

## 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

**January 2021**

"And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have no bread.' But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?' They said to Him, 'Twelve.' 'Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He said to them, 'How is it you do not understand?'"

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 communist prisons.

(Mark 8:16-21)

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand

### How to worship God?

Suppose the disciples would not have had seven loaves, but only three or one, what would have happened? The multitudes would have been satiated the same.

You can serve God with the very little you have. His blessings do not depend upon the size or quantity of what you have, but upon the fact that you bring them to Him. But suppose, I have nothing to bring; what then? This is impossible. The Hebrew, Aramean and Greek, the languages in which the Bible was written did not have the word "Zero", neither its mathematical symbol 0. A man who has nothing to bring to Jesus does not exist. The poorest Christian of today, is richer than the first Apostles.

A Christian can bring his own person, that very person which says, "I possess nothing." He has something very valuable: himself and his utter poverty. He can bring to Jesus his sins. From the sin of being a fanatic persecutor, God made in the case of Paul of Tarsus a zealous apostle. From

the sin of a loose life, Jesus made a saint with steadfast love, St. Mary Magdalene. Bring your weakness to Christ. This you surely have. His strength will show its perfectness in your weakness.

In another instance Jesus said: "Be shod with sandals and don't put on two clothes". (Mark 6:9)

During the persecutions of Christians under the Roman emperor Diocletian, a Christian named Eustrat, was shod in boots of iron full of big, sharp nails. Shod in these boots, beaten the whole time to run faster, he was led to martyrdom. The church honors his memory.

We are not all called to such sufferings. Martyrdom is the exceptional. Not all have to wear shoes with nails which should enter into our flesh. But God looks into our wardrobe. He taught his first disciples simplicity in clothing. Some contemporary Christians are very careful to have the right doctrine, others the right ritual. What about having the right number of shoes and suits and dresses?

Communists wish to have much; they wish to have even somebody else's property. They try to occupy the entire world. The average yearly income of KARL MARX had been ten times the average income of a middle-class Britisher of his time, and he kept his daughters in bourgeois luxury. He squandered what he had in unsuccessful speculations at the stock-exchange.

It appears that a good deal of Marx's hostility to capitalists stems from his inability to become one. Communism is nothing more than encouraging human evil greed. At the instauration of communism in China, under the enticing name, "The Great Leap Forward" Mao Tse Tung killed in only four years, at least 45 million people. The United States unchristian politicians encouraged such communist greediness and madness. So long business with China was profitable, they ignored hundreds of thousands of their fellow humans being imprisoned, tortured and killed. In 1957 Mao wrote in his book, "About the correct attitude toward the contradictions within the people": "The actual situation when the United States control the majority in the United Nations and dominate in several parts of the world, is only provisional and eventually will change." This happened. The US lost the majority in the UN and US role in the world is decreasing.

True Christians consider themselves only stewards of material riches. They strip themselves even of their own selves to follow the naked and barefoot Christ on His way to Golgotha.

Christians cannot afford luxury in clothing and food. Billions of souls need the Gospel. The children of God will be arrayed in glory in the future.



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)

**Helped with your Gifts!**

**Some pictures of Christians Imprisoned under Communism for the Faith**

**Read their full testimonies in our past newsletters at <http://helpforrefugees.com> (third column!)**



**Sidorova Vera and Nadejda**

Two Baptist sisters each imprisoned 3 years in Siberia for the faith. They were active in an underground printing shop. They issued the forbidden religious publication Khrestianin (The Christian.) In it, were published names, addresses, sentences and even pictures of many imprisoned believers. Read their testimony in the 1/2018 Newsletter.



**Genady Efremov**

A minister who suffered in the former Soviet Union. He was tortured for a day to stand in a 20” x 20” square cell, called, “The Bottle.” Read his testimony in the 2/2018 Newsletter.



**Savelieva Valentina Ivanovna**

Suffered 5 years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union for being an active Baptist believer. Read her testimony in the 2/2018 Newsletter.

**Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts**

**Imprisoned in a Psychiatric Asylum**

**KGB Diagnosis: Holds Baptist Beliefs**



Koplík, in a picture smuggled out of psychiatric hospital

Anatolii Koplík wrote to Michael Wurmbrand: “I heartily greet you God-loving friends. I truly thank you for your letter. It is possible that you sent multiple letters and that they did not all reach me.

The ‘Tortured for Christ’ book authored by your father Richard, I read it back in 1979 when I returned upon the conclusion of my imprisonment. (He read a copy of the book surreptitiously smuggled at the time inside the Soviet Union! N. Ed.) A friend named Vitaly Ivanovich Pidchenko who was close to me, told me of it. He is a fellow Kharkovian. I collaborated with him in the transport of literature. The Lord says: "Put on the armor of God." Christ sent his disciples to kings and rulers to be witnesses to them.

And speak we must - we are servants, undeserving, that's why we are created in order to have done that. The disciples experienced success but Jesus said to them: "Be glad that your names are written in heavens." This is our salvation.

I was born in a Christian family of parents Koplik Nicolai Ivanovich and Larissa Mihailovna in the town of Sumy. Already from first grade, I was destined to educate atheists. As soon I opened my mouth, when only a kid, because I expressed my faith, I was labeled an "enemy of the people", "an obstacle to progress", and "an enemy of societal development". I was criticized, slandered for being from a Christian family and chased away.

My father, Nicolai Ivanovich served the Lord with his whole heart, mind and strength, He served as a good example for all youth, children or grandchildren. He passed away, when toward 80 years old, at peace with God. I was at the time 13 years old, the oldest of seven children. In the years before my father's death, from June 24, 1968 on through 1971, for his service to God, he was sentenced (in the former Soviet Union) to 3 years of incarceration.

Worship services were held in my father's house even during his imprisonment. Therefore, the house was closely monitored by the KGB (Soviet Secret Police, N. Ed) There was a continuous stalking of all family members. The KGB followed whenever, whoever would leave the house in the morning, the KGB was informed where they spent the day, and what was the time of their return. For example, if one of our friends would come to see us for a few minutes, KGB-officers would show up and would assault us with questions: "Who was that?" they would ID check every visitor. The officers would exclaim, "Oh, so you already have some common prayer? You have violated our laws regarding religious cults." Father was subjected to frequent searches. In these searches, literature, personal belongings and pictures were subject to confiscation.

In those years, the KGB began devoting attention to me as well. During my studies in the high school and later on in college, I was criticized, subjected to slanders, obliging me to participate in some communist indoctrination lessons. In front of my classmates, I would be given questions unrelated to the subject. I would be remonstrated "So, you believe in God?" and I would answer: "Yes." "For this we cannot give you a grade," said the professor. There is no grade for this subject and there is no scholarship. In addition, with no grade issued for that subject, I must be expelled from that educational institution for unsatisfactory progress. But somehow, I was not expelled after all. Therefore, I was a student, and at the same time not a student. I attended classes as a volunteer listener.

When 18, I was drafted into the army. In my military dossier, under "personal traits" was inserted "Baptist". At that point, with interrogation and threats, I was told: "We will elicit everything from you and will re-educate you. You will go to such a (difficult) place..." - harrowing threats, and they kept their word. For my assignment, they sent me to the most distant region of the USSR - Trans-Baikal for the Komsomol's project of the century - the construction of the highway between Ulan-Ude to Chita, now known as Baikal, that involved Komsomol personnel (Komsomol was the communist youth organization, N. Ed.), prisoners, as well as regiments of soldiers. In the Trans-Baikal, the town of Petrovsk, was the site of forced labor camps, were the Decembrists were exiled after their failed uprising against the Tsar in the 1820s. The Russian Emperor did not execute them but sent them to this town, where they were joined by their wives. In this area, the summers are short, the days are hot above 77 F but nights are very cold and rainy. In the winter, strong winds from the south would drive the air temperature to -58 F.

For my personal reasons - as a consequence of my promising God to serve Him, I refused to take the military oath, for which I was told: 'Here is the law of the Tanga (the name of that region, or Taiga, a name for the Siberian wild steppes, N. Ed.) - the prosecutor is the bear. We make the laws, there aren't any other laws here.' Then the military prosecutor proceeded against me.

In the USSR, there was a saying: "The Soviet communist party is the honor and conscience of our time, the 20th century. Its leader is the KGB." It has now become commonly known, from those same psychiatrists, that the Chief Psychiatrist of the USSR was a KGB-er determining the diagnosis for those whom they proclaimed as being sick.



Recent Picture of Brother Anatolii Koplik and Wife Galina

The KGB established a diagnosis for me: '**A schizophrenic showing the following symptoms: Baptist beliefs.**' With this, God allowed me to see with my own eyes, to hear various things, to read and to commit all to God. And, so with this diagnosis, I was sent to the First Psychiatric Hospital of the Republic in Ulan-Ude, Buryatia, West of Petrovsk, Trans-Baikal, by lake Baikal. This is an infamous KGB special hospital. I interacted with the patients in this institution, and I was their "priest" in contrast to these communist soul-destroyers. The Lord has His plans, no one has the authority to alter. The conclusion of the triad of the local psychiatrists - one woman and two men - was a definitive diagnosis (contrary to what the KGB would have liked it to be, N. Ed.): "healthy, a man of faith - he is responsible for his actions." Still, instead of medical questions, the military prosecutor, captain Likhodcho pestered me with question after question about my Christian service, about Christian underground publications, about all of my Christian friends or Christian church-youth, children... My answer to Likhodcho was: 'I will not answer any questions of the kind. These are questions relating to the church and not of a military nature.'

On September 8, 1975, I was sentenced by a closed military tribunal. This was the system in place in 1975 - Stalinist double and triple "officials" serving as prosecutors, judges and jury in closed courts. I verily saw foam flying out of Likhodcho's mouth when he loudly screamed in disputing the sentence given me which was based on a peaceful time statute. The war time statute would have mandated execution by firing squad. The verdict: Seven years of confinement based on code 249 A UK - of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, 'Unlawful Avoidance of military service'. Immediately after the trial, I was transported to the camp in Petrovsk, Trans-Baikal. This is about a 2-day journey to the east. On Sept 12, I arrived in the historic prison of Chita. In the month of Oct. 1975, I was sent even further east - a three-day trip covering about 1,300 miles.

On Oct 24, I arrived at the prison in the town of Blagoveshchensk, in the Amur region (close to the border with Mongolia, N. Ed.) where I was assigned to zone 14/8 of the town. I served my whole sentence (of seven years) in that zone up to August of 1979.

This was the childhood town of Georgi Petrovich Vins. (Georgi Vins, a leader of the unregistered Baptist churches in the former Soviet Union, suffered nearly 8 years imprisonment for the faith.

His father, Peter Vins, was an American citizen of Russian origin, who had traveled to Siberia just two years before as a missionary. He ended up being executed for the Christian faith in the gruesome Stalinist purges of 1936. George Vins and his mother, Lydia Vins, a staunch leader of the underground Baptists in the former Soviet Union, were freed and expelled to the United States with four other anticommunist dissidents when exchanged for two Soviet spies in 1979. N. Ed.)

This town ended up as the town of my youth as well. The Amur region is the area of the exiled Mennonites. Its ground is stained with the blood of martyrs. Those serving in the area administration would recount to me what they had witnessed in their childhood spent there. People were brought by freight transport without any protection of covering from frost. The winter temperature in these conditions would extend below -40 F. As it was, victims would be buried every day.

Those were years of struggle for the Word of God, His declared Name, included in my correspondence, and censored by the authorities. On August 30, 1979, I was secreted out of the 14/8 zone, with no announced destination. The convoy was made up of some administrative members of some labor squad disguised in civilian clothes. I traveled in the civilian train-carriage and not in the guarded one. In the span of three days, I was returned to the prison in Chita. The KGB present there, made also sure that I would not be seeing or be corresponding with my family or friends. I completed my sentence there and on Dec. 8, 1979, I was driven to the city train station at midnight.

This was a blessed testimony for Christianity. After being freed, I was subjected to harassment and searches by the KGB for multiple periods of 15 days, until the so-called ‘Perestroika’ occurred (a partial ‘freedom period’ decreed by the Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev, upon the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. N. Ed.)”

409	Власенко	Валентин	Медведевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казакстан
411	Курбан	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левин	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казакстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1958	Украина
416	Барнов	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СКВОРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЕВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варовин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Лашенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Тяченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казакстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Поллович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Озмекко	Венедикт	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Федеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	Анна	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богодушко	Александр	Валериевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миньков	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 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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:** <https://helpforrefugees.com>

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**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.