

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

Michael Wurmbrand, President

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

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

Email: 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 Wurmbrand with wife, Sabine

December 2021

Announcement:

A free copy of the paperback book, "**Reaching Towards the Heights,**" A Book of Daily Meditations on the Word of God by Richard Wurmbrand, may be requested using the order form on the internet, at the <https://helpforrefugees.com> site. (See third column!)

"They that had eaten were about four thousand."
(Mark 8:9)

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 communist prisons.

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand

CHRIST CAN STRENGTHEN US

Christ becoming man, submitted Himself to human limitations. If he was in one town, he could not be in another at the same time. He belonged to one nation, to one social class, to one sex. All these limitations ceased at His ascension into heaven. In Jesus' time there were millions of hungry as there are today. Jesus the man could not solve the problem of starvation on all continents, but when He could do something, He did. He fed once 5000, another time 4000 men, at least they got one good supper.

When we think about all the innocent suffering existing in the whole world, we are tempted to become discouraged. "The distress is too big, I can't help it," But if I can't feed the hundreds of millions who hunger, I can provide perhaps one hungry man with just one breakfast. Jesus showed us an example to do the maximum of what we can instead of repeating that we cannot do all we would like to.

From a subterranean prison in Rome, Apostle Paul wrote. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) He was not tortured as Communists or Moslem terrorists torture Christians today. The Apostle surely must have endured many hardships to induce him to tell the names of his coworkers in the church, which was underground and persecuted at that time, too. His nervous system must have been exposed to excessive burdens, as is that of any prisoner. Whoever does not have this in mind will never understand the harshness in some of Saint Paul's epistles. Hunger probably made him collapse in swoon on the dirty floor and awake with bleeding wounds as it did me during my prison life in Communist Romania. He must have known the horror which I had when after a long period of time I again saw my face in a mirror - a monstrous face of unequalled ugliness that I scarcely recognized as that of the young man who had been jailed. St. Paul must have suffered intensely in prison: notwithstanding he wrote from there: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. You dear reader, also have your share of this world's suffering but you do not suffer as St. Paul or many of today's persecuted Christians suffering in communist jails. In union with Christ, you will also be able to bear your burden.

A rich braggart once took a believer on a tour of his house. He showed him room after room filled with valuable works of art, priceless carpets, and heirlooms of every kind. At the end he asked, "What impressed you most of all?" The Christian answered, "The fact that the earth is strong enough to support the weight of such a massive building."

A brother in the Soviet Union was fined again and again for having been found at secret prayer meetings. He could not pay the huge fines, so the communists confiscated one piece of furniture after the other, until one day the house remained empty. Then he gathered his family for song and told them: "Now, we don't have to fear anymore that we might lose something because we serve the Lord. Now we will worship Him freely."

SOMERSET MAUGHAM wrote, "If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom. And the irony of it is, that if it is comfort and money, it values more, it will lose that, too.

We can renounce luxuries. We can bear sorrows; we can be joyous and wise and courageous through Christ who strengthens us. Will He strengthen you too? Why not? Because you are a sinner? But St. Paul who said the words "I can" had been the chief of sinners before his conversion - a murderer of Christians. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sins. And then, the Lord knows that you are not only a sinner but also a person much sinned against. He sympathizes with you. He will strengthen you. Unite with Him.



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)

Heroes of the Faith and their Families, Helped with your Gifts!
Some pictures of elderly Christians Imprisoned under Communism for the Faith
Read their full testimonies in our past newsletters at <http://helpforrefugees.com> (third column!)



Sister Liuba Ivashenko Goman with husband Vitaly. Sign reads: “Love the Lord!”

Sister Goman was actively involved and participated surreptitiously in the distribution and transportation of Christian literature published by the underground Krestianin (The Christian) Publishing House. When arrested and imprisoned for 2½ years, being the youngest of the group, the KGB (Soviet Secret Police, N. Ed.) were sure they will be able to break her will and turn her into an informer. She impressed on the contrary, so much by her steadfastness in the faith, that the interrogating officer admiring her, ended up providing her surreptitiously with a Bible to read. **Read her full testimony in our 3/2019 Newsletter.**



Baptist Preacher Victor Sasin

Pastor Sasin stopped the KGB squad which came to arrest him during a church service. He made the communist policemen listen to his sermon with no interruption. Moved around through many Soviet prisons, he ended up hemorrhaging from tuberculosis. **Read his testimony in our 4/2019**



Sister Dorofeeva Galina

Sister Galina was imprisoned two years in the former Soviet Union for the “crime” of teaching Sunday School. The KGB held her on purpose in bug infested cells and confiscated her living apartment thus ending homeless. She obtained housing through Christian missionaries in Germany. She is now bedridden. **Read her full testimony in our 4/2019**

Heroes of the Faith!
Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts

Briefly, From His Daughter



“Fedorchenko Ivan Ivanovich born 1937, zealously loved the Lord as Lyudmila Leontivna Savchenko (wife of the minister of the Omsk church Nikolay Romanovich) described him in the book: ‘GOD IS WRITING A MEMORABLE BOOK.’ He went into eternity when I Lena was 14 years old. He remains in my memory as my father who loved God very much, he worshiped, was in awe, read the Bible early in the morning and gathered us for Evening and Morning Prayers. In our house, meetings were often held, especially festive ones. There were dispersals by the KGB (Soviet Secret Police- N. Ed.) and therefore our house was confiscated. Literally just before his death, dad having registered it as his property, the house was returned.



Now, in the context of a pandemic we are very glad that we can continue these house meetings. Mom is still alive. Thank God, she is already 80 years

old. Parents had 12 children, 10 alive, almost all serve God, three were excommunicated, for which the heart grieves very much, but as they say, this made us others drawing closer to the Lord.

My older brother gave a more detailed story of an example from my father's prison life. While imprisoned he was called "the holy father." He told people about Christ, he was very sociable and smiling. When difficulties were encountered in his life or in the life of his family, he always said: it is better to remain offended, there is no need to prove your rights, and God himself will intercede. There was one person in the cell, who kept the entire cell subordinate. They listened to him unquestioningly. Once he and his friends drank heavily and there was a strong fight, and then he began to use a knife. His friends knew that it was not possible to stop him and it would come to the administration and he would be condemned again and there would be victims. They began to look for our dad and came with a request: Ivan Ivanovich, holy father, help, talk to this man, he will only listen to you. God granted mercy and our dad found the key to his heart and stopped the lawlessness. Dad was a humble but sincere and God-fearing man. Savchenko Lyudmila Leontivna (also helped by this mission) describing the suffering of her husband Nikolai Romanovich (he was a very good brother) described our dad as a fearless Christian. Thank you for your attention and concern."

Heroes of the Faith! Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts

SHORT BIOGRAPHY BY HIS DAUGHTER



Shokha Viktor Petrovich 1942 – 2020 was born into a large family in Sochi, Russia. He devoted his whole life to serving God. When in 7th grade only, he already had a strong desire to choose such a profession that would not prevent him from serving in the ministry. God fulfilled this desire. Over the past 78 years, brother Shokha never missed a single Sunday and festive service. Serving God came first. In the summer of June 24, 1960, my father entered into a covenant with the Lord through holy water baptism. On August 13, 1967, in Simferopol, a marriage took place between Viktor Petrovich Shokha and Dulepova Elena Mikhailovna.

From the beginning of 1973, widespread arrests and trials of Christians on the Crimean Peninsula began. On February 24, at 06.30 am, the authorities conducted searches throughout the Crimea region.

In 1978, the State Security Committee (KGB) arrested my father. They came to work and took him away for interrogation. They wanted to make him an informer, but off the bat father answered: 'I am responsible only for myself, I will not take the path of Judas. I will immediately report the entire conversation to the church.' These were very difficult days when the brethren were sentenced to prison. During this period, brother Shokha was ordained to the ministry as a deacon and took responsibility for the church.

In 1978, during a service, a government person came in and said: 'Victor Petrovich, finish it.' Brother Shokha described: 'I realized that my turn had come and immediately remembered what was written in the Bible: "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." (Isaiah 48:17) This word encouraged me.' Calls to the KGB began, interrogations, house surveillance. The years 1978 to 1982 were very difficult. Daddy stood firm in his conviction that this was the way of God and did not hesitate. They drew up 10 sentencing articles and sent them to court.

One day, a local policeman came to work for my dad and said: 'Let's go home.' Dad realized that there would be a search. Approaching the house, about ten people came out and showed a search warrant. The search began, and father was ordered to sit and not get up. They took away all the spiritual literature. They searched everywhere, in the attic and even in the stove. When finished, the district police officer said: 'Get ready for a conversation (he meant interrogations.)' We prayed and the officers took Viktor Petrovich away. At my father's request, they let him return home, because my mother was in the hospital with my brother. He was very grateful to the Lord for his prayer having been heard.

On January 11, 1981, the trial took place and dad was allowed to return home that first day. On the second day of the trial, a sentence of 2 years and 6 months of general regime was announced. Three prison vans approached the main entrance, but dad was taken out by a back entrance. Young people had surrounded the building and noticed him and he waved his hand at them. They took him to jail. They asked for his ID which he had left at home. They took him back home with a policeman, dad took his passport, said goodbye to us and was taken to prison.

For 2½ months he was held in the Simferopol jail. In the morning, on Sunday March 27, the guard knocked on the cell door and called: 'Shokha out with your belongings.' The prisoners were loaded onto a train and brought to the camp in Volnyansk, Ukraine (then part of the Soviet Union.) Dad was assigned to the kitchen in charge of making tea for 4,800 prisoners. Dad said, 'I am a believer, I will do everything honestly' and therefore he was loved. He did not complain to anyone. He worked in the tea kitchen for a year and a half, then he was transferred to the prison boiler room.

Once, standing by the boiler, he heard a voice: 'move away.' As soon as he moved away the boiler exploded, a one-and-a-half-meter flame explosion tore off the powerful door of the boiler. This is how God saved father's life. Glory to Him for this. Dad worked in the bathhouse for a year and he was released and allowed to go home.

Every warrant officer had the right to search a prisoner at any time of the day. Someone planted a document on dad – marked at the top as "secret" and he burned it on the spot. If this document would have been found during a search, the prison authorities would have added another prison term. God didn't allow it. In the camp there were two more brethren, a minister from Melitopol and brother Stasik from Zaporozhye. They had communication whenever possible. In 1982, daddy returned to his family and church, where until the end of his life he served the Lord, he loved.

In 2015, on November 17, Viktor Petrovich was separated from his dear wife and our beloved mother entering eternity. For another five years, daddy served God and made us happy, and at the beginning of autumn, on September 19, 2020, he left for the eternal abode of his Friend and Leader, to whom he remained faithful to the end.

Heroes of the Faith!



Enns, Yakov Yakovlevich was born in 1941 and was married to Miriya Davidovna Neifeld. They had 9 children. The eldest son died at the age of 18. He lives in the village Miroljubovka. At the age of 18 he turned to the Lord and was baptized. He burned with a first love for the Lord and tried to serve Him as best he could. He actively worked with young people, conducted youth and church services.

The authorities did not like the activity of Yakov Yakovlevich. On June 19, 1974, the police came for him. A case was opened and an investigation was underway. On June 26 he was transferred to the Omsk prison. On July 5, he was transferred back to Moskalenki for the continuation of the investigation and placed in a bullpen. On July 19, exactly one month after his arrest, he was again taken to the Omsk prison. On August 29, a trial was held, which ended on August 30. The trial took place at the Moskalenki House of Culture. The entire square in front of the House of Culture was filled with brothers and sisters from Miroljubovka. The hall was overcrowded with activists, atheists, teachers, employees of the district committee. There was no room for church believers. The trial lasted two days. Enns Yakov Yakovlevich was sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment in a general regime colony.

Yakov Yakovlevich was serving time in the Omsk prison camp. At first, he was transferred from one cell to another, planted informers tried to extort information about the church and other brethren. To the best of his ability, Enns testified to everyone about God. In prison, Yakov Yakovlevich worked as an auto mechanic. He was respected by both inmates and superiors. This brief biography was written by his children from stories told to them by their father. (Brother Enns is presently semi-paralyzed in a bed.)

Our mission has sent help to as many of these faithful Christians we could locate and contact personally!

409	Власенко	Валентин	Михайлович	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казахстан
411	Куркин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левин	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казахстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тистен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1958	Украина
416	Бичков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СВЮРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЙВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варовин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Лещенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Талченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Откапов	Венедикт	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савинко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Федеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Латвия
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богородице	Александр	Валериевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миников	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

Above, a **sample only** of a long list, our mission was able to compile beside other lists, of over 480 elderly Baptist Christians most of them 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 4th 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: website: <https://helpforrefugees.com>**

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