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# Religion & Liberty

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## A Rare and Tenuous Freedom

### An interview with Nina Shea

A Journal of Religion, Economics, and Culture

# Editor's Note



Recent press accounts of atrocities against Christians in the Muslim world too often point to mutual blame between the parties. In this issue, Nina Shea sets the record straight. Nina Shea, whom *Christianity Today* called “The Daniel of Religious Rights,” has committed her life to fighting for religious and political freedom across the globe. In this interview, Ms. Shea pays tribute to the ten-year anniversary of the demise of communism in Eastern Europe, an uprising that started in the fall of 1989. She also makes important connections between the persecution many suffer today and the long twilight struggle for freedom behind the Iron Curtain and in the former Soviet Union.

Her work is immensely important, and we are fortunate and humbled for this opportunity to raise awareness of all she is doing for the sake of freedom.

Managing editor Ray Nothstine has contributed a book review, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South*, an examination of the political force of the greatest American evangelist of the twentieth century. Author Steven P. Miller argues that Graham played a pivotal role in reshaping the political landscape of the American South.

Mark Tooley, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy in Washington, D.C., is a leader in the long struggle to rescue the social witness of mainline protestant churches. In his feature piece, “Not Celebrating Communism’s Collapse,” Tooley looks back at the moral failings of the religious left during the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. He reminds us that, “The religious left has learned very little, as it continues to apologize for remaining Marxist regimes in North Korea and Cuba.”

“Repressions” is a series of voices that witness against the evils of Marxist and fascist rule and thought. Marxism, of course, was especially harsh to people of faith because they refused to offer their whole life and soul to its method and ideology. The late Richard Wurmbrand, Lutheran pastor and founder of Voice of the Martyrs, said this about Marxist-atheism in his landmark account *Tortured for Christ*: “They knew if a man believed in Christ he would never be a mindless, willing subject. They knew they could imprison men, but they couldn’t imprison faith in God. And so they fought very hard.”

This issue’s “In the Liberal Tradition” is a tribute to Francis Schaeffer, American Christian theologian, philosopher, and minister. Along with C.S. Lewis, perhaps no other Christian has had the kind of monumental impact on the thinking of twentieth century Christians. He challenged secular humanism at its very core, defending and lifting high the banner of Christ.

*Editor Raymond*

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# A Rare and Tenuous Freedom:

An Interview with Nina Shea

*Nina Shea has served as an international human-rights lawyer for over twenty years. She joined the Hudson Institute as a senior fellow in November 2006, where she directs the Center for Religious Freedom. For the ten years prior to joining Hudson, she worked at Freedom House, where she directed the Center for Religious Freedom, which she founded in 1986.*

*Since 1999, Shea has served as a commissioner on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, an independent federal agency. She has been appointed as a U.S. delegate to the United Nation's main human rights body by both Republican and Democratic administrations. She recently spoke with Religion & Liberty's managing editor Ray Nothstine.*

**R&L:** *There are many anniversaries related to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe*

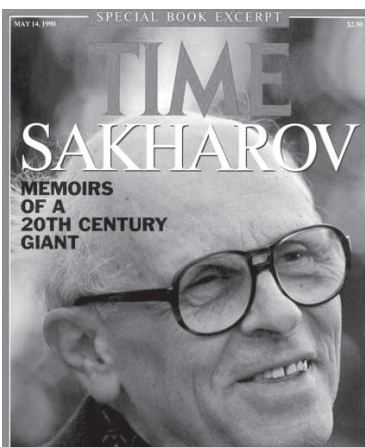
*this year. Those countries were appropriately referred to as the "Captive Nations." What thoughts do you have as you look back at that time and remember some of the great figures who toiled for political and religious freedom?*

**Shea:** It was thrilling to come to know some of the heroic champions of freedom from that historic period—Soviet human rights advocate Andrei Sakharov, Lithuanian Catholic priest and long time political prisoner Fr. Alfonsas Svarinskas, former Jewish *refusnik* Natan Scharansky, Romanian poet Dorin Tudoran, and many other less familiar political dissidents, clergy, and writers of *samizdat* literature. Of course, many others I would only know by reading about because they never made it out of the gulag and labor camps. In the struggle for individual rights and freedoms, they were uncompromising and self-sacrificing. They were not mere victims, they were defiant leaders of the

freedom movement—a movement that stretched from the East to the West; their nations were captive, but their minds were free.

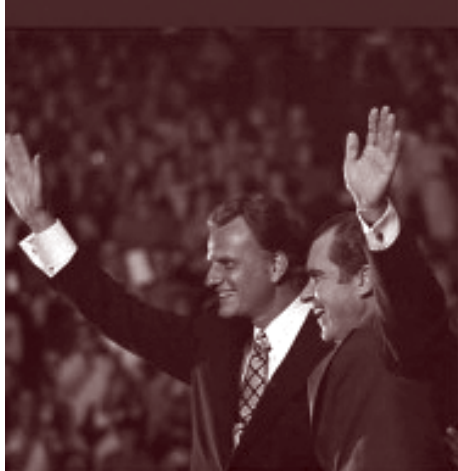
Whatever their religious perspective, these figures understood that communism's false philosophies of human nature and the human condition were insupportable. They understood that their societies would flourish with freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and democratic freedoms. They brought profound insights into the deep moral destructiveness and corruption of a totalitarian political system in which the individual was deemed irrelevant. With their voices, pens, and prayers, they rebelled against the mistrust and fear generated by the communist system that permeated every level of society. They knew in an integral way, from living within it, that the communist system only managed to survive because of the state's willingness to use coercive power against its own people.

I had the privilege of personally working on behalf of Andrei Sakharov, the great founder of the Moscow Human Rights Committee, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and top physicist in the Soviet Union. I helped present his case to the United Nations in the early 1980s, after he had been forcibly exiled to Gorky, a closed city, because of his work in documenting individual stories of oppression and persecution. Even some of the West Europeans thought it was bad form—destructive of international bonhomie—to raise these



Andrei Sakharov on the cover of Time and Natan Sharansky meeting with President Reagan

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# Review: Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South

By Ray Nothstine

Explaining the realignment of American Southern politics is often a favorite area of study among historians and scholars. A region that was once dominated by yellow dog Democrats, has for the most part continued to expand as a loyal region for the Grand Old Party. One of the earliest and most common narratives among liberal historians and writers is the belief that the realignment in the South had to do with a backlash against desegregation. Steven P. Miller in his new book *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* puts considerable emphasis on Graham's role in desegregation, public evangelicalism, and Graham as a spiritual and political adviser to presidents. Miller argues that Graham played a formidable role in reshaping the political climate of the South.

Early on Miller describes some of the dynamics of Graham's insistence on holding desegregated crusades in the South, and his relationship with many fellow Southern Baptist ministers who supported segregation. Miller labels Graham a "racial moderate" largely by comparing him to Dr. Martin Luther King. Graham also at various times called for Civil Rights protesters to obey federal court orders and was quick to defend the South as having better racial relations than many places north of Dixie. With quips like, "prejudice is not just a sectional problem," and, labeling criticism of the South "one of the most popular indoor sports of some Northerners these days," Graham became an endearing figure to many fellow Southerners. It also allowed

him to take fairly progressive positions on race without losing a large part of his Southern audience.

Graham linked racism as a problem directly related to the absence of God that pointed to the need of regeneration for the individual. It was a reasoning that also made political sense when Graham would make pronouncements for more gradualism when it came to integration. He understood there were limits to solving segregation through legislation alone. Miller also notes Graham's forward thinking when he addressed how much segregation stained America's image abroad in relation to Cold War dynamics.

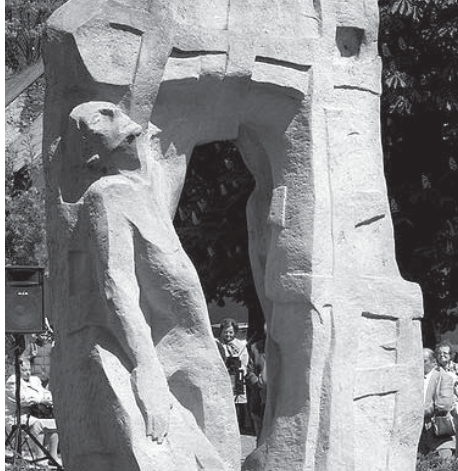
Another large portion of the book covers Graham's relationship with political figures and presidents. Graham, a lifelong Democrat, is well known for his close relationship to President Richard Nixon and how his regional leadership in the American South helped Nixon's "Southern Strategy." Graham also had a very good relationship with President Lyndon Johnson and even lent his endorsement to his War on Poverty programs, citing Scripture as a basis for support. While Graham supported many of Johnson's big government initiatives and his Vietnam policies, he also had harsh criticism for other areas of 1960s liberalism, especially related to judicial activism as it related to school prayer and criminal rights.

Graham was criticized by the left for being a court prophet to Nixon, and his reputa-

tion would suffer again decades later through the release of tapes where Graham was heard agreeing with Nixon as he railed against all the Jews in the media. Defenses of Nixon late into Watergate proved to be an issue as well, as Graham often called the scandal further proof of a larger national problem that called for personal and national repentance.

An overarching point of Miller's theme is that Graham gave considerable cover for Southerners to distance themselves from their segregated past. An evangelical understanding of the sins of racism allowed many to declare themselves healed and absolved from past guilt. Graham then criticized forced busing as a desegregation tactic, he further lauded law and order policies, and continually criticized the secularizing of America through the courts. Miller also argues that his close association to Nixon and his vocal pronouncements on many conservative positions, especially social positions and the moral breakdown in society further made the region ripe for change.

This book provides a lot background on Graham's career as an evangelist and as a force in twentieth century American politics. Miller appropriately concludes by noting that "Graham's central theme never altered; the evangelist preached Christ crucified and resurrected, with salvation available through Him available to all who would invite Him into their hearts." Far beyond any political statements, it is what Graham is known for and will especially be known for when he is called home. ♦



# Not Celebrating Communism's Collapse

By Mark Tooley

America's Religious Left, having invested decades in dialogue with and advocating accommodation of the Soviet Bloc, was flummoxed and uncelebratory about the momentous collapse of East European Communism in 1989-1990.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops, representing 9 million church members in the U.S. were actually in session when the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989. They reacted by blandly commending the East Germans for their "openness and growing self-confidence" and by urging a "new trust and compassion throughout the world." They also warned against the imposition of Eastern or Western value systems, as though the two were morally equal.

East German United Methodist Bishop Rudigor Minor assured his fellow prelates that East Germans would not exchange communism for West German capitalism's "society of sharp elbows" and would instead prefer a "new democratic socialism."

"What people [in East Germany] are seeking is not a return to capitalism," Bishop Minor insisted. "They are looking for something beyond the old dichotomy between capitalism and communism." Agreeing with the East German bishop was World Council of Churches Central Committee member Janice Love, who was attending the bishops' gathering. "Because of the events in the USSR and Eastern Europe,

there appears to be a new-found triumphalism about capitalism that I find to be uncritical, unwarranted and chauvinistic," she fretted.

Love seemed to regret there is "greater cynicism than ever before about socialist forms of organization, some of which is justified, some not." She also suggested "more creative work needs to be done on alternative economic futures for ourselves in the United States as well as other parts of the world."

A few months after the bishops' gathering in the U.S., Bishop Minor was still hoping that Marxism was not dead. "As critics, I think Marxists are still relevant," he opined. "Marxism has insights into power that we can learn from." Minor asserted that capitalism's critique of "competition structures" was still valid. "Christians need to be seriously concerned about capitalism's profit-maximizing at the expense of the Third World," he warned. And the bishop suggested that "perhaps the utopian element in Marxism is still worth talking about" among Christians. Still, Minor admitted that East German Marxism had been "shamefully bad" and a "flop."

Minor's partial criticism of Soviet Bloc communism came only after the Berlin Wall's fall. Himself having lived under the former communist regime, he can perhaps be excused for the reticence. But mainline Protestant and ecumenical

officials as a whole, in the U.S. and throughout the West, were largely silent throughout the 1970s and 1980s about communist repression in East Europe and the old Soviet Union. This silence was accompanied by loud and aggressive human rights activism aimed at rightist dictatorships in Latin America and Asia, as well as apartheid South Africa. This double standard left little rationale for Religious Left celebration when East Bloc communism fell.

After the fall, there were some reluctantly expressed public regrets and defensiveness about the Religious Left's preference for supposedly "quiet diplomacy" with the old East Bloc regimes, especially by groups like the Swiss-based World Council of Churches (WCC). In 1990, WCC chief Emilio Castro admitted that his group "didn't speak strongly enough, that is clear. That is the price we thought we needed to pay in order to help the human rights situation inside Romania."

Romanian protestant Pastor Laszlo Tokes helped spark some of the 1989 protests against Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu that precipitated his overthrow. Barely months after Ceausescu's fall, Tokes publicly complained "there was a refusal [by Western church groups] to present the true conditions of churches in Romania and a pretension that in our country everything is fine, [that] the churches perform their mission in peace and

*continued on pg 6*



freedom.” He was mostly targeting the WCC and also the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Under communism, Romanian government-controlled church officials succeeded in “misleading their sister churches and the public opinion of the ecumenical movement abroad,” Tokes decried. These clerics were “deeply intertwined with state policy structure, and under the label of ecumenism successfully represented the direct interest of an inhuman, ungodly and oppressive regime – all at the expense of their own believers.”

In early 1990, the Romanian Orthodox Church publicly expressed “regret that under the dictatorship some of us may not always have shown the courage of the martyrs, and have not publicly acknowledged the hidden pain and suffering of the Romanian people.” The church statement apologized for “paying the obligatory tribute of artificial praise to the dictator.”

This apology from the Romanian Orthodox Church was more candid than any initial regrets emitted from the WCC. Emilio Castro claimed the WCC refrained from public critique of communism to spare Eastern European Christians from communist reprisals. “What do we need to repent of if we were trying to help the Romanian people?” he rhetorically asked. “Let us confess our wrongness, but let us not go beyond that.” A 1990 WCC Central Committee statement regretted “mistaken judgment in failing to speak adequately” about Romania, but rejected a proposed stronger apology. The WCC’s Assembly in 1991 tersely admitted that, after recent events, “the limits to bureaucratic control have become clearly visible.”

Newly installed National Council of Churches chief Joan Brown Campbell

was more candid in 1993. “We did not understand the depth of the suffering of Christians under communism. We failed to...cry out under the communist oppression.” Many years later, former WCC chief Konrad Raiser similarly confessed that the WCC should have spoken out on behalf of human rights in Eastern Europe.

“While being aware of the situation and basically sympathetic to their struggle, the WCC gave priority attention to the struggles against racism and for justice and liberation in the southern countries,” Raiser announced in 2004, a year after leaving the WCC. “In retrospect, it would appear that the ecumenical organizations have not sufficiently recognized—at least at the official level—the historic legitimacy and the political potential of the dissident movements in the Communist countries.” The WCC had “tried to break through the Iron Curtain and to include the churches in Communist countries in the ecumenical movement,” Raiser explained. But “in place of prophetic protest, the ecumenical movement concentrated on bridge-building and cooperation.”

Former chief of the Conference of European Churches John Arnold, also speaking in 2004, insisted that church groups like his had made contacts and wanted to keep open lines of communication across the so-called Iron Curtain, when few others could. Supposedly, the ecumenical movement was for East European church groups “a lifeline and oxygen supply combined, and the only means of engaging in public issues other than by simply supporting the ‘peace policies’ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.”

Arnold did acknowledge that the admission of East European Orthodox Churches into ecumenical councils in the 1960s did “radically change the ethos” of the WCC. “Its focus of concern shifted away

from Europe to the Third World, and this was skillfully exploited by representatives of the ROC (Russian Orthodox Church) to sideline or at least ‘relativize’ the concern felt in many western European churches for persecuted Christians and dissidents,” he said. “I prefer to say simply, ‘No, we did not do enough.’”

A strong example of “not enough” was the 1975 WCC Assembly, which diluted a proposed expression of solidarity with persecuted East Bloc religious believers into an innocuous recognition that “churches in different parts of Europe are living and working under very different conditions and traditions.” Soviet Bloc Orthodox clerics successfully argued for the dilution. The 1983 WCC Assembly also obligingly spoke of “collective human rights,” in deference to regime-controlled East Bloc delegates, who resented any potential reference to Western style human rights.

Many Western church group contacts with communist-directed East Bloc church groups were influenced by the Prague-based Soviet front Christian Peace Conference (CPC), whose officials actively participated in the WCC. The CPC’s U.S. affiliate was Christians Associated for Relationships with Eastern Europe (CAREE), which operated as a division of the National Council of Churches, and whose coordinator was often salaried by U.S. denominations. CAREE defended the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and obligingly supported Soviet Bloc strategic goals throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

No doubt under CAREE’s influence, the NCC issued virtually no statements of concern about human rights or religious liberty about Eastern Europe during the 1970s or 1980s. One exception was a careful criticism of Poland’s 1981 martial law, which an NCC official balanced with a warning that the U.S. not “use Poland as a pawn in our superpower conflicts

# Double-Edged Sword: *The Power of the Word*

with the Soviet Union.” In 1977, the NCC criticized the “harsh sentences” imposed by the Czechoslovak communist regime against human rights activists.

Silence about communist repression in the East Bloc by Western mainline Protestant and ecumenical groups was possibly motivated partly by concern for reprisals against East Bloc churches by their regimes. This same concern, of course, did not deter Western church groups from condemning rightist regimes. More pervasively, left-leaning Western church groups did not want to critique Marxism, especially during the high tide of Liberation Theology, which tried to merge Christianity with Marxist class struggle. Nor did they want to disrupt disarmament initiatives or hopes for coexistence with the East Bloc, which the church groups more highly prized than human rights or religious freedom.

When East Bloc communism imploded, these same Western church groups were simply too embarrassed or emotionally incapable of celebrating the downfall of a system to which they had never strongly objected. Over time, some Religious Left clerics reluctantly admitted error, especially as they were confronted by former East Bloc Christians now free to speak candidly. But the Religious Left has learned very little, as it continues to apologize for remaining Marxist regimes in North Korea and Cuba.

Communism’s collapse did further discredit the Religious Left, and the political witness of mainline Protestantism and ecumenical groups like the WCC and NCC has arguably, and thankfully, never quite recovered from the events of 1989-1990.

*Mark Tooley is president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy in Washington, D.C. and author of Taking Back the United Methodist Church.*

## Isaiah 53:1

*Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

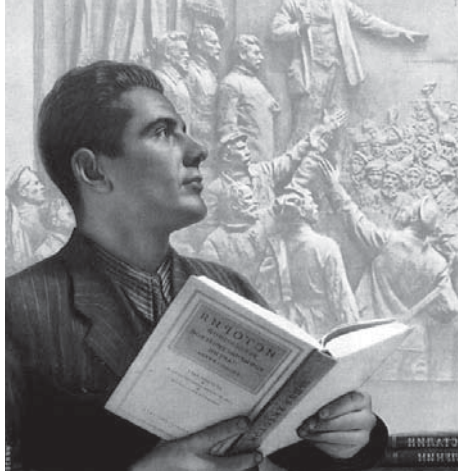
Simply put, who has heard the truth of Isaiah’s report? In the time of Isaiah many were not hearing the truth because of enemy persecution within Israel and Israel’s own rebellion from the Lord. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is one of the most well known from the Old Testament. It is commonly known as the ‘Suffering Servant.’ The Suffering Servant in the passage is the prophetic announcement of Christ who bore the punishment for all of our sins.

In this issue we have looked at some of the suffering of Christians under the arm of communism and the suffering of others across the globe because of their faith. It is true that one of the great current crises in the West is the moral relativism that has seeped into almost every branch of society. One of the great proclamations of truth by some political and moral leaders in the West was that communism is evil and it oppressed the overall condition of the person down to the very soul. Natan Sharansky, a Jewish political dissident and prisoner in the Soviet Union called his Scripture readings with a Christian friend “Reaganite readings.” It was a tip of the hat to a president who was speaking the truth to such a definitive issue.

One of the reasons for the collapse of communism was that the real truth about the system permeated within its walls. It was delivered from the inside by courageous Soviet dissidents and on the outside from some in the West. One of the greatest values the West exported, often times imperfectly, was the long twilight struggle against the spread of Marxist expansion. Those that still suffer for their faith in Christ powerfully witness to truth today, and they are so important to remember and lift up with our prayers and support. They are the courageous and dynamic speakers of truth at this very hour.

For those who hold sacred the importance of rule of law, the United States Constitution, and our Judeo Christian foundation, it seems we hear less and less truth clearly articulated in society.

But when it comes to the Suffering Servant, we are reminded of another truth, the ultimate truth that is rejected. Isaiah says, “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.” Of all the beauty and wonder that characterizes Christ; perhaps the greatest is that he suffered immensely for us and among us. Isaiah means “the Lord saves.” Isaiah foretold the abundant Good News of the glorious incarnation and saving power of the Lord. The Methodist theologian Thomas C. Oden says, “Turn to most any paragraph of the New Testament and see if you can read it without the premise that God has come in Jesus and the claim that in Jesus we are being met by nothing less than the God.”



# Repressions

Editors

## The First Freedom

*Twenty years on from the fall of the Berlin Wall, it is worth recalling the distinctly salvific promises of the inhuman ideologies of communism and fascism that resulted in the deaths of tens of millions of innocent people during the 20th century. The utopian promises of murderous ideologues were accompanied by a vicious fury against those faiths that proclaimed freedom and human dignity. The despot persecutes the believer, who refuses to offer the totality of his life to the ruling power. For this reason, the Framers of the U.S. Constitution considered religious liberty the “first freedom,” the foundational freedom upon which others are built. A brief selection of readings follows. — Editors.*

## Communism and Christianity

Communism ... wants above all to be a “world outlook”; it is totalitarian and on that account the religious question is very important for it. Russian communism (and, as a matter of fact, communism in general is a Russian creation) builds its whole program upon a definite “world outlook.” ... It is required of members of the party that they break off every kind of relation with the Church. Lenin clearly established the principles by which the communist must be controlled in his relation to religion ... Religion is certainly not a private affair within the communist state party. It is then the most public and most social of matters;

then a merciless fight against religion becomes necessary. The communist, the real integral communist, cannot be a religious man, a believing man; he cannot be a Christian.

*“The Origin of Russian Communism” by Nicolas Berdyaev (Geoffrey Bles, 1937)*

## Marxism becomes a universal religion

The appeal of Marxism was, and is two-fold. It exploited, and exploits, the prestige of science, claiming to be a scientific system for a scientific age. It offered, and offers, deliverance from present injustice and misery, promising to all believers a new world of equality and happiness. This gospel of deliverance comes directly to the poor and dispossessed; to the uneasy and idealistic children of privilege it brings vicarious absolution from guilt and participation in righteousness.

The miracle of Marxism is not Marx, and is not his system—which as a whole is a crazy quilt of clashing colors, a weak patchwork of ill-fitting pieces, a conglomeration of ideas hammered into the most tenuous unity and possessing only a plausible and thin intellectual respectability. The miracle of Marxism is its social and institutional embodiment and its transformation into an aggressive, universal religion of salvation.

... the faith of Marxism, born in Germany, developed in Great Britain, with a scattering of cosmopolitan converts throughout Europe, moved eastward, and in an ancient, backward nation of peasants fired a revolutionary flame, annexed and started in to transform a social system with the almost unlimited potential power of the Russian state, and has continued to expand and gain converts ever since. Today, it has secured China and threatens all Asia. In every Western nation it has adherents and some zealous missionaries; in some it is a leading political, social and intellectual factor.

*“Communism and Christianity” by Charles Lowry (Collier Books, 1962)*

## Defining totalitarianism

“Totalitarianism,” in its adjectival form, “totalitarian,” originated in 1923 among opponents of Italian fascism, who used it as a term of abuse in describing the policies of the dictator Benito Mussolini. Quite quickly, however, the fascists embraced the word as a fitting description of the true goal and value of their regime. “Everything in the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state,” Mussolini proclaimed in a 1925 speech—and he might have added, “everything for the state.” Among other things, if nothing could stand outside the state, then there could be no



free market or free corporations, no free families, no free churches, and of course, no free political parties. Totalitarianism therefore emerged as a term to describe a novel form of political regime in which a party or movement captured the apparatus of the state and—usually through means of terror—sought to mobilize *every* energy of society for the use of the party-state, leaving *nothing* alone. Insofar as liberal societies boast of providing a maximum of freedom to individuals and their associations, totalitarianism could be understood as existing at the opposite pole from liberalism. Throughout the Cold War period, American conservatives usually understood themselves to be engaged in an immense effort to save “the free society” from the unique threat of totalitarianism.

Following the Second World War, as political thinkers sought to understand the recent calamity, at least two broad narratives were available. Communists and their socialist and left-liberal fellow travelers interpreted the war as one which pitted “progressive” international forces against extremist “reactionary” regimes (which, for communists at least, were the necessary outcome of capitalism in its late imperialist phase). World War II had been an “anti-fascist” war, which was to say, a war against dictatorships of the nationalist Right. Such a leftist interpretation tended to group Hitler’s Germany, Mussolini’s Italy, Franco’s Spain—and later, many military regimes in Latin America—under the genus “fascism.” Such an interpretation also identified the Soviet Union and communist and socialist regimes more generally, as forces for “progress.” The other available narrative centered on totalitarianism as the ideological foe in the war. But if this were so, then America’s wartime alliance with the Soviet Union—an evidently totalitarian regime—was merely a transient phenomenon,

dependent upon the circumstances. Moreover, given an adequately rigorous understanding of totalitarianism, it might be possible to recognize Franco’s Spain, for example, as falling into a separate genus, that of more or less traditional authoritarianism.

*Excerpt from “Totalitarianism” by Mark C. Henrie, First Principles Journal, ISI (<http://www.firstprinciplesjournal.com/articles.aspx?article=974&loc=fs>)*

## Communists, Nazis and the Shoah

[There is a disagreement concerning] what most characterizes the twentieth century compared to all others: the extraordinary scale of the massacre of

enthusiastic devotion and heroic acts. But what they have most in common is that they arrogated themselves the right—and even the duty—to kill, and they both did so with similar methods, on a scale unknown in history.

Today, however, historical memory does not treat them equally. Although Nazism completely disappeared more than half a century ago, our abhorrence of it is not at all weakened by time, and rightly so. Our horrified reflection on Nazism seems to even gain in breadth and depth each year. Communism, on the other hand, although still fresh and just recently fallen, benefits from an amnesia and an amnesty that receive the almost unanimous consent, not only of its supporters—because they still exist—but



Victims of the shoot to kill order at the Berlin Wall

men by men, which was made possible only by the rise to power of Leninist communism and Hitlerian Nazism. These “heterozygous twins” (Pierre Chaunu), despite being enemies and emerging from dissimilar histories, share several common traits. Their goal was to achieve a perfect society by uprooting the evil that hindered its creation. They claimed to be philanthropic because they sought the good—one of all mankind and the other of the German people—and because of this ideal gave rise to

of its most determined enemies, and even its victims. Neither side judges it fitting to bring it back from oblivion. Sometimes Dracula’s coffin opens halfway. This is what happened at the end of 1997, when a book (*The Black Book of Communism*) dared to tally the deaths that could be attributed to communism. The book suggested a range of 85 to 100 million. The scandal was short-lived and the coffin is already closing again—without, however,

*continued on pg 10*

anyone seriously contesting these figures.

... Communism and Nazism can, indeed, be considered two species of the same genus, the ideological genus. Their appeal, the nature and mode of their power, and their type of crime stem from the mindset upon which they entirely depend: ideology. By this term I mean a doctrine that, in exchange for conversion, promises a temporal salvation that claims to conform to a cosmic order whose evolution has been scientifically deciphered and requires a political practice aimed at radically transforming society. One might push the comparison between communism and Nazism even further, noting their differences and similarities, without leaving the realm of historical and political analysis.

On the contrary, with the Shoah we immediately leave that realm. Even though politics, particularly in France, attempts to make the Shoah an issue, to force it into the endless struggle between the “right” and “left,” this catastrophe is on an entirely different level, like a very solemn and burning hearth that is self-sustaining, far from the struggles of the public square. Our consciousness of the Shoah does not fit within a purely political analysis; it is ill at ease with making the Shoah the object of comparative, neutral, “scientific” study. It maintains the ineffable sense of an event that is unique in this century and in all of time, requiring something other than objective study: a special reverence, a sacred silence. We are no longer in the history of ideology, but in the history of religion—even in religion itself, the Jewish religion initially, and as a result, the Christian religion.

*“A Century of Horrors: Communism, Nazism, and the Uniqueness of the Shoah” by Alain Besançon (ISI Books, 2007)*

## What role does blogging play into Acton’s communication mix?

The Acton PowerBlog, the most popular feature of Acton’s growing web presence, marked its fifth year of faith-and-policy punditry in April. Written by a diverse group of scholars, writers, clergy, and businesspeople, the blog is a forum for a wide variety of social and economic topics. To date, Acton bloggers have published almost 3,000 posts and readers – who provide their own invaluable insights – have logged about 5,500 comments to these posts.

The PowerBlog has been an essential communications tool for promoting Acton ideas, scholars, publications, events, and Acton’s writers and thinkers to news organizations and the reporters and editors looking for expert commentary. When big news breaks, the Acton blogging crew is all over the story. For example, the traffic at the PowerBlog exploded during last year’s release of Pope Benedict XVI’s first social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*. It was an excellent testament to the fact that many professional commentators and individuals realize that the Acton Institute is a premiere location to find solid analysis on the encyclical.

While the blog has a primarily English-speaking audience, it is also popular with readers whose primary language is German, Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, and various dialects of Chinese. Ranked in order of importance, the most popular nations of origin for blog readership are the United States, Canada, the U.K., Australia, the Philippines, India, Italy, Germany, France, and Spain.

The growth of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter has allowed for the content on the PowerBlog—which is linked into these sites—to be read and disseminated far beyond previous capabilities. The Acton web presence on social media sites pulls in new readers who might not be exposed to the work of the institute. Today, Acton Institute has 1,950 fans on its Facebook page and 900 followers on Twitter. Individuals can readily stay connected to content from the PowerBlog through these sites. What’s more, PowerBlog posts will be linked or republished frequently on other blogs and websites.

Acton has been widely praised for its use of new media capabilities. The quality of the content generated is the key to Acton’s success. The strong content is a testament to the research and work provided by staff and scholars as well as the power and relevancy of the ideas.



Kris Alan Mauren  
Executive Director

cases. After I introduced Dr. Sakharov's adult children in the U.N. Human Rights Commission one year, a representative from France denounced me for "poisoning the atmosphere of the United Nations." Later, during *perestroika*, I was overjoyed to have had the opportunity to



Nina Shea in Washington D.C.

meet Sakharov. After suffering so much KGB persecution, he went on to win election as a member of parliament where he continued to serve the human rights cause until his death in 1989.

*How did the moral struggle for freedom in communist countries affect your own life and what kind of impact does it have on your life today?*

The struggle for freedom behind the Iron Curtain opened my eyes to how rare and tenuous individual freedoms are in the world, and how living without freedom is so deeply corrosive not only to society but to the human spirit. In a certain sense, I am multi-cultural, but I am not culturally relative. The powerful witness of Christians in Eastern Europe—Pope John Paul II foremost among them—deepened my faith, and during this period I returned to the Catholic Church after having drifted away as a teenager.

The sudden and astonishingly peaceful fall of Soviet and East European communism taught me three important lessons: First, no matter how difficult and intractable the human rights problems of today seem, they are not hopeless. No one in the West predicted that the entire Soviet sys-

tem would implode over the course of a year or two. Second, ending serious political repression requires both an indigenous freedom movement and external support. The Helsinki committees, Charter 77 and the other human rights actors of the Soviet bloc delegitimized the regimes

there in a way that no one in the free world could. And on the outside, American and Western actors like the U. S. government's Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, the AFL-CIO, the Pope, and human rights groups gave invaluable support

to them and amplified their voices. And third, religious freedom really is the "first freedom." The easing of religious persecution, the freeing of religious prisoners, allowing the *refuseniks* to go to Israel, the public visit to Poland of the Pope, all of these were the first indications of the process of liberalization.

I remember these lessons today in the context of Sudan. Sudan's government led by General Omar al-Bashir is basically responsible for two genocides, one ongoing in Darfur, and one during the 80s and 90s in the south where two million Christians and animists were killed. Bashir was also responsible for multiple famines and for harboring terrorists, including in the past, Osama Bin Laden. The United States has been generously giving food aid, trying to ease Sudan's recurring and government-manufactured famines. But it is America's diplomatic measures to bring peace through elections and a referendum that will really matter. As long as Sudan's very bad government remains, the famines, conflict and misery continue. Under the US-brokered peace agreement of 2005, South Sudan is to have a referendum next year that could result in it sepa-

rating from the North and establishing its own government. This could be a pivotal moment. We can best help South Sudan by supporting heroic figures like Catholic Bishop Macram Gassis and other Christian leaders of the South, those leading institutions such as the University of Juba and others, who like the human rights heroes of the Cold War are indispensable to changing history for the better.

*Have things improved for Christians and other people of faith in countries still under communist rule? Nations such as North Korea and China especially come to mind. What are some of your biggest concerns now at this moment?*

North Korea and China rank at the bottom of the State Department's and US-CIRF's lists for religious persecutors. I don't see any improvement in North Korea where the few church buildings that exist are government props to impress international visitors. Imprisoning religious believers is reportedly common. An estimated 6,000 Christians are held at one prison alone, Prison Number 15, in the north, where prisoners have no soap, medicine, socks, or underwear. Third generation members of Christian families

"Later, during perestroika, I was overjoyed to have had the opportunity to meet Sakharov."

caught praying in the 1950s and 60s are still incarcerated as prisoner-slaves. Specific case information is hard to come by in this closed society, but in 2006 we know that a man, Son Jong Nam, was sentenced to death for spying because he had converted to evangelical Protestantism and that in prison he has been severely tortured. The big change in the North is that a few have been able to escape to South Korea and the West and reveal some of the horrors of what is taking place there. Their

*continued on pg 12*



stories have been compiled and reported by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and others, and they are heart breaking.

In China, there have been certain improvements since the Cultural Revolution when religion was prohibited altogether and many religious leaders were in prison camps. I have learned of that dreadful period from the late Cardinal Ignatius Kung, and Harry Wu, who served three and two decades in prison camps, respectively, for peacefully exercising basic freedoms. Since then, the government's goal has shifted from stamping out religion to controlling it until it withers away. The state continues an official policy of hostility to religion; it views religion as a superstition that im-

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pedes scientific and economic progress and poses a threat to political stability.

Beijing requires churches to submit to government oversight of their religious message and, through the mechanism of registration in the state religious apparatus, closely monitors and imprisons those who deviate in their preaching from what the Communist Party's United Front Work Department allows. Speaking out against the government's forced abortion and one-child policies—the latter affects most families in China—for example, is a criminal offense. Ten elderly Catholic bishops, who in the phrase of Pope Benedict XVI "opt[ed] for clandestine underground consecration," are now imprisoned in the government detention centers. No one knows where Bishop Su Zhimin of Baoding is held; he hasn't been seen since 1997 after being taken into custody for celebrating Mass without state authorization. Evangelicals independent of the state

church often lack Bibles, and their pastors are at times arrested, beaten, and tortured. On February 4, 2009, Gao Zhisheng, the heroic Chinese lawyer who defended persecuted Chinese Christians, was forcefully taken from his home by police, and has not been seen since.

*The church in North America is often mentioned as a great resource for aiding Christians elsewhere with material help and assistance. What can the church in North America learn from the suffering church and why are they so important to our own life and witness?*

I remember Bishop Macram Gassis from Sudan saying to an audience in Washington, "We are not a mendicant church." Of course, there was a lot of money coming from the United States to support Central and South Sudan. But he was pointing out that the Sudanese church was giving too. Sudan's Christians were offering to die as martyrs for the faith, and they were praying for us. I realized that Sudan's Christian herdsmen and farmers were indeed bearing witness, standing up to intolerant forces and saying, yes, I'm a Christian and being starved to death, enslaved or killed outright for it. This is a great force of inspiration and a spiritual gift. At the same time, if you only think of it in those terms, I think this creates a certain complacency or confusion within North American Christians—that somehow suffering persecution is a good thing and we can walk away from it feeling satisfied. Religious persecution is not good.

It's evil. And we must do what we can as members of the Body of Christ to help them and not show indifference. That kind of ultimate witness for the faith is going on right now in Nigeria, in Iraq, in Pakistan and Egypt, for example. In Vietnam, Father Lee, a Catholic priest, is imprisoned for calling for greater religious freedom, and he has suffered two strokes recently and is being denied medicine. Last week I received a visit from a wonderfully articulate and committed Baptist preacher from northern Nigeria, Rev. John Hayab, whose life is under constant threat because he is a Christian leader living under extreme Islamic rule. Mobs have killed hundreds of Christians in his area in recent months.

*That's a good point. When I was in seminary it seemed some wanted to glorify their suffering and hold them up as such a superior example to North American Christians.*

It's a confusing concept because you should honor their sacrifice, you want to draw inspiration from it, and there are spiritual gifts from it. At the same time, we are bound by our faith to visit the imprisoned and comfort the afflicted and to reject evil and that's certainly at work in causing such suffering.

*In early June, President Obama made a much heralded speech to the Muslim world in Cairo. Were you satisfied with the speech? What, if anything, would you like to have heard that you didn't hear?*



Three young Chinese Red Guards from the Cultural Revolution

I thought it was good he mentioned human rights, and he did make mention, though barely, of Egypt's Christian Copts. Until then, there was concern that he wouldn't even do that because human rights and religious and other freedoms have not been foreign policy priorities for the Obama administration. But, he did it in a very weak and half-hearted way. He didn't give any specifics and drew false moral equivalencies between the United States and the Muslim Middle East. For example, he criticized U.S. restrictions on some Muslim charities without explaining that Muslims can give to charity, they just can't give to certain ones suspected of funding terrorists. He should have called for Egypt's government to allow Copts to restore and build their churches, and to give Copts basic justice when they suffer attacks from Muslim mobs, as they do with increasing frequency. He should have criticized the rampant anti-Semitism in the state media, the arrests of dissidents Kareem Ameer and other Muslim bloggers, for "insulting" Islam, the repression against the unorthodox, liberal Koranists, and the persecution of the Baha'is who are barred from even acknowledging their faith in Egypt.

The other pressing issue right now in the Muslim world—and it's beginning to threaten the West—is the blasphemy issue, that is the ability to speak freely, even critically, about Islam and human rights, women's rights, individual freedoms, democracy, and other issues, including by Muslims themselves. We have defended journalists in Afghanistan imprisoned and facing death for blasphemy for criticizing the blasphemy law there, itself. We have found that the lives of these Muslim freedom champions can be spared when there's an outcry by the international community. At the present time, the head of one of the Netherlands' most popular political parties, member of Parliament Geert Wilders, is on trial for religious hate speech because he made a film that is harshly critical of the Koran, and called for its ban. This can only be seen as a blasphemy trial. It

is the most recent in a growing list of such trials in Western Europe. The West should not return to the dark ages of blasphemy prosecutions. As we see in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and other countries that have blasphemy bans, the definition of blasphemy ex-



**"The other pressing issue right now in the Muslim world-and it's beginning to threaten the West-is the blasphemy issue..."**

pands over time, hinging as it does on feelings and sensibilities of authorities, to encompass an ever widening list of subjects that cannot be discussed. Such bans empower extremists, encourage mob violence, and undercut political and economic development.

The movement to ban blasphemy against Islam is strong at the United Nations. Egypt and Pakistan—both recipients of enormous U.S. aid and both deeply troubled societies—are the leaders of this push, working through the fifty-seven member Organization of Islamic Conference. They aim to create a new human right for Islam to be protected from "defamation," negative stereotyping and insult, in other words, a universal criminalization of Islamic blasphemy laws. If their proposals become international

law, they will actually supplant individual religious freedom and individual freedom of expression as internationally recognized human rights. The danger has increased since the Obama administration supported a resolution jointly with Egypt this past October at the U.N. Human Rights Council that urges all countries to enforce religious hate-speech laws. The United States, of course, doesn't have religious hate-speech laws. We have strong constitutional protections on free speech. But what this joint U.S.-Egypt resolution does is urge states with weak protections for speech to make them even weaker by imposing bans on what can be said about Islam.

*What can Americans do in a concrete way to help religious communities around the world that are suffering from repressive regimes?*

The greatest thing the United States can do is use its foreign policy to defend freedoms of religion and expression and explain how they are linked. The United States has tremendous influence in the world when it chooses to use it. And so, what Americans should do is exercise their rights as citizens to influence foreign policy. The United States should speak up for repressed religious minorities in the Muslim world, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Americans need to become better informed about the situations in these other countries, and they should inform others by organizing speaking engagements or book study groups in their churches and social circles. They should write to their members of Congress about these issues. And they should support groups and individuals abroad that are working to expand religious freedom in their countries.

I would like to add that Iraq is a situation of deep concern for religious minorities, particularly those without militias to defend themselves, and it is one place where the United States through its enormous military and civilian assistance programs does have direct influence. ♦

## Francis Schaeffer [1912-1984]

*We cannot deal with people like human beings, we cannot deal with them on the high level of true humanity, unless we really know their origin—who they are. God tells man who he is. God tells us that He created man in His image. So man is something wonderful.*

Francis Schaeffer is one of the most influential Christians to have lived in the twentieth century. His life closely paralleled the rise and fall of godless communism in Europe. Schaeffer spent many of those years fighting to instill a depleted western Protestantism and an increasingly materialistic America with a sense of God's presence and His voice in human affairs.

Schaeffer began his career as a simple minister of the gospel, a shepherd of a flock. From the beginning, he had a special affinity for young people. Programs he and his wife Edith put together for children proved to be strikingly successful. After pastoring in America for a few years, he and Edith went to Europe as missionaries. They would find their destiny at a Swiss chalet they called L'Abri (the shelter). There, they entertained college students tramping about Europe. Schaeffer relished engaging them in debate about the things they were learning in universities. From this small beginning emerged taped lectures, books (*Escape from Reason*, *The God Who Is There*, and many others), and then films (*Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, *How Should We Then Live?*) that would shape the minds of evangelical Christians for decades.

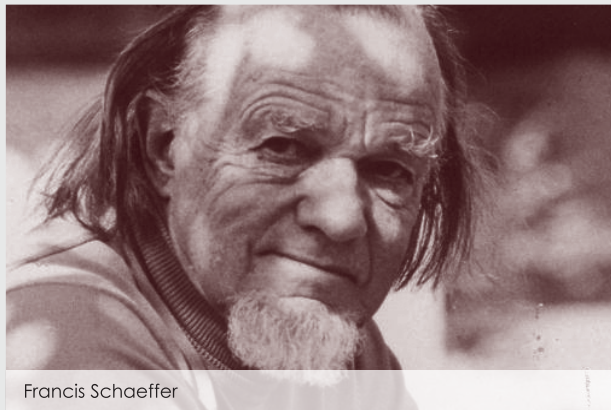
Three key themes dominated Schaeffer's relentless assault upon social decline and spiritual impoverishment. First,

he insisted that Biblical occurrences, like the resurrection of Christ, were real events in space and time. In this sense, he was an apologist for the Christian faith and saw these Biblical truths as the only legitimate foundation for our ethics. Second, he pulled Christian pietists out of a purely devotional faith by demonstrating the massive impact the faith has had on the development of civilization. For Schaeffer, the Christian faith was not some exercise in

supernatural therapy for people bewildered by the adversities of life. Instead, he drew out the connections between Christianity, social events, art, history, music, government, and the many other endeavors of human beings in the world. His faith led Christians out of their tiny reading room and into an enormous library of human experience and learning. Third,

and finally, Schaeffer made a powerful stand against the shallow materialism increasingly manifest in western society. He criticized the addiction of many Americans to their own "personal peace and affluence" while being insulated against the travails of the poor. And he crusaded fiercely against the devaluation of human life, particularly in the realm of bioethics. In this regard, he helped forge a bond between Catholics and Protestants as he urged them to engage in co-belligerency against a culture in love with death.

Though it is sometimes fashionable to criticize Schaeffer for a misreading of one thinker or the other in his voluminous work, the simple fact is that this minister of the gospel sallied forth into battle during a time when the world sorely needed men like him. And it still does. Thank God for sending them.



Francis Schaeffer





## Haiti & Solidarity

When I first heard the news from Haiti and watched the horrible stories on television, I had the same impulse I imagine millions around the world experienced: I found myself thinking of catching the next

plane to Port-au-Prince to help in whatever way I could.

What was the basis of this impulse? It is our moral intuition, sometimes called the principle of solidarity. We feel pain when others feel pain, and joy when they experience joy; we slow down on the freeway when we pass an accident not merely for some macabre or prurient interest, but because we recognize that “there but for the grace of God go I.”

And yet I had to ask myself the practical question: What would I actually do when I got off the plane in Haiti? I do not know how to set broken bones. I can’t fix mudslides. I cannot operate on limbs and eyes. Only after all these things were done would I be able to fit into the division of labor to authentically serve people.

I am deeply grateful for those who can do these things, and I am inspired that they are there. In fact, aid workers have been emphatic that the last thing Haiti needs right now is a massive influx of people bringing only their good intentions. Such a run on the country right now would increase the need for food, shelter, transportation, and more.

The impulse to help, to do anything — largely and understandably based on our emotions — is exactly what confuses our thinking about charity and economics. It is the confusion between sentiment and practicality, between emotion and reason, between piety and technique.

On the other hand, it would be a cold and spiritually dead person who sat back without any sense of emotion over this Haitian calamity. And yet, we know that what has compounded the suffering in Haiti is not only the earthquake as such but the poverty that hindered the necessary preparation and at all levels of society.

More generally, the fundamental problem in Haiti is not bad

weather or natural disasters. It is a problem of economics. Haiti has suffered from various forms of dictatorship for many decades, which has eviscerated from Haitian culture a general sense of entrepreneurship and enterprise. This is not to say that Haitians aren’t entrepreneurial. One need only observe Haitian immigrants selling goods on the streets of New York to be convinced of their entrepreneurial spirit. Rather, what has made Haiti as a culture resistant to entrepreneurship has been the inability of Haitians themselves to gain control their own lives by ridding themselves of government policies that have made the country dependent on foreign aid and powerful dictators.

We like to imagine that we could send our favorite things — such as cars, computers, and the best medical equipment — to help. But when there is no electricity and few sources for fuel, and when the roads can’t be used for heavy transportation, all our gizmos and products and conveniences become useless.

Nor is it the case that piles of paper money are going to be a magic cure-all. When there is nothing to buy, and when replacement parts are not available, and the retail- and wholesale-trading sectors cannot support an advanced economy, money alone cannot do much good.

Haiti needs practical help and generous charity right now — implemented intelligently, and with a keen eye for existing conditions. We need to support aid agencies that provide water and medicine. In the long run, we have to look at what Haiti needs to prevent such disasters and minimize their impact. What the country needs is economic development and a culture that can support such development.

We are a very long way from that, and this catastrophe has set Haiti back even further. However, this is an opportunity to build a society that is prosperous, industrious, virtuous, and free. What Haiti needs are the institutions that provide protection and cushioning in cases of emergency. Most of all, it needs to develop economically.

*This is an edited version that first appeared in National Review Online.*

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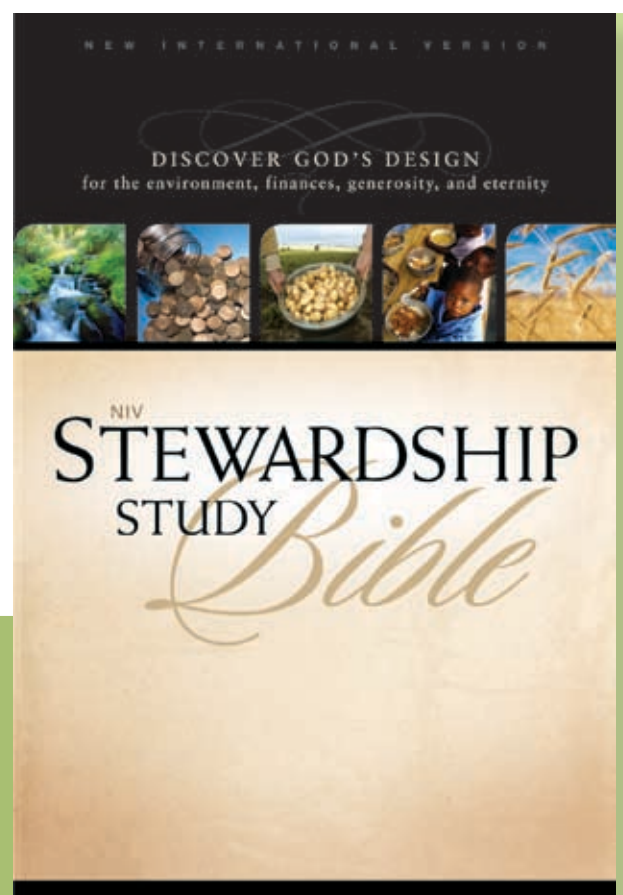
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