

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



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“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.”
(2 Peter 3:2)

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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmband

Christians Need Weep, Cry, Scream, or Howl!

We are often inclined to philosophize about prophecy or interpret it to suit ourselves, whereas we should be concerned to fulfill the commandments of God as transmitted through His prophets.

Consider the following: "Howl ye" (Isaiah 13:6), "lament and howl" (Jeremiah 4:8), "cry and howl" (Ezekiel 21:12), "howl, ye ministers" (Joel 1:13), "Roll yourself in the dust" (Micah 1:10). Did you ever weep, cry, scream, or howl about the calamities that have befallen the people of God? If not, what is the point in debating the inerrancy of these Scripture-prophecies or how they could be translated?

I have been held 30 feet beneath the ground, in a refrigerated solitary cell and have howled in it for the cold. Even now, I lament: Why Christians of the Free World, don't you howl? You will reply, "What good would that do? Would it help my tortured brother?" Surely not, but we are not meant to express compassion for these suffering Christians in some way. We are to remember that all Christians are "of one heart and one soul." (Acts 2:32) We are to identify with the sufferer. Imagine that you are the person with a black hood over your head. You tremble in the cold of the prison cell. You howl, not in order to do good to someone else, but because you feel the cold that afflicts his body. "Remember those in bonds, as bound with them." (Hebrews 13:3)

The Christian PETRO SITCHKO and his son VASSILY, when arrested by the communists, refused to say even one word during the interrogation. They signed no protocol. They had to be dragged to court in handcuffs. When the marshal said, "Stand before the court " the father asked: "Son, should we remain seated?" "Yes, father," he replied. Soldiers yanked then up, to the point where their feet scarcely touched the floor. "Are you suspended, son?" "I am, father." (SAMIZDAT)

Both refused to say even one word in their defense. Christians do not recognize the courts of the God-haters. Father and son were each sentenced to three years of prison. The father had a heart attack after the trial. The son was sent to another camp, not knowing if his father is still alive. Like all who have suffered severe trauma in their youth, he might carry wounds in his soul that will never heal.

Heroes of the Faith

Howl, lament, weep, not to show compassion for these tortured Christians or for the mother who remained behind in tears, but because you, YOURSELF are behind iron bars, your heart is sick, and you know nothing about your loved ones. If you are a Christian and feel others' suffering as your own, then you are a hero of the faith.

The word "hero" comes from a love story of antiquity. Leander loved a girl, Hero, who was kept imprisoned in a tower in the Straits of Bosphorus. A tyrant desired her for himself. Leander tried to rescue his beloved by swimming to her and carrying her back to shore. They could not make it, and drowned while embracing. The story of their love never died. It inspired other lovers to give their lives for the beloved. These are all heroes.

Christians are called to acts of heroism. They choose rather to be crucified with Jesus than follow the commandments of a wicked world.

The altar which represents God (Exodus 29:37) is greater than the sacrifices offered upon it, whether of such persecuted Christians or even yourself. The altar itself is disdained and dishonored. We howl about the offense against God and about Christ being tormented anew in his Body, the Church.

Just as we live by faith in practical matters, let us also accept by faith, in matters of ultimate truth and eternal life, what the authorities in this matter - the prophets and Jesus - have to say. The Bible writes: "Remember them that are in bonds, **as bound with them**; and them which suffer adversity, **as being yourselves also in the body**. (Hebrews 13:3)



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 past newsletters at <http://helpforrefugees.com> (third column!)



Ivan Petru BELEV
A Baptist minister sentenced to **2½ years of prison** for raising a tent church in former Soviet Union. Read his testimony in the 6/2016 Newsletter.



Christian Vasile Tasca was sentenced to **three years of prison** in the former Soviet Union for participating in the smuggling of tens of thousands of Bibles. Read his testimony in the 7-8/2016 Newsletters!



Reverend Miclea Teodor was sentenced to **5 years of prison** in former communist Romania. He was held in prison for a time with late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand. Read his testimony in the 8/2016 Newsletter.



Reverend Liviu Chifor was sentenced to **7 years of prison** in former communist Romania. **He wrote: God’s plan was for some Christians to survive prison and spring up.** Read his testimony in the 8/2016 Newsletter.



Minister Gheorghe Marian (deceased*) and wife Elena

sermons. He dared preach:

“Christians need fight the forces of darkness which try rob them of their faith. Christians need be strong and not renounce their faith.”

He was tortured in the cruelest communist prisons of Aiud and Periprava. Prisoners were required build by hand a major dam, carrying heavy boulders or even in winter wade to the waist in freezing water to cut reeds and rush.

*** (For many Christians now deceased, we continue where possible, helping a surviving spouse or a child.)**



Banished in a no-man’s land called “Latesti”

Christians Helped with Your Gifts

Three Years of Communist Jail for Organizing Home Churches



“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

1 Corinthians 13: 8

“Peace to you, dear brethren in Christ!

Indeed, we have never met and that is why we are not acquainted. But if we are all in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, then His blood cleanses us and unites us in one body.

Mr. Nicolae Petrovici Rusnak asked me to briefly tell you my story.

I, Berezovskii Vasile Tarasovici, was born in 1936 on October 20th. Due to some circumstances, I moved to the north of the (former) Soviet Union, to the town of

Vatutino. That's where we were going to church.

In 1967, on February 26, I was ordained as an elder in the local church, but after a while our family had to move again to the mountains of Ukraine, part of the Soviet Union at that time, to the city of Chervonograd.

In 1968 I began to be a church leader. The circumstances were severe. While the divine services were running we were being spied upon, the authorities were coming and were driving us away from our own home, gatherings were often interrupted by the KGB.

We were fined, arrested, and judged. At that time, our brother Lukianciuk G.I. had been imprisoned already since about three years. When my time came, on November 24, 1981, all the literature in which the name of God was mentioned was confiscated, and they took me along with the books. Christians were not allowed to attend my trial. The Soviet court sentenced me to a 3-year general regime prison-term.

I was released on November 24, 1984.

In 1986, on January 6, while I was at work, the KGB showed up again at my home. Then they came to my place of work and took me (I was working in a mine.) They tried to bring me back to my home and other KGB officers had waited for me at my house before starting the house-search. But the Lord had other plans. Somehow the KGB did not return me home because I succeeded to get lost. From that day I remained in hiding and was able to continue serving in the church for 2½ years. According to the Soviet communist law, a totally illegal activity.

I returned home when religious freedom returned to our country on June 28, 1988. And so, by the grace of my Lord, I have freedom in Him and also am free from punishment. As much as it is in my powers received at this moment from the Lord, I serve my brethren in Christ.

I greet you in the name of our Lord,

Berezovskii Vasile Tarasovici”

**Christians Helped with Your Gifts
Three Years Communist Imprisonment
and Confiscation of Homes
by the Communist State,
for Underground Church Activity.**



“I salute you with the peace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ!

My name is Kapetii Vasile and I am 85 years old. Two years ago, I suffered an intense heart attack. Thank God I'm still alive, but my health has worsened.

Due to a cataract disease I can hardly see. I read with much difficulty. I am again at home after my hospitalization.

I am a member of the local church in Piryatinsky. After the fall of the communist government, our church was registered in 1992, but during the late Soviet Union regime it was persecuted for violating the communist laws with its religious activities.

I was born on January 21, 1934, in a Christian family. And in 1958 I made a covenant with the Lord.

After I got married, I was ordained in 1964 as a deacon, and in 1971 I was ordained as the presbyter of the church.

The persecution of the church was ceaseless. Divine services were held in different places. The KGB (Soviet Secret Police, NT) was spying where we gathered. They showed up to drive us out of our own homes.

Believers were heavily fined. Several times they came to undertake house-searches, looking to confiscate religious literature. The KGB officers threatened me with arrest and conviction.

Indeed, I was arrested on July 10 in 1972 and on August 10 of the same year, was convicted by a court in our village Piryatinsky on Article 138 of the USSR Civil Code.

(Above cited communist law was misinterpreted by the communist court as forbidding the use of a house as a place of worship and providing for state-confiscation of homes used for church gatherings. NT)

I spent the term in the town of Kremenchuk, at the time in the Soviet Union, now in the Ukraine.

I had the opportunity to receive visits from my wife and our children. At that time, we already had five children.

There were also other brethren all imprisoned with me, like brother Iastribov from Kharkov, brother Bacikov from Jeltie Vody, in the Dnipropetrovsk region.

After being released, they threatened to arrest me again, yet I continued to serve in a presbyter ministry in the church.

The Lord Jesus has not promised us that we will have no difficulties, but promised He will always be with us! I wish you, brethren, that you always serve our Lord, for this is the greatest happiness and fulfillment! God bless you fully!

P.S. my daughter, Levcenko Liudmila Vasilyevna wrote these lines for me.”

For over 40 years, HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC. has extended financial support to Christian refugees from communist countries, orphans and elderly 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 Wurmbrand 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*
12 Years of Hard Labor in a Communist Prison,
Buried at 40 in an Unidentified Mass-Grave**



Romanian minister Victor Fanea* pastored a church in the communist Romania village Sancrai. He was arrested on August 14, 1956 by the Romanian communist secret police and summarily sentenced to 12 years of prison. He was imprisoned in some of the cruelest prison camps of the Romanian communist regime: Aiud, Salcia, Periprava. He died in the Periprava camp aged 40 leaving behind wife and 5 children.* One of the few survivors of these camps described how without any justification, many detainees were hit with crowbars, digging spades, shovels, whips, some of them dying on the spot from such traumas, others remaining major invalids for the rest of their lives. Medical treatment of sick prisoners was forbidden and they were forced to labor despite being gravely sick (even in the harsh winter), even being naked, requiring them to wade in the water to the waist to cut reeds and rush. Some were punished to freeze, others were kept naked in summer, day and night to be bitten by mosquitoes. The dead were thrown naked into shallow graves as due to the freeze the other prisoners could not dig deep. In the spring, dogs were uncovering the graves and eating up these corpses. Some prisoners were being buried while in a coma when still alive!

* We continue where possible, helping a surviving spouse or a child.

Christians Helped with Your Gifts

409	Власенко	Валентин	Медведевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казакстан
411	Кудрин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левин	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казакстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Титстен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1958	Украина
416	Барков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВИННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СНВОРЦОВА	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	Станиславо	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Опмаков	Веннамин	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Сарченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Фадеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богородков	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миньков	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

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 5th, 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 100 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> (3rd column.)

Help for Refugees, Inc. PO Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA. Email: 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.