

## HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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**We help orphans and elderly Christians (many in their 80s, even 90s) who had been imprisoned for their faith in present or former communist countries**



Late Reverend Richard Wurmland with wife, Sabina

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### Announcement:

A free copy of the paperback book, "**Reaching Towards the Heights,**"

A Book of Daily Meditations on the Word of God by Richard Wurmland, may be requested using the order form on the internet, at the <https://helpforrefugees.com> site.

(See third column!)

"All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." (Matthew 19:11)

Late Reverend Richard Wurmland spent 14 years in Romanian communist prisons. Mrs. Wurmland was imprisoned for nearly three years, also for her Christian faith, in some of the same communist prisons.

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmland

## SERVE GOD ACCORDING TO YOUR CALLING

These words of the Lord Jesus have freed my conscience from many unfounded regrets and much painful remorse. They can free you, too. Therefore, I write about them.

It is obvious that not all commandments of the Bible are written for all believers. Nobody is obliged to fulfill all of them, neither must we feel bad when we cannot accomplish them. Some commandments are given only to the Jewish priests, others only to husbands or only to wives, others to children. The commandments for masters are not the same as those given to servants. Many verses concern exclusively the generation that conquered Canaan. Some apply only to farmers. God does not expect the same thing from men of various temperaments and different educational backgrounds. Everyone should serve God according to his calling and to his own gift, without torturing his conscience over the fact that he cannot do other things for which he is not qualified. In Matthew 19:9 the Lord forbids divorce. It is best to remain till the end with a marriage partner even if he changes your life into hell. Perpetual suffering can help develop a Christlike character; yet the Lord adds immediately that this extreme position of saintliness is not expected of everybody. For those to whom God does not give a special gift, such a commandment is impossible.

In Red China the police broke into a religious service asking for a certain Christian whom they wished to arrest. Trying to protect him, the believers said they had no person by that name in their congregation, but the one sought came forward. He could not bear a lie, even if prompted by love. He told the police, "I am the man you seek" and he paid for his integrity with his life. Such crystalline integrity should be admired, but with the knowledge that the right attitude toward sainthood is admiration, not imitation. It is a special gift from God.

A poor Asian Christian with several children read my book "Tortured For Christ". He immediately sold his modest home in order to help persecuted believers in communist countries. The saying of Jesus to the rich man, "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, " cannot be received by all men. It is for those who received a special grace from God. We should at least be inspired by their example and give the little which we can give joyously. The Bible writes: "God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

All Christians cannot bear "the care of all the church" (I Corinthians 11:28). This is a special calling. If you have only the vision of the Christian upbringing of your family, of one parish, of one denomination, or of the missionary work in one specific country, do your little duty and you will be rewarded. A world-wide vision is a gift apart. The sorrow engendered for the countries in which Christians are already tortured to death and for others which will have soon have their own "Prison-Country" could break hearts and drive men to madness. We do not expect all Christians to share our burden, but while doing your precious work in a narrower sphere, pray for us to whom God has given this charge. If you wish to free yourself of a great burden, apply to the problems of your life Jesus' principle that not all sayings of Scripture are for all, but only for those to whom it was given. Be happy about how much is given to you and be faithful in your own calling. God does not expect more of you. St. Augustine, a great church teacher, prayed, "God, give me what you ask and then ask what you like." God will never ask of you what he has not given first.

God knows he made us to be different. He does not expect from one Christians as much as from another. Your small gift will also be received gladly by God. There is no respite in the Christian battle. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15) suggests a missionary work without ever settling down in resting places. Not all are called to be missionaries, but all must support the missionaries with their love.



The Communist Jilava Prison.  
Entrance to the underground cells.



Prison cell with bunk-beds with no mattress, prisoners were obliged to sleep on. Stove for show only, never heated in cold winters.



Mug-shot of Late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand when held in the Jilava prison, in communist Romania.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father are this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (Apostle James Epistle 1:27)

**Heroes of the Faith and their Families, Helped with your Gifts**  
**Some pictures of elderly Christians Imprisoned under Communism for the Faith**  
**Read their full testimonies in our past newsletters at <http://helpforrefugees.com> (third column!)**



**Sister Lavkaitis Vatlava  
Osipovna**

was sentenced in the former Soviet Union three times for having conducted children Sunday schools and had to support cold and hunger during 5 days in prison trains carrying her 2,000 miles to the final prison destination by the Mongolian border.  
**Read her full testimony in our 4/2019 Newsletter.**

**Sister Firsova  
Valentina  
Constantinovna**

was sentenced to two years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union for having conducted children Sunday schools. She was able to hide a Gospel in her cell. **Read her testimony in our 4/2019 Newsletter.**

**Baptist Worker  
Kosteniuk Victor  
Iosifovici**

was sentenced to three years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union for participating in the printing and smuggling of Christian literature. All his possessions were confiscated by the communist Soviet state.  
**Read his testimony in our 5/2019 Newsletter.**

**Christian Composer  
Oleg Popov**

was arrested and sentenced in the Soviet Union to three years imprisonment for conducting a Christian children choir and for surreptitious transport of Christian hymnals. His wife, Tatiana was left with four children, the youngest only 3 months old. He died of pneumonia.  
**Read wife's full testimony in our 5/2019 Newsletter.**

**Heroes of the Faith!**  
**Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts**

**A Christian describes a miracle that happened during her imprisonment!**



Greetings Brother Michael Wurmbrand! Krivtsova Natalia Pavlovna from Mozdok, Russia, is writing to you. I apologize for not responding for a long time for what I received from you. My heartfelt gratitude to you for this. Through your ministry, God does not leave me in need. Glory to Him for this! Thank you very much!

You asked me I should write about my prison life. I will describe one vivid episode in which the Lord was glorified by His power.

(First, about my family.) I don't remember my father, because he left my mother a few days before my birth when she became a

Christian. It is the grace of God that she put her trust in the Almighty.

In 1964, as head of the household, my mother was convicted with other sisters for holding in her house the first children Christian camp in the Caucasus. Most of these children came from families of imprisoned Baptist parents. After she returned home from this 4-years imprisonment, I (was 14 years old) repented and dedicated myself to the Lord. I have always actively participated in the life of the church among children, adolescent and youth. My mother did everything she could with her own hands in the underground (Krestianin) publishing house of spiritual literature.

In 1983 God deigned me and other sisters to be arrested and sentenced to 4 years in prison under Art. 227 h. 2 of the Criminal Code of the Soviet Union. (This article condemned all adults who tried to introduce children into religious activities, like Sunday schools, church choirs and so on. N. Ed.) In those difficult conditions for a young girl who never knew worldly vulgarities, God taught me a lot. Glory and praise to him for helping to preserve the purity of heart and body and remain faithful to God.

Right after the trial, I was in prison in Vladikavkaz, in a common cell, where there were 14 women. Everyone was waiting for being transported to prisons in other different towns. Visitation by relatives was not allowed. I was very worried and prayed intensely that God, contrary to all the rules, would send me the opportunity before leaving this prison, to see again my mother, who fell ill with an incurable disease, and was in the hospital in the same city. All the women in the cell knew about this, because they had heard my prayers more than once. Most of them condemned me and mocked not only me, but also Almighty God.

During one day, one by one the guards called on the women "take your belongings and get out of the cell." This meant – we had to go into prison-railroad-carriages. By the end of the day, I was also called. Once again, I prayed loudly, entrusting myself, my mother and all the inmates to the will of God. When getting out, I again heard the mocking voices of these women inmates that God was late, or did not hear my request.

The convoy brought me to the place where the transports were gathered, women and men in different groups. As an "especially dangerous" person (due to having been convicted for my faith) I was placed separately, in what was called in the prison-slang "the glass". This was a very small concrete cell. In it one could only stand, leaning against some ledge. The guards pushed me in along with my things. It was dark, filthy and smelly, and slippery insects crawled from the ceiling and the walls. A guard was constantly looking through the peephole and he let cigarette smoke through the keyhole. At the same time, he swore obscenely. It was hard to breathe. I prayed, asked God to strengthen me. So, I was kept standing up on my feet for 6 hours. The sounds I heard made me understand how inmates were taken from different groups to the prison train. What about me? Have they forgotten me? There was not enough room in the carriages? They came for me late in the evening, and without explanation, they took me back to my cell. Everyone was stunned! And I, tired and hungry, having prayed, lay down on a hard bunk. God Himself controlled everything and gave me a deep sleep. In the morning I remembered a hymn and slowly sang: "You know the way, You also know the time, Your plan has long been ready for me. And I praise Thee Lord heartily, for mercy, care and love." Soon I was summoned, but without my belongings. The women who were watching me mockingly said: "Here, you are the one who always expect miracles!"

The escort-guard led me for a long time through a semi-dark hallway, until I saw a group of people in a lighted place in the distance. From the white, lush bows, I recognized my sister with her husband and 2 children, and MOM. Yes!! It was them! Yes, it was a miracle!

Coming closer, the attendant opened the door, and rudely said: 15 minutes for you, and the door was locked behind all of us. Our encounter flew by instantly! Thank God! He has all his time! He is the Master over everyone! This is how it happened: my sister Tamara, came to visit my mother and having prayed, decided to take her out of the hospital and get a date with me before myself

being dispatched to another town. The permit was received only in the morning. That is why they forgot to take me out from the narrow cell to the prison-wagon. God is in control of everything! He is Almighty!

I came back to my cell with my hands full of groceries I received from the family. It became a truthful proof of a miracle for the women who were waiting for me in the cell. No more mockery. The inmates met me in silence. Before distributing, I thanked God for the miracle performed. Many of the women cried and said what a good, living God you have! In the evening, the same day, I was again summoned with my things to the prison train. Blessed be the Lord! Glory to Him for everything!

One year before my release, my mother died. This was another difficult test for me. But I was comforted by the fact that both she and I have from God one dwelling place in heaven. And it was not for nothing that the Lord consoled me with this particular Scripture.

In 1986, after the end of my sentence, having arrived at the parental home, I again encountered difficulties. After the death of my mother, the house was transferred to the state fund, and myself, as a former political prisoner, had no right to it. There was nowhere for me to live! But thanks be to God! He is a quick helper in trouble! After 1.5 years of court procedures, I was allowed to buy back my own mother's house. Only God is worthy of glory, honor and worship! He does not allow anything beyond one's strength.

Subsequently, I married Alexander Krivtsov, a believing brother. He died 8 years later. I gave birth to a son, Timothy. Now he is already an adult, married, and lives in another city. I live alone in my house (in the photo it's me with my house in the background).

I thank my Savior that: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Ps. 16: 6

## **Heroes of the Faith!**

### **Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts**

#### **A Brief Description of the Conviction and Imprisonment for Religious Beliefs of Viktor Miroshkin**



The family Miroshkin with their 10 children

On November 9, 1973, I was drafted into the ranks of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union. I arrived at the military unit of Taboshar settlement, Leninabad region, Tajik Soviet Republic. (Taboshar, presently in Tajikistan, was a secret military location during the existence of the Soviet Union, due to the exploitation of a uranium mine in this region. N. Ed.)

I testified that I am a believer in God and on the basis of my convictions of faith in the Word of God, I will not take the oath.

The squad leader, Sergeant Kamaev, reported this to the unit's high command. I had many conversations to dissuade me in my decision.

On December 2, 1973, the oath was taken in the unit. I remained firm in my understanding of the Word of God.

On December 3, 1973, I was taken into custody by the foreman of the unit. An investigation into my act began, led by investigator Boris Varshavsky. During the investigation, I had to be in a very cold cell for several days, where there was a strong hypothermia of the body, due to which there was a very strong pain in the teeth and jaws.

In January 1974, a trial was held. The prosecutor requested a 5-year term. The court passed a verdict of 3 years 6 months. Was conveyed to the colony P / I 3 / 5p. Rohaty (at the time a locality in the Soviet Union and now in present Uzbekistan. N. Ed.).

During my imprisonment, I had to go through several jails where I had to experience bugs, lice, dirt. Such were my companions during this period of time.

In February 1974, I arrived at the place of serving my sentence in the penitentiary complex in the village of Rohaty. I had to work for some time in very unfavorable conditions, although I was young, but this affected my health.

I served my entire imprisonment sentence. After liberation I ended up extremely sick in the area of the liver, stomach and intestines. I experienced severe pain, the consequences of which are being felt to the present day.

*Our mission has sent help to as many of these faithful Christians we could locate and contact personally!*

409	Власенко	Валентин	Мефодьевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казахстан
411	Курикин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казахстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бьчков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СКВОРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЕВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варавин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Ляшенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Ткаченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отмахов	Вениамин	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Фадеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богодимов	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миняков	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

Above, a **sample only** of a long list, our mission was able to compile beside other lists, of over 480 elderly Baptist Christians most of them still alive, who suffered for the Christian faith in the former Soviet Union. The prison sentences amounted from 2 years, to as many as 18 years of communist prison. If considered together, their years of prison-sentences shown in our **abbreviated** table, would most likely add up to over 2,000 years of prison. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> column together, show year of birth and the most recent country they live in (like Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, etc.) We try obtain exact addresses, so we may be able to send encouraging help to those still alive. We were able to send repeated help to about 120 such elderly Russian-speaking Christians and over 110 of other languages. Many of their testimonies you can read in the monthly newsletter. Testimonies available also on the internet. **Look up third column at: website: <https://helpforrefugees.com>**

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