Congress — calling for an end to the persecution of the Shouwang Church — was signed by 17 church leaders from six different cities in China.

The official Communist explanation by the Foreign Ministry is that these Christians had been “gathering illegally many times and in order to keep social order, public security departments have adopted relevant measures.” The statement did not elaborate on how peaceful Christians threaten the social order by meeting privately to worship and pray.

Catholics in China face the same problems. The Vatican-appointed Bishop of Shantou, Zhuang Jianjian, is under house arrest. There is no formal diplomatic relationship between the Vatican and the communist Chinese government, and the Vatican has rejected the Chinese government’s attempts to have bishops for the nation chosen in communist-controlled elections. An example is the recent “election” of Joseph Huang Bingzhuang as the communist-sponsored bishop of Shantou by the carefully controlled Catholic Patriotic Association. Simon Li Zhigang, another candidate rejected by the Vatican and closely aligned with communist policies, was recently elected bishop of Chengdu.



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The number of Chinese Christians is growing apace. While some attend the state-created and state-controlled churches, most — some estimate as many as 50-70 million — worship in private places, accepting the oppression of the state as the price of their faith. Such is the familiar pattern of history. Christians who take their faith seriously will always be persecuted by tyrannical regimes. Yet no matter how onerous the oppression, a greater power sustains them.



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