

## 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 Wurmband with wife, Sabina

**March 2020**

“The root of the matter lies in me!”

(Job 19:28)

Late Reverend Richard Wurmband suffered 14 years in Romanian communist prisons. Mrs. Wurmband 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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmband

### **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN YOU!**

Above is one of the most profound verses in Scripture. We usually attribute the joys and sorrows that alternate in our lives to external circumstances, which is wrong. The Bible teaches us that God and His kingdom are in me, that the cause of sin is evil in my heart, that Christ died for me. The root of my life is therefore in me. I can live with God reigning in my heart or legions of devils tormenting me daily with worry and anxiety. The choice is mine.

Everyone lives with the reality he has chosen, in a spiritual home he has built himself. An imprisoned Christian named Tamkevicius smuggled a message from a Siberian jail: "I am convinced that one's life can be useful to others everywhere, at all times. If the Lord sent me to a prison camp, it means that my life can be more useful to the church here than in freedom. Here I can sacrifice for God and put my ideals above all other values. I do not regret being a prisoner. The external freedom so much appreciated by people is not the highest boon. The value of inner freedom is greater, it cannot be taken away from anyone. One can lose it only by not living according to his own conscience... I don't know how long and under what conditions God will allow me to continue to work, but I desire that it be a life of sanctification and sacrifice. It seems to me that the world has lost much of its clout today and only through suffering for Christ, we gain. The more, the better. Time works for us. The church of Christ does not lose because I am deported to Siberia. It loses only when pastors are overfed, live a rich life, and care only about

themselves. And if my being here arouses idealism in at least one person, I can die in peace. I wish the rich gifts of the Holy Spirit to every one of you.” The roots of Tamkevicius are in himself. His hidden man of the heart provides him with God's peace, however adverse the external circumstances.

Your roots are also in yourself. You may suffer at the hands of a spouse, parent, child, colleague, enemy, sickness, or a series of past events. Whatever your situation, the root of the matter is in yourself. If God reigns as a king within you, then you will have full peace and be untouched by adversity. Let us make the right choice, following above example

In 1983, the Soviet Baptist Peter Siemens was sentenced to seven years of prison for his faith. While he was in jail, the Secret Police gave him a choice: to become an informer who would denounce his fellow-inmates if they continued to share their beliefs, in which case he would get an early release, or to have his punishment increased. Siemens is dead to the world. He prefers a clear conscience in prison rather than freedom as a traitor. His sentence was increased from seven to ten years. In different ways we are all confronted with such choices. Believers have the roots in themselves, where Godhead reigns. They resist allurements, threats, and promises of the world. Nothing outside themselves will dictate to them what to do, and they find delight in suffering for what is right. Another Christian, Valentina Savelieva\*, held in a Siberian prison in Irkutsk wrote after having been released from a five years prison-sentence for her Christian, activity, wrote: “We were often knee-deep in the mud. Our coats and boots were never dry. There was no washroom. The water was not drinkable because of the salt. Many had to sleep on the dirt floor. There were not enough blankets to keep warm. When we awakened in the morning. we had to be careful not to rise too quickly, for our hair was frozen to the dirt floor. It was impossible to remain free from lice. Many died of tuberculosis. Food was scarce and hardly edible. The temperature was seldom above 41 F. The prison was full of demon-possessed criminals, who cursed day and night. They wanted to destroy my faith.” A Jew, Michael Heifetz, was in a communist Soviet jail, where he met the Christian Bails Galauskas, a prisoner for Christ since 40 years. Heifetz, an unbeliever, writes about our brother, "I loved him. I was proud of him, and even more, was proud to belong in a cell imprisoned with such men. He had a quietness with the unshaken dignity of faith. He has truth and God on his side." ("Grani," #141)

\*Our mission was able during past Christmas, send help to sister Valentina Savelieva. See her own testimony published in the February 2018 newsletter (in the third column, at <https://helpforrefugees.com>)



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)

**Some pictures of Elderly Christians Imprisoned for the Faith, Helped Now with your Gifts!  
Read their testimonies in our past newsletters at <http://helpforrefugees.com> (third column!)**



**Rodoslavov Eugen Constantin**

Was sentenced at the age of 19 for his Christian activity among the church youth, to five years of communist prison and 5 years of banishment in the far-end of Siberia, to the city of Khabarovsk. Read his testimony in the 2/2017 Newsletter.



**Sister Lyuba Lozinskaya**

Was sentenced to 1½ years of prison for conducting a church choir outside sanctioned hours. The authorities made her faith-witnessing an example of mockery in front of other detainees. Read her testimony in the 2/2017 Newsletter.



**Mikhail Alexandrovich Pshenitsyn**

Was sentenced for his Christian activity to 5 years of prison. He fasted 40 days when imprisoned to reobtain his Bible. Read testimony in the 2/2017 Newsletter.



**BORINSKII Filip Vasile**

Was imprisoned 3 years and remained in hiding for 5 years, while active in the printing of Bibles and the magazine Khrestianin, containing pictures and details on many imprisoned Christians. Read testimony in the 3/2017 Newsletter.

### **Christians Helped with Your Gifts**

**Imprisoned Five Years in Magadan (coldest Siberian Prison Camp!)**



**Nikitkov Alexander Valentinovich**  
when first imprisoned at age 25

He wrote to us: “I, Nikitkov Alexander Valentinovich was born in 1944 in the Mozhary village, Sarayevsky district, Ryazan Region, my parents, Valentin Andronovich and Vasilisa Ivanovna being God-fearing Christians.

My grandfather, named for short Dron, fought in the First World War, was captured and was taken as a prisoner to Germany. Being a good carpenter specialist, he ended up working during several years for a German farmer who happened to be a good Christian.

When war ended, and all prisoners of war began to leave for their homeland, for his good service and conscientious attitude when working, the German farmer gave grandfather a Bible in Russian, in pocket format, saying the following words: “Dron! If I give you money, drinks, good clothing, a home even, the Soviet communists will take everything away ... I better give you the Bible. If you read it carefully, you will find salvation both for your soul and for all your household. God will reveal himself to you, and will tell you

how to live right. ”

Grandfather Dron arrived back to his native village. Many an evening, surrounded by village peasants, sitting on stumps and smoking, one of the literate youths read from this Bible to everyone present. After some time, the Spirit of God began to act, through the Words of the Book, on everyone who came to listen. "Guys," someone said, "we are not doing right, we are reading this Holy Book and we smoke." They quit smoking. Then, while reading, as a sign of respect for God, they began to take off their hats. Thus the Spirit of God performed His invisible work in the hearts of unenlightened and illiterate peasants, bringing them to the realization of their sinfulness and true repentance.

After a while, a church was formed in the village of Mozhary, which the villagers began to call the "shtunda" (from the German word, "Stunde," meaning "Hour." N. Ed.) With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the membership multiplied to 100 people. My grandfather ended up being one of the leaders. So faith in the living God was inherited by my father - Valentin Andronovich.

God gave his family six wonderful children, among whom myself, little Alexander. All childhood and adolescence of children passed in the village in an atmosphere of love and peace. Children attended church, learned to pray, learned to sing, and how they served the Lord.

When they grew up, then for further training everyone had to leave for the city. And then, in order to get a higher education go to different cities of the Soviet Union. So gradually all the good things sown in childhood began to be forgotten, and from the little God-fearing boy, under the influence of a strong ideological education in the communist spirit, myself became a "patriot" of the Soviet Union.

Up to the age of 24 my life was no different from the life of my friends and peers, who tried to take everything from life, burning it, in sinful pleasures. But the prayers of the parents were not in vain. Once, going to visit a friend, I saw a large, open Bible on the table. A curious sight caught my attention on one of the yellowed pages. Something dear, dear, distant from childhood began to come to life in my mind, and I then said to myself, "I definitely need to figure this out." After a while, all the pondering ended with myself kneeling before the Almighty God, and in a prayer of repentance recognizing myself as a great sinner, devoting my whole future life to the service of the Lord.

Adjacent to the local church, I became an active worker and herald of the truth of God. In 1968, the Lord gave me a wife - an assistant, a humble and God-fearing Christian, with whom we began serve the Lord, fulfilling His commands to preach the Good News to people. It was a difficult time for the church of God in the Soviet Union. Repeated prison-terms were added to prisoners who were serving sentences already in the Soviet prisons. Thus, prisoners were not being released.

At that time, all leading brothers of our Ryazan church were languishing in prisons. The church needed new workers. Minister N.P. Khrapov in his final instruction to all the ordained said: "Brothers, the time has come to hang visibly your epaulets, the time is very severe, perhaps in six months you all will be in prison. Prophetic word as N.P. Khrapov's warning became extremely accurate. Six months later, myself with other brothers, were all convicted in show trials and sent

to Siberia, to a forced settlement in the city of Minusinsk, Krasnoyarsk Region (temperatures mostly under 13F. N. Ed.) It was not yet a prison, but a place of forced labor with strict regime, where no movements were allowed without prior approval from authorities. I decided to look for my own Christian brethren and sisters. After asking the locals about the believers, I began visiting a small group of Christians who were deeply loving the Lord.

We prepared a group of youth for baptism, and at night in the waters of the Yenisei river they were baptized. It is a secret who informed, how this became known to the authorities and after that, myself, as a malicious criminal, was thrown into a strict regime camp, without the right to correspond and communicate with relatives.

It is impossible to silence the one who received salvation and forgiveness from the hands of the Savior. Not having been free for a year even, I was prosecuted again under the political article of the Soviet Code No. 142. I was then sentenced to 5 years of strict regime and sent to serve time in the severe Magadan prison camp. That same camp where brother N.P. Khrapov and then another underground Baptist leader, G.V. Kostyuchenko were held. What the children of God had to experience in these camps, from their persecutors and all the evil ones, only the Lord knows. I do not really like to talk about all difficulties and wanderings that had to endure over the years, believing that only God will evaluate everyone correctly, He will weigh each one of us on His scales and there will be a reward from the Almighty.

Until now, I am alive, by the grace of God and in fair health in spite of the fact that my health was severely undermined, by suffering 7 heart-attacks, (several in prison), but the Lord gives us the necessary strength and health to perform the service every day until we hear from the mouth of the Lord: Enough, all that is entrusted to you, done, Come up!”

### **Christians Helped with Your Gifts Christian Choir Conductor Placed in Punishing Isolator Cell**



Four church members sentenced to many years of communist prison.  
(See explanation in attached text.)

I greet you with the peace of the Lord! My name is Karpuk Liubovi and my husband's name is Victor Karpuk. We lived together in the city of Nikolaev, Ukraine. My husband was a choir conductor and participated therefore in regular church services. Our elders in the church were arrested first, and then my husband was arrested as well. Police house searches were often carried out in our home.

Choir rehearsals also took place in our home. For such religious activities, my husband ended up being imprisoned multiple times for short arrests of only 15 days.

Later he was sentenced to 2 years of prison. Because Victor did not want to testify against the church, he was very punished for it, they even put him in what they were calling, “the isolator-cell.” They kept him locked up for 2 weeks when he was not allowed to go out for a walk. Inside he could barely breathe and he thought he would die.

He was also poisoned with certain substances. Because of this, after being released, he often became seriously ill. His kidneys and liver were poisoned.

He became ill with Leptospirosis and had to stay in a hospital for a long time. I was taking care of him there. But by the mercy of the Lord he remained alive and is still alive. His relatives helped us to buy a house where we could live.

In 1991 he was no longer working, because he could no longer learn to walk or eat but now, thank God, he can also go and eat. Praise Him for all! At the time my husband was arrested we had 3 children, and I was pregnant with the 4th. The four in the picture are all former prisoners: my husband, then sister Maria Didneak, Mihail Deshko, and Alexandru Lipzak.

Thanks for listening to us and may God bless you!”

### Christians Helped with Your Gifts

Across, a **sample only** of a long list, our mission was able to compile beside other lists, of over 480 elderly Baptist Christians 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 5th 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:** <https://helpforrefugees.com>

409	Власенко	Валентин	Мифодеевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казakhstan
411	Нуркин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казakhstan
413	Романенко	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бычков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕСАНДР	АЛЕСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СВЯТОЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЕВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варовин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Лещенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Тяченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казakhstan
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Опачков	Венедикт	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Сарченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Федрева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	Анна	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богодимов	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миников	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

### Sample of a List of 480 former Imprisoned Christians In the former Soviet Union

**Help for Refugees, Inc. PO Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA. Email: [hfr@helpforrefugees.com](mailto:hfr@helpforrefugees.com), website: <https://helpforrefugees.com> (EIN: 95-3064521) is listed in Publication 78, Cumulative List of Nonprofit Organizations described in Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Service. Gifts to Help for Refugees are US tax-deductible.**