

## 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>

**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 Wurmbbrand with wife, Sabina

**September 2019**

“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.” (Exodus 16:14)

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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand

### Manna from Heaven!

God rained manna, the food of angels, from heaven only once in history and in only one place: when His chosen people followed Him into the Sinai desert. It was not a pleasure-trip through the desert in air-conditioned buses with all modern conveniences. Children of Israel journeyed on foot through blazing heat in the sun-parched, treeless Sinai. The people, three million strong, were provided with water from one rock. They did not get much. Eventually, they were told that they would die in the wilderness without ever seeing the Promised Land. They could have returned to Egypt, which would have been happy to welcome them back as slaves. But they overcame evil tendencies and, under the leadership of Moses, they choose to endure the hardship of wilderness but under God's hand.

It was on these sacrificing people that God rained manna. If anyone had come to the Sinai to share the pains of Israel, they would have feasted with them on this food, the delight of angels.

The persecuted church enjoys a shower of blessings, “manna” for the soul. Pastors feed them with choice heavenly thoughts cultivated in dark prison cells and nurtured in pain and suffering. This manna does not fall on well-watered countries. We have to seek it in “desert lands” where people suffer the terrible heat of persecution. We have to feel their pain as if it were ours and share their chains as if we ourselves were bound with them. (Hebrews 13:3) Then we too will eat angels'

food. I do not wish to belittle the spiritual food served in the churches of the free world. It is often very good. But masterpieces of Christian thought arise only out of the furnace of affliction, out of great suffering lovingly endured.

VLADIMIR PORESH, a devout Russian, was sentenced for his faith to three years of prison and five of deportation. He had written these words: "The Holy Spirit discovers, in the course of history, new mysteries, unknown to former generations. Till the time of Christ, it was right to have the Jewish religion, but since Christ's birth to remain a righteous Jew has meant to be a backslider. A new light has been given. So now, in the 20th century, as a result of wars, revolutions and GULAG prison camps, the whole world, but especially Russia, has received a spiritual experience of such depth that it is no longer enough to remain good Christians in the old sense of these words. Thinking about this experience, we perceive a new dimension." PORESH was before court for the crime of having organized a Christian seminary. Though the police had threatened, "We will break your arms and legs," he remained unafraid. The communist judge said to Poresh, "You were well off economically. What more do you need?" He replied, "The whole world for Christ! From you I ask no pity. The prosecutor asked too light a sentence for me. I wish a heavier one, but this would be too great an honor for me. There are others who have done much more for the church than I. The warriors of Christ will conquer the whole world." When PORESH was sentenced, the believers present in the courtroom shouted, "We love you! You are our pride!" and "CHRIST IS RISEN!" It was Easter.

Every one of us has some suffering to bear. Instead of murmuring about it, let us emulate those who bear even heavier crosses. Let us go out into the "arid desert" where the persecuted Christians feed upon manna. We may give them of our means, but they have much more to share with us: they can give us heavenly food. Sheep do not forsake green pastures. People do not abandon good restaurants, but they stop practicing a religion when they no longer receive "manna." The most urgent task for Free World churches is to learn from their persecuted brethren, who live on angels' food.

In his book "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch," SOLZHENITSYN describes ALIOSHA, a typical Russian Christian whom he met in prison. Aliosha makes this observation: "Of all transitory things in the world, the Lord taught us to pray only for one: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' " He was interrupted, "Does this mean the small portion we receive at noon?" Aliosha replied, "We should not pray to receive food-parcels or to get one more portion of soup...We should pray for the needs of the soul ..."

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!)



**Minister RACOVITAN T.** was sentenced to 6 years of communist prison where he was subjected to extreme tortures to deny his faith. Read his testimony in the 9/2016 Newsletter.



**Minister ANDERCAU Vasile.** Suffered 10 years of communist prison for his faith. Was held in same cell with late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand. Read his testimony in the 9/2016 Newsletter.



**Minister DARABAN Teodor** was sentenced to 25 years of communist prison. He suffered in the Gherla prison with late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand. Read his testimony in the 9/2016 Newsletter.



Baptist Christian **Gheorghe-Aron MLADIN** suffered 4 years in 6 different prisons of communist Romania. He tried organize public prayer meetings on behalf of late Rev. Richard Wurmbrand. Read his testimony in the 9/2016 Newsletter.



### **Christians Helped with your Gifts\* 10 Years of Communist Prison for Helping the Underground Church**

Late Uniate minister Martian Tiberiu-Lazar\* was a student in chemistry. He helped surreptitiously many underground-church believers. The communist regime caught with his secret activity, he was arrested, tried and sentenced on February 22, 1952 to 10 years of hard-labor prison. He passed through some of the most atrocious prison regimes of communist Romania: Gherla, Aiud, Baia-Spie where he had to mine radioactive uranium. He lost all his teeth and became terminally ill with a lung disease. He was also imprisoned in a slave-labor camp for the building of the Danube-Black Sea Canal (pastor Wurmbrand's wife Sabina suffered imprisonment in same labor-camp.) When freed after 10 years of prison and two additional years of forced supervised residence in the settlement of Latesti, Baragan (a deserted no-man's land) while Romania was still under a communist government, he had the temerity to describe publicly in some detail the tortures prisoners were subjected to. He 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 graves. 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! He left behind wife and three children.

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

## Christians Helped with Your Gifts

### Nikolai Kruchinin Sentenced to Six Years of Communist Jail for Organizing Home Churches



“Peace to you, dear brother Vasile (Tasca) and brother Mihai (Wurmbrand!) I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I received your letter in the mail and thank you for remembering me and paying attention (to my situation.)

I'm writing in short about myself. I was really imprisoned (by the Soviet Union regime) because I was serving the Lord. I was imprisoned twice, three years each time.

Both times I was sentenced under the Article 142 of the Soviet Criminal Code. This article was especially used by the KGB (the Soviet secret police) against Christians.

**Article 142 read:** “The breaking of the laws on the separation of Church and State, and Schools and Church – is punishable

by **correctional labor** for up to one year, or by a fine of up to fifty rubles... repeat offenders are to be imprisoned for up to three years.”

Since I was “a repeat offender” the years during which I was imprisoned were:

1969 - 1972 - general regime imprisonment

1980 - 1983 - strict regime imprisonment

I suffered my first term of imprisonment in the Kurgan region, and then I was moved to the Ryazan region, where I spent the rest of the term. The second term I suffered imprisonment in Tomsk.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, I was rehabilitated in 1992.

I was acquainted with **Aida Skripnikova** in her youth (when only 27, Aida had been imprisoned for her faith four times already by the Soviets! See 9/2018 Newsletter at <http://helpforrefugees.com> in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column. N. Ed.) Brother **Horev Mihail Ivanovich** often came to our region, and we knew each other closely (imprisoned for over 12 years for his faith by the KGB. Also spent 7 years in hiding. See 11/2016 Newsletter at <http://helpforrefugees.com> in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column. N. Ed.).

Though a native of Moldova, brother **Palei Vasile Andreevich** lived for a long time in our city Dedovsk. He was likewise sentenced to a long prison term, in connection with the distribution of Christian literature. He is deceased, now with the Lord.

**Brother Richard Wurmbrand** visited our church (about 30 years ago, in 1992?) With him was his wife, **Sabina** and other visitors. They left us a very good impression.

At this time, I am 76 years old. I live with my wife **Lyudmila Vasilievna**, and some of our sons. While writing this letter my wife informed me that a second great-grandson was born to us today. May the name of the Lord be glorified for all!

May the Good God be with you and with us!

With love and respect, brother **Nikolai Kruchinin**.

Country: Russia

Region: Moscow

City: Dedovsk”

**Christians Helped with Your Gifts  
Two Years Communist Imprisonment  
for Underground Church Activity.**



“The Lord's Peace, dear brothers in Christ!

My name is Mashnitskaya Leonida Antonovna. I was born on April 14, 1929.

Church meetings were held often in our home where Christians came and we conducted the Sunday divine service. It caught the attention of the (communist) authorities, the KGB (secret police) who came and arrested me.

On October 1986, I was sentenced to be imprisoned for two years in a corrective labor camp. This was a "reduced" term because an aggravated illness. I was sentenced on the ground that I was the owner of the house where the meetings of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches were held.

After those 2 years I was released and I continue serve the Lord with great joy. May God bless you and help you be faithful to death!

Name: Leonida Mashnitskaya, Country: Ukraine, Region: Vinnitsa”



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God's Peace, dear brethren in Christ!

My name is Mashnitsky Petru Nikolayevich. And I am the son of Leonida and Nikolai Mashnitsky.

I was born on April 30, 1957 into a family of Baptist evangelical Christians. As a child I attended the church, and thus knowing the Word of God, I repented and decided to receive baptism when 17, which was very “illegal” at that time. Under the Soviet godless regime, it was strictly forbidden to baptize minors. I became a member of the local church in 1974.

I also had a ministry in the church, and for this I was sentenced to prison twice, just like my father.

I was arrested first on April 29, 1982. I was sentenced to 1.5 years imprisonment on condition of participating in a corrective general regime labor camp. I completed this entire sentence.

For a second time, I was arrested on August 29, 1986 (over 4 years after the first sentencing.) (As a "repeat offender") I was sentenced to 2.5 years of imprisonment, provided I participated now in the strict

regime corrective labor camp. I was released on November 17, 1988. Thus, two months earlier than the sentencing term.

Thank God that He has given me the grace to suffer for Him and so I can be a testimony to my brethren in faith.

May God bless you fully and strengthen you in all!

Name: Petru Nikolayevich Mashnitsky, Country: Ukraine, Region: Vinnitsa”

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\*  
Left Home Wife and Six Children when  
Imprisoned for Faith!**



His daughter\* wrote:

"Minister Mihai Sabau was active with great dedication in the underground church (during the communist regime in Romania.) He held services in cellars, hay lofts, hidden dwellings. When arrested in 1951 he left behind six children and his wife Luiza pregnant with a 7th child. We, the children endured much hunger. The believers in our village would show up surreptitiously, in the dead-of-the-night bringing a little bit of food.

Father did slave-labor in a well-known prison camp building a canal between the Danube and the Black Sea. (Late Pastor Wurmbrand's wife, Sabina was also imprisoned in same labor camp.) My father passed through the (dreaded) prisons of Periprava, Jilava, Oradea, Onesti (a town built completely under communism by political prisoners.) (Working in inhuman conditions) minister Sabau, my father, had to amputate a leg (in prison.)

Due to so much suffering in our family, one of my older brothers ended-up both mentally and physically handicapped. He receives only 600 Ron illness-aid from the government (under US\$150) and his older brother needs maintain him. We thank you, from the bottom of our heart for the charitable work you undertake. God may reward you for all you do."

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

**Christians Helped with Your Gifts**

409	Власенко	Валентин	Мефодьевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казахстан
411	Курани	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казахстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тистен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бичков	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	Таланко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отказов	Венедикт	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Саринко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Федерева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богудимов	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миняков	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 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 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 at:

<http://helpforrefugees.com> (3<sup>rd</sup> column.)

**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 US tax-deductible.**