

## HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

Michael Wurmbbrand, President

Tel. (310) 544-0814, Fax: (310) 377-0511.

PO Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA.

Email: [hfr@helpforrefugees.com](mailto:hfr@helpforrefugees.com); Website: <http://helpforrefugees.com>



**June 2019**

“And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.” (Luke 5:29)

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

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand

### Prepare a Feast for Jesus

In reading the Bible, you marvel at how much it tells about secular things, like a farmer's, a housewife's, a carpenter's work, about marrying and having children, about fighting wars, about hunger and banquets. Much of the insight offered has a profane character. An appeal to self-interest and the promise of personal success are often given as motivation for ethical conduct. Though God's Word teaches us about an eternal destiny, it enjoins us not to despise natural and human values. Believers are encouraged to "have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:7), and one of the expressions of fellowship is sharing meals. Levi loved Jesus so much so that he not only spoke his praise and committed his soul to Him. He also became an active man in the community of the faithful. Levi did something practical: he went "shopping," to the baker's, the grocer's store.

Since there were no cars at that time, he carried all his purchases under the hot Palestinian sun to his home. Preparing a meal with modern day equipment takes many precious hours. He had no cooking gadgets, no gas or electricity. Then Levi went from one friend to another to invite them. Inviting Jesus meant inviting all his 12 disciples. The gospel ads that there was a great company of publicans (official tax-collectors) and of other (some religious and some nonreligious) guests. Therefore, it must have been a dinner with scores of invitees. Together with his family he spread

a table. The guests enjoyed the banquet and left happily. His household remained behind, perhaps spending the whole night washing dishes and cleaning the house.

You have accepted Jesus. You have worshiped Him, and you might be active for Him. You may also tell others about your love for the Savior - but did you ever make a great feast for Him? There is almost no American church without potluck dinners, refreshments or luncheons for the members. Like Levi, we have to make a banquet for Christ living in us, in our fellow believers, their families, in the church.

The Bible starts with the word "Beginning." "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) In the language of the Book of Genesis, Hebrew, the word translated as "beginning" reads "*reshith*." This word has also the meaning of "excellent." Thus, the verse could be translated also, "God created the heaven and the earth in an admirable, distinguished, exceptional manner!"

It is easy to find the opportunity to throw a party for our Lord Jesus. Jesus told us where to find Him, to visit and invite Him and his disciples like Levi. When, at the Last Judgment, Christians will ask: "Lord, when saw we thee an'hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" Jesus answers: "**Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**" (Matthew 25: 37-40)

We try help those who suffer and have suffered for the Christian faith. Discover your own way to be of help yet, see the martyr church have a great and excellent feast. Therefore, we would like the children of martyrs to have chocolate, a toy besides a piece of bread! Their persecutions, what they have to endure to remain faithful are hardly imaginable for Christians living in the Free World. At one time we organized in England a well-attended-dinner. The many guests who wanted hear me speak, each one paid nearly \$20 for the meal. We took no offering. In front of each guest was placed a plate with a large message on a card saying, "this is the fare of your brethren imprisoned for their faith in Communist jails. Upon request, we will refund your dinner cost!" Under the message was a piece of mildewed bread! The dinner was changed into a great feast of outpouring of love for the martyrs.



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



Late minister  
 Gheorghe Coceanga  
 5 years in Romanian jails.  
 Read testimony in  
 1/2016 Newsletter;



Late Rev. Rebreanu Petre,  
 15 years in communist prisons.  
 We continued helping wife.  
 Read 2/2016 Newsletter;



Erdes Varvara Josepha  
 Suffered 8 years imprisonment  
 in communist Romania  
 and 2 years of exile.  
 Read 2/2016 Newsletter;



Late Evangelical preacher  
 Tudor was sentenced  
 to 12 years of communist  
 prison in Romania. We  
 helped wife. See 2/2016 NL.

### Christians Helped with your Gifts



**Late Uniate Minister Ioan Mereu  
 suffered 10 years of Communist Prison  
 and 5 More Years of Forced Banishment  
 (house-arrest) in the deserted region of  
 Baragan, Romania.**



**In picture left, in front of the banishment,  
 hay-roofed shack together with wife  
 Romulia.**

The sentencing document above, provided by minister Mereu's daughter we helped, Elvira-Matilda now 77, reads: 10 years of hard labor for "complicity in the crime of conspiring against the (communist) social order." His daughter was only 7 when father was arrested for religious activities in 1949, not even two years after the instauration of the communist dictatorship in Romania. Minister Mereu was held in the dreaded prison of Aiud and obliged do hard labor at the Danube Canal prison-camp where more than 100,000 prisoners were held and thousands exterminated. Reverend Mereu continued his Christian activities even after 15 years, when coming out of prison and the forced banishment. He died when 90.

## Christians Helped with Your Gifts

### Risked Freedom by Transporting 5,000 Christian Children Books and Tracts.



“Peace, dear brothers and sisters! Reutova Tatiana Mihailovna, Reutov's wife writes! Mikhail Ivanovich, my husband was born on January 2, 1957. Together we have 9 children.

In 1985 in the Soviet Union, continued to reign a (communist) regime that banned the distribution of religious literature, and if such literature was distributed, it was described as having fake content that defames the Soviet state and the social system. In spite of this, the Baptist Evangelical Churches continued to print and spread Christian literature and bibles. Fines and even arrest and sentencing to imprisonment had to be foreseen for such Christian activities. Many brothers who risked their freedom have responded to this call, including (my husband) Reutov Mikhail Ivanovich. He has repeatedly supported this work of spreading literature by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

On August 15, 1985, he once again loaded a car with 5,190 copies of the various Christian literature imprints, and headed for a point to be distributed to brothers, sisters, and unbelievers even. Of course, this place was a secret place, and it was not allowed for outsiders to know of it. But God allowed in His plan that Brother Reutov M.I. not be able to

deliver this literature at its intended destination.

He was arrested on August 17, 1985 in the Brest region. Sentenced under articles 304.,316, 317 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Belarus Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR), part of the Soviet Union at the time, a “People’s Court” found Mikhail Ivanovich Reutov guilty of the distribution of Christian works on the basis of Article 186-1 of the Criminal Code of the BSSR, and sentenced him to execute a punishment in the form of a corrective labor year at his workplace, with 20% of his salary being garnished by the state. (This rather mild sentence was given because he had many minor children. NT) He was also convicted of resisting arrest by police officers in performing their duties to protect public order and under Part 1 of Art. 187-1 of the Criminal Code of the BSSR he got fined 200 rubles by the state.

In the inspection report of August 17, 1985, in the car with license UAZ 469 driven by Reutov Mihail Ivanovich, there were six types of religious literature: Bulletin of Adev (?), number 1-2 of 1985 in the amount of 1120 copies, Bulletin of Truth number 2-3 in 1984, 1140 copies, the 4th Bulletin of Truth No. 4, 1984, in a quantity of 1,000 pieces, the book "The Man God Calls" in 500 pieces and the "Salvation of God" - in the amount of 760 pieces , brochures "Sacred stories for Children" two volumes in quantity of 270 pieces, a total of 5190 copies. But God glorified in all things He was with us, and His mighty hand supported us. On August 17, 1985, he was stopped and detained on the Hantsevichy-Minsk road in the village of Elavon, Hantsevichy district. He was sent to a transit jail before the trial. The brother continued to preach the gospel of Christ when he was in prison, and when it was particularly hard in his heart, in one of his cells a scratched writing on the wall "Peace to you" encouraged him!

The trial took place on November 28, 1985. For nearly half a year, his brother was imprisoned as well, in a prison in Baranovichy, Belarus.

God bless you fully! Name: Reutova Tatiana Mihailovna”

(Clock in picture reads: “Five Minutes to Midnight!” NT)

## Christians Helped with Your Gifts / Over 4 Years of Communist Prison for Teaching Sunday School



Sister Jukovskaia Evelina writes: **“I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy word.” (John 17: 6)**

“God's peace be with you! I greet you dear brethren: Vasile and Michael (Wurmbrand) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

I have received your letters and thank you for waiting patiently for an answer. I had to poke through my memory, because it took a lot of time and the events of the past do not seem so sad anymore, especially because everything in our lives is under God's control. First of all, I am very grateful to my Lord for calling me to follow Him. My new life began at age of 28. I loved Jesus Christ and the Church of God, I wanted and tried to be useful in it. I have met many wonderful people among the Christians living in the spirit. Soon, my person became public, because an article was published in a communist regional newspaper denouncing my choices in life. Yet, in God's hands everything works for my good. Such a testimony could not have been made by myself, there were attempts to discourage me, to intimidate me, but my Protector in heavens is working

on earth. He gave me time to strengthen me in faith, and it took 13 years after my conversion for me, to be arrested.

On the morning of May 13, 1983, a search was made in my apartment, then also at work. All spiritual literature, all notes, letters, postcards, etc. were seized. Based on all these aspects, the investigation resulted in a sentence under the following articles of the Soviet Penal Code:

- Article 227, Part 1 - violation of human rights of citizens, in the form of religious rituals that affect health.
- Art.190 / (approximate description.) - the dissemination of defamations of the Soviet state system;
- Article 142, Part 2 - Infringement of the law on the separation of the state church and school; (it meant: teaching religion to children).

A court of Appeals confirmed my sentence of 5 years prison.

I executed my sentence in three regions, I experienced three periods of confinement, I was imprisoned in eleven prisons. From the prison in Stavropol, where I stayed for more than 7 months, I was sent to a colony in Ust-Labinsk, Krasnodar Soviet Union. There I stayed for about five months and, just before a personal meeting I had the right by law to have with my mother, I was sent to the next region. This was the most difficult period for me. It lasted 38 days travelling in a prison wagon from Ust-Labinsk to Kozlovka in Chuvashia. (A distance of about 1,000 miles, travelling on it being made on purpose difficult, so prisoners would not survive it. NT) There were hardly any food. During the entire travel they gave us crumbs of stale bread and salty sprat-fish. In my case, the final destination was not specified and I passed three times by the required station. I got into the Kozlovka colony in extremely poor health. I could hardly stand on my feet. But here, the Lord prepared for me a soulmate, a Christian sister from Kiev, Nadejda Lebedeva, who was executing her last, third year of imprisonment. Three months before she was released, she was given a little better food and she shared such with me.

In every new prison, I became acquainted with the local prosecutor, the local administration. I had to obey new interdictions requiring I should not pray, talk to no one about God and not use the word God if I was allowed to write short letters to my family. I did not respect the bans: I prayed the same as when I was living at home, I fasted every Friday, I wrote letters often, I did not attend political and cinema gathering, I did not participate in prison theater-shows, I did not work in the administration, I did my job honestly without a flaw. Attempts were made to influence the prisoners against me, but the Lord did not allow this evil, and (prisoners) themselves told me of these attempts.

Twice, the head of the detachment made a petition to set me free but because of my not admitting of being guilty and the fact that I did not renounce my Christian faith, I was denied being released. In February 1987 I was summoned to a conversation with the Soviet Chuvash Autonomic Republic prosecutor (while having been punished for having tried to send a letter bypassing the prison censorship.) I was offered to write a petition for early release, they gave me a sheet of paper and a pen. I could not understand what was behind this proposal, and, invoking non-admitting my guilt, besides, not accepting my being penalized, I refused to write such a petition. I did not care how I would be released, so I was ready to be released at the end of my sentence.

Soon I was sent back to another area of Vologda. Again, the same process: prisons, wagons, convoys, but this time it was much easier. I was released from the Vologda colony under an amnesty on July 23, 1987, much earlier than the set time. The total period I spent in prison was 4 years, 2 months and 10 days. The greatest pain in this period was also experienced by my mother. She had to make the effort of travelling to visit me in prison, write messages to authorities, put together some packages, write letters to me and friends. Praise the Lord, for He has given her power in all these things, and she comforted me with a visit. My parents are now with the Lord and I live in their old house, where I moved in, when released, to take care of them. May the Lord bless you in your good work and abundant blessings in this God-blessed ministry. Congratulations on the Easter holiday. Christ is resurrected! Truly Risen! Your sister Jukovskaia Evelina”

**HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.** has extended for the past 40 years, financial support to Christian refugees from communist countries, orphans and Christians who had been imprisoned for their faith in present and former communist countries. Also helped are the Agape Orphanage in Pascani, Romania and the Richard Wurmbbrand College, an Evangelical and accredited high school in Iasi, Romania, where many children of disadvantaged families are able to study. See <http://helpforrefugees.com>.

Anyone may use a “DONATE” button on site.

## Christians Helped with Your Gifts

### 4½ Years of Prison for Preaching the Gospel!



“Nikolay Emelyanovich Shepel was born December 18, 1938 in the village of Bilozirya, the Cherkassy District, today’s Ukraine (formerly in the Soviet Union.) He studied at a rural school, then at a technical school in the town of Gorodise. He graduated in an agronomist profession. He went to the Agricultural Institute, but was forced to

leave school because of his physical health. Through these circumstances he came to Christ, and thus entrusted his life to the Lord's hands. He was baptized in 1950, dedicating his life to God. He received his first communist prison term in December 1963 when convicted for the (unauthorized) preaching of the Gospel. Verdict: two years imprisonment, three years in a labor camp, five years of banishment, and confiscation of property. After a year and a half though, he was rehabilitated. He married in 1967, with a sister in the Lord, Ekaterina, in the village of Khutor, near Cherkassy, where the young family settled. He was ordained as a presbyter of the local Baptist church at the age of 34, being the father of three children. He ended up convicted though, for his Christian faith a second time in 1983. Verdict: a three years imprisonment sentence. This prison-term he served to its end, being released on January 26, 1987. The eighth child in the family was born in 1988. As a gift from the Lord, six sons and two daughters were given to us. During the persecution, he was a member of the Association of Evangelical Christian Churches, visiting churches in many cities and encouraging the people of God. In 1996 he was elected Presbyter of the Unregistered Church of the Association of Evangelical Christian Churches in Cherkassy. Since then, he has always been taking care of the newly formed churches in this region. In late 1990s, he coordinated the services of unregistered churches in Ukraine for some time. To be in the right place at the right time, at age 66, he learned to drive. This work, like any other, required self-denial. In summer of 2009 he suffered a mini-stroke during the divine service at a church in Chigirin, Ukraine. And that day, after regaining conscience, he returned to Cherkassy by car. An extended myocardial infarction occurred during a visit to another church on January 30, 2011. He spent seventy-seven days under intense medical care. He left for the Lord on April 16, 2011. Both in the years of communist atheism in Ukraine as well as during the newly found religious freedom, Nikolai Emelyanovich Shepel worked relentlessly for the Lord as a preacher and evangelist, always proclaiming the good news of salvation. He founded many churches. He successfully carried out the difficult task of a spiritual counselor. He was a soldier of Christ until the last moment of his life.

Ekaterina Shepel, wife”

409	Власенко	Валентин	Медведевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казакстан
411	Кудрин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казакстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тистен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Барков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СВЮРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЕВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варовин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Лещенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Ташенко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казакстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Омлаков	Венедикт	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Сарченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Фадеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богорядков	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миников	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

### Christians Helped with your Gifts!

Above, a sample of a list, our mission was able to compile, of over 480 elderly Baptist Christians who suffered for their 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 fourth column shows year of birth and the 5<sup>th</sup>, present 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 help to about 70 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 at:

<http://helpforrefugees.com>.  
**Help for Refugees, Inc. PO Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA. Email: [hfr@helpforrefugees.com](mailto:hfr@helpforrefugees.com), website: <http://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 tax-deductible.**