

## HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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"They began to pray (Jesus) to depart out of their coasts."  
(Mark 5:17)

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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand

### **Jesus, used to being driven out!**

The larger population of an ancient city named Gadara, situated not far from the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel, was non-Jewish, mostly Greek. They had good reason to try get rid of the Son of God, appearing in their city. He had chased demons out of a man by ordering them to enter into one of their 2,000 strong herds of swine. Those ran down a slope straight into the sea and drowned. The Gadarenes thus lost their whole property, the bread for themselves and their children. His miracles were destroying their livelihood, their business. How would you have reacted if the entrance of Jesus into your life had meant the loss of your house, your car, your bank account and your job? You might perhaps continue to use holy phrases without meaning them. The Gadarenes uttered a prayer which was at least sincere, "Depart from us, Jesus" Instead of being worshiped as the Son of God, stunning one and all with His miracles, Jesus is used being driven out.

When HOLMAN HUNT painted his renowned picture, "The Light of the World," in which the Lord is shown begging entrance, knocking at the door of a house, His feet are turned not toward the door, but pointing to the roadway. He has more of a chance being refused rather than accepted, because to accept Him costs much. Apostle Paul writes, "For Christ Jesus my Lord, I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Philippians 3:8) Do we also look upon our nice furniture, a new car, the better job we just got, the money we possess, as upon repulsive dung? When somebody encounters dung, he wishes to get away from it - the sooner the better. Is this our attitude toward our earthly possessions? Who wishes to win Christ, must lose them. Friendship with Jesus is

costly. Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone. It is always accompanied by great sacrifices for Christ's sake.

The first revelation of God was given in Hebrew, a language in which the words "to have" do not exist. You simply cannot say in Hebrew, "I have so much money, I have a house or a car." The only possessor of all possessions is God, and you can possess Him. Regarding all other things, you can be only their steward. This is why Christians tell the heavenly Father to give them their daily bread. Seemingly, they have it right there in the cupboard or the money to buy it and need not ask for it. But neither the cupboard, nor the bread, or the money, is theirs. It is God's bread and He can command you not to eat today, but to fast. You can eat the bread from the cupboard only with His permission. Preachers who promise prosperity, good health and continual joy if you come to Jesus, lead men astray. On the contrary, you might lose your "herd of swine." You are meant to lose all. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple," says the Lord. (Luke 14:33) Because of this, the subconscious prayer of many - not what they speak with their lips - is, "Depart from us, Jesus." Let us examine our hearts as to our true prayer!

### **Jubilant dance for Jesus**

When I was still living behind the Iron Curtain, I had met a Russian captain who had just entered Romania as part of the Soviet army. He had never seen a Bible. He had never attended religious services. He had no religious education. I am fluent in Russian and so I read to him the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of Jesus. After hearing them, he danced around the room in rapturous joy proclaiming, "What a wonderful beauty! How could I live without knowing this Christ?" It was the first time that I saw someone jubilating in Christ. Then I made a mistake. I read to him the passion and crucifixion of Christ, without having prepared him for this. He had not expected it. When he heard how Christ was beaten, how He was crucified and that in the end He died, he fell in an armchair and began to weep bitterly. He had believed in a Savior and now his Savior was dead! I looked at him and was ashamed that I had called myself a Christian and a pastor, a teacher of others. I had never shared the sufferings of Christ as this Russian officer now shared them. Looking at him was for me like seeing again the mother of Jesus at the foot of the cross or faithfully weeping when Jesus was a corpse in the tomb.

Then I read to him the story of the resurrection. When he heard this wonderful news that the Savior arose from the tomb, he slapped his knees and swore. Again, he rejoiced. He shouted for joy: "He is alive! He is alive!" Again, he danced around the room, overwhelmed with happiness! I said to him, "Let us pray!" He fell on his knees together with me. He did not know our holy phrases. His words of prayer were "O God, what a fine chap you are! If I were You and You were me, I would never have forgiven You your sins. But You are really a very nice chap! I love You with all my heart." I think that all the angels in heaven stopped what they were doing, to listen to this sublime prayer from this Russian officer. This man received Christ wholeheartedly. He knew that he would lose immediately his position as an officer, that prison and perhaps death in a Soviet jail would almost surely follow. He gladly paid the price. He was ready to lose everything.



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.

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

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

#### **Minister Emil Riti Suffered 14 Years in Romanian Communist Prisons (now deceased)**



He was ordained right when Communism took over Romania but was arrested only two years later and sentenced in a trial in 1952, to lifelong imprisonment. The Communists considering him peculiarly dangerous, the prosecutor requested therefore a stiff sentence. He courageously told the prosecutor in open session during the trial: "I accepted to become a minister because I am convinced my (Uniate) church was outlawed unjustly, and this is the very reason it needs young people to defend it. Had I not been a minister already, I would have done my best to become one." Though sentenced to lifelong imprisonment, he suffered only 14 years of Communist prison and for a while he shared the same cell with Rev. Richard Wurmbrand. When freed he worked as a male-nurse but continued his underground Christian work until the fall of communism in Romania.



*Pictures from Romanian communist jails where Tens of thousands of Christians were held, tortured and murdered.*

**Left: Recent cell picture in the prison of Gherla. In cells designed for at most 20 prisoners, 60-80 prisoners were held crowded like sardines.**

**Upper right: Solitary confinement cell. Floor flooded on purpose. Lower right: cell gate with a Judas-opening, peep-hole.**

*For the past 40 years, HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC. has extended 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 is the Richard Wurmbrand College, a 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. Due to tax laws inside Romania and Eastern Europe, some help needs be sent through local nonprofits in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova.*

**Christians Helped with Your Gifts!**  
**More than 2 years of Soviet Prison for Protesting Religious Repression**  
**to Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev (she is now 85)**



Sister Barin Catherine when arrested for her faith by communists in 1976. She is now 85 years old. Picture from the secretly published Krestianin bulletin.

In an open letter written in the month of July 1976, to the Soviet government leader, Baptist sister Barin had the audacity to complain of violations of the believers civil rights, gross violation of Soviet laws and international agreements.

She described how for instance on January 18, 1976 in the village of Bogorodskoye, Russia, the KGB broke into a house where only 8 Christians were gathered. The same repeatedly in another city named Elektrostal, where the KGB again and again broke into homes, arrested Christians, shoved and twisted the children's arms, and obliged summarily dressed children stay outside in the middle of a forest, at minus 10 degrees Fahrenheit. The adults were imprisoned and held for days without term.

She wrote to Brezhnev: "Thus, we and our children are ruthlessly deprived of the means of subsistence. In 1975 our church was fined 4,000 Rubles, Christian disabled pensioners, receiving only 60-70 Rubles a month, were fined altogether hundreds and hundreds of Rubles. (For instance) Stolbov GP - a pensioner, a fine of 250 Rubles (his pension was 100 rubles.) Even minor children are ending up being fined. ...

"How can all this be compared with assurances of complete freedom in the Soviet Union, guaranteed by the Constitution, the Declaration on Human Rights, the Final Helsinki Act? It can be said with certainty that the measures applied to the Christians are inhuman and directed to physical destruction of believers." This complaint was cosigned by 29 believers.

**The reason we reproduce above in such great detail, though it happened more than 40 years ago is that at that time, many church leaders in the Free World were being fooled by the Soviet propaganda of "Peaceful Coexistence" and**

**"Communism with a Humane Face."**

**Sister Barin wrote to us:** "Great peace and grace from the Lord! I, Barin Catherine Nicolai, got your letter and how glad I am, we (Christians who suffered) are not forgotten. God has allowed me during my Christian life to suffer for the faith. From my youth I surrendered myself in the Lord's hands. We were part of an unregistered church because I could never accept the interference of (communist) authorities in the life of the Church. Therefore, we (the believers) in the church were subjected to repressions and persecutions. Any religious education of children of the church was strictly forbidden by Soviet State-Law. Whoever was involved in such Christian education risked being placed in jail.

For this Christian activity, I was sentenced to 2½ years in prison. In 1976, in the Sunday school in our church, we had a group of children where I taught Bible lessons with the aid of a picture-book titled "Bible for Children" (This book was printed in thousands of copies and smuggled into the Soviet Union at the initiative of the Wurmbrand family. N.T.) Police informers attending our meetings squealed to authorities on my work in the church. These 2.5 years to which I was sentenced were spent in a prison in the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine (at the time part of the Soviet Union, NT.) After my release from prison, I continued to serve the Lord pursuing the same underground work in the church.

Now I am 85 years old and thank God very much because His Hand has led me on a straight path. I am waiting for encountering God and inheriting His Kingdom."





## Christians Helped with Your Gifts!

### She Grew Up in the Agape Orphanage A letter of Thankfulness from Elena

Elena was received in the Agape Orphanage, Pascani, Romania, upon her mother's death. Father had long before abandoned family and was living as a vagrant. Elena grew up at Agape until she reached 18, when she moved in with an older sister. Eventually she married a boy from Bucharest, whose family are committed Christians. Both spouses went seeking work in Germany and established there their home. God gave them a little girl they raise with much love and responsibility. Elena visited not long ago the Agape Orphanage and continues keeping in touch.

**Late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand and wife Sabina, founded the Agape Orphanage shortly after the fall of communism in Romania. It was started with 56 orphans.**

### Translation of Elena's Letter to Agape Orphanage Workers:

Foarte des ti povestesc fetitei mele cum esti familia  
Agape de care imi esti foarte drag. Mi povestesc cum parintii  
mi-au crescut cu atata caldura, rabdare si atata siguranta mi-au  
oferit. Ca in fiecare familie, Agape m-a invatat cum sa  
fiu oameni, sa fiu credinciosi si de acolo am invatat  
sa pot face fiecare seara bucurandu-ma de ea.

Am putut sa luam un loc de lucru de propria familie, o  
prietenă de 5 ani, Bianca, si sotul meu Cristian.  
Impreună, lucram in Germania de 6 ani, lucram si

Bia va incepe scola in numai o luna.

Si de si ne bucuram de ce ne ofera D-ze, D-ze (cum spune Bia)  
Eu, personal, multumesc fiecarei imparte pentru rabdarea  
si iubirea primita.

Vă iubesc si cu putina rabdare va voi revedea oameni  
frumosi !.

Dne, dne fie cu noi, cu fiecare !

Elena Stanica (Bortzun)

"I often tell my daughter, how much longing I have for the Agape "family." I describe how these (orphanage) "parents," raised us safely with much composure and patience.

Like in a (true) family, the Agape (workers) taught us how to be human, how to be faithful and appreciate and take delight in every second (of life.)

With God's help, I am enjoying (now) my own family, together with (my daughter) a "princes" named Bianca, five years old and with my husband Cristian. We lived in the last 6 years, in Germany. We both work and Bianca should start kindergarten next month.

We relish daily what our Lord (as Bianca calls God) allows us. I need thank each one of (those who work in the Agape Orphanage) for the patience and love I received.

I love you and beg your patience until we will have again a beautiful reunion. May God be with us all. Elena Stanica (Bortzun)"

**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.**

**Christians Helped with your Gifts!  
Five Years of Soviet Prison for Serving  
Holy Communion (he is now 80)**



Tevs Ivan Frantzevici and family, when arrested in June of 1974. He is now 80 years old. Pictures from the secretly published Krestianin bulletin. ("The Christian" a Russian Baptist underground publication.)

Brother Frantzevici wrote to us: "Dear brothers in Christ! Dear Christian Workers: We will reply to your letter. We are brother Tevs Ivan Frantzevici and sister Lidia Ghenrihovna. Your letter has moved our heart and we express our gratitude. Who are we? We both are 80 years old this year. We were born and we live in a tiny village, in the Omsk region of Russia. In February, both me and my wife, underwent a fourth operation. My wife can only move in a wheelchair. But we thank the Lord for He is the Doctor of Doctors, and we trust Him to heal us. I was baptized in 1962 and my wife Lidia in 1961. Twelve years later (in 1974) I was ordained as a pastor in the local church. After my ordination as a pastor, I only managed only once offer the Lord's Communion in our church. because I was arrested (by the Soviet communist authorities) on 6/19/1974. The investigation lasted a few months, and I was sentenced to five years of jail for "slandering the Soviet authorities" by preaching the Gospel (in our underground Baptist church.) I was offered freedom in exchange for cooperation with the KGB (the communist secret police.) I categorically refused their proposal for freedom and chose staying in jail. I was released from prison, at the end of having served my prison sentence of five years in 1979. During these five years of jail, I was repeatedly offered to collaborate with the authorities. I refused. I was threatened again and again, that I would not go out of jail anymore, and I would never see my family. I replied that everything is the Lord's will. I thank God because He protected me and nothing worse happened to me. And now, at the age of 80, with Lidia, we follow Him and serve the Lord to the extent of our capabilities. We pray to God that He bless the work you do. With a lot of love from your brother, Tevs Ivan Frantzevici."

409	Власенко	Валентин	Меродьевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Иорниевич	1958	Казахстан
411	Курин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казахстан
413	Романов	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бычков	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	Лашенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Ткаченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимоич	1960	Украина
425	Отмачко	Венямин	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	Валериевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миняков	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

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. Many of their testimonies you can read in the monthly newsletter. (Testimonies available also on the internet at: <http://helpforrefugees.com>).



**Sister Aida Skripnikova,  
at left age 32. On the right  
after her 4th Soviet prison  
term.**

Though she suffered four different communist prison terms, for spreading the Gospel, Aida was able to write: "When the Soviet prison guards learned that somehow a Gospel of Mark was smuggled to me secretly, they searched the whole prison camp. They discovered it only during a second search. I was punished for this "crime" of having a Gospel, with ten days and nights in a solitary confinement cell. But (unafraid) I was able only two weeks later, to obtain surreptitiously a whole New Testament, which I kept to the day of my release. Many other prisoners, even themselves not Christians, helped me avoid the guards discovering it...I was told that ten parcels of food arrived for me from Norway (the Wurmbrand family inspired this, NT) but I was not given these. It was a great joy for us to experience definite spiritual fellowship with other Christians. This gave us hope in prison. I want to send an expression of love from us all, to those who cared about us and prayed for us!"