

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



Late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand with wife, Sabina

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.

July 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 by using the order form on the internet, at the <https://helpforrefugees.com> site.
(See third column!)

"A bishop must be...a lover of good..."
(Titus 1:8, in the original.)

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand

IS YOUR CHURCH LEADER "A LOVER OF GOOD?"

In the first church, "bishop" was not a rank in a hierarchy, All the elders of the church were considered as being made by the Holy Ghost overseers (in Greek "episkopos," from where our word "bishop" is derived). See about this Acts 20:17-28. Even our English word "elder of the church" is misleading. These elders were sometimes very young, as it was the case with Timothy. The Greek word for elder means 'farseeing.' In plain English, the Scripture quoted above means "an overseer of the church", a church "leader", whatever the 'name', bishop, pastor, priest, preacher, mission director must be a "lover of good."

The highest good is to have God living in one's innermost. A church leader must love bring men to this stage, to teach men that they should deny themselves until nothing remains than God. A church leader must do this work also by night, in times when humanity is plunged into darkness, when intense suffering and persecution comes. In the few beginning years of the Soviet regime, under Lenin, 40,000 clergymen were killed ("Der Landbote," Switzerland, January 15, 1972). Many others, in the tens of thousands, were killed by communist dictators like Stalin, Khrushchev, Mao, Ceausescu and so many other butchers. We thank God that the church has self-sacrificing leaders.

The Russian pastor Sergey GOLEV had already 22 years of prison behind him. At the age of 82, he was in prison again. His wife came to visit him, but was forbidden to do so, because it had been discovered that he had secretly a New Testament. She could see him only from afar. He was in tears. She shouted to him "I never saw you weeping. Strengthen yourself. Soon everything will end." From behind the barbed wire, he answered, "I got tired. Greet all those who sincerely love the Lord." Strength returned to him, when later-on several brethren discussed in the prison cell how they would like to die and the one said "I wish to die while serving the church; let those in the church bury me" and another "I desire to be with my family, to bring my children to faith and then to die." The same minister GOLEV who had had the one moment of weakness, said "I wish to die in prison. Here I passed my best years. Right from here to the Lord-this is my prayer." The same communication I received about GOLEV recounts the story of a Christian sister by the name of Nadezhda SLOBODA. Nobody would call her a pastor. But she was the first one in her village to be converted through Gospel broadcasting in Russian. She formed a church in her village. The church grew so mightily that the police had to surround the village to hinder people from the collective farms around, to come hear its message. Sister SLOBODA was sentenced. for this to four years of prison. Her five children were taken forcibly to an atheistic boarding school. Her husband remained alone. In prison, sister SLOBODA was punished to stay two months in an unheated, isolated cell, where she had to sleep on concrete, without any mattress, because she had told other prisoners about Christ. During the day she worked. All wondered how she resists. She answered "I fall asleep on the cold concrete floor, trusting in God and it becomes warm around me. I rest in the arms of God." The prison director suggested to her to make a request to be freed from this punishment. She answered "It was not I who decided to be put in this cell. It is not for me to ask to be released from it." (This reminds us of St. Paul refusing to leave the prison in Philippi until the magistrates did not come and besought him. Acts 16.36-39)

There exist such stars on the Christian sky, lovers of good. Christians have always told their sufferings. Christ shew the marks on his body. Paul told how many times he has been beaten. Christians make known the sufferings of their brethren in all their atrocity. Just read the atrocities enumerated in Hebrews 11.36-38, men stoned, sawn asunder, wandering about in goatskins, etc. Christians praise their Lord loudly for their victories. Christians are always solidary with their persecuted brethren. I have shown you examples of faithful "bishops", who love what is "good," give their lives for Christ and for their flock. There are also men, who have high ranks in the church but are not "lovers of good." Be very careful of whom you entrust your soul. God gave some to be pastors and teachers "for the perfecting of the saints," to make you grow unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4.11-13). A "bishop" must be a lover of good. He must bring you to the peak of fellowship with God. If he does not, simply discard him and seek a better one. If you have been unsuccessful to find the right pastor in your community, take as an example of teaching and of life the faithful, suffering ministers of the underground church in countries where faith is forbidden. Prayer will unite you with them. You catch their "fire", and you will put your church "on fire." Somewhere a church was burning down. Among the spectators trying to save the church was a well-known atheist. The pastor told him "While the church was in good condition, you did not attend it. But now, when it is on fire, you come?" The atheist replied "Had your church always been "on fire", I would have attended regularly!" See that your church should be so. It will be so, under "lovers of good."



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, 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!)



**Pastor Silagy
SANDOR**

Was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in communist Romania. Communists suggested to arrest also his son. Pastor Sandor answered: If God gave His only Son to die for us, I am ready to sacrifice my son.
Read his testimony in the 7/2018 Newsletter.



Mihai Iovin

Was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in communist Romania. Being offered a brilliant career under communism, he answered: “I believe in God and I want God should lead my life. Since I cannot accept atheism, I need refuse all your enticing offers.”
Read his testimony in the 7/2018 Newsletter.



Dina SHAPOVAL

Was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union for teaching Sunday School. When she refused to work in prison on Sundays, she was placed in winter, in a freezing stockade.
Read her full testimony in the 8/2018 Newsletter.



**Vitalie
DEMCHENKO**

Suffered 7 years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union for his Christian activity as a Baptist Choir director.
Read his full testimony in the 8/2018 Newsletter.

Heroes of the Faith! Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts

3 Years Imprisonment in the former Soviet Union for Printing and Distributing the Bible

Testimony of Nina Anatolevna Chukhontseva,



My life in the church began when baptized at the early age of 15. Our young group ready to work for the Lord, consisted of only five people. A little later there were seven of us. Among us there were only two boys, but when they went to the army, only the sisters remained. Where did we seek our happiness?

Once Peter asked the Teacher: “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” In response, Jesus Christ gave a wonderful promise to the disciples: “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife^[a] or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.

(Matthew 19: 27-29). I concluded that the happiest people are those who leave behind everything for

Christ. I did not have a father but here was my mother. I had brothers and sisters, and also my own youth. I made a decision in my heart to sacrifice all that I had, for the Lord.

In those years there was an acute need in the Soviet Union for Christians to obtain Christian literature. There were brethren who offered us an opportunity at first to duplicate books using a mimeograph. But we were busy with our own employment places. We sisters decided to leave our jobs and go work as cleaning ladies. Now we had more free time! We were happy. We were happy that we can carry out the instructions of certain brethren and dedicate more time for the Lord. Later our ministry began to expand. From a secret printing place (named Krestianin, "the Christian" N. Ed) these brethren brought us books in sizable quantities to Chelyabinsk, for us to distribute to all churches in Russia, in the Ural Mountains region. Eventually this production of literature was secretly moved also all the way to the Baltic States. At one time as we had arrived to one of the families involved in such underground printing, they met us greatly alarmed: "Be careful! The KGB (Soviet secret police, N. Ed) is expected to come do a house search." It turns out that some of the "printers" were arrested that very day. The publishing house had just started working and the communist authorities seemed to have been in on it. It seemed to us that we had lost everything. For two days we were in panic, despair and sadness. But on the third day, the surreptitiously printed literature had been saved. It turned out that even though the printers had been arrested, the publishing work did not stop! Then the thought occurred to me: "So the printing machine is still there, but not enough people to do such work. If the Lord will call me to print, I will go with joy." Only God knew about this intent.

Two more years passed while I was also secretly teaching Sunday-School to children in our underground Christian meetings. One day some brethren instructed myself and another sister, Larisa Zaitseva, to carry the mimeographed literature to the city Rostov-on-the-Don. But on the way we were arrested and detained for four days. The KGB let us go home but still threatened: "We will build a case against you. "Soon after that, a responsible brother came up to me and said: "Nina, you are only 20 years old. If (the communist authorities) will put you in jail it is not known for how long you will be that is, three, four or five years, it might be as well for you to remain in hiding working in the secret publishing plant!" This had been my dream! I happily answered: "I'll go!" At that moment, my happiness doubled or you may say, even tripled. To give a general idea of our work. We undertook surreptitious printing in these former republics of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, in the present Baltic States, then republics of the Soviet Union and in several different cities of Russia! The printing and distribution were very large, up to 6 tons of paper! A complete (Evangelical translated) Bible was printed for the first time in Russia! Gospels and other Christian literature were printed as well.

Where I was dispatched at the very beginning, was in the town of Fergana (in today's Uzbekistan, N. Ed.) It was hot in Fergana. We worked in a small house, with windows stuffed with lumped blankets so nothing be heard on the outside. Everything needed be done very fast. I was instructed to fold the sheets on special marks. While one leaf was down, in order to be faster, your other hand had to grab the next. We needed go through 6 tons of paper in 3 months when such work would take usually 6 months. Our team was directed by a Christian who became a personality in the Russian underground church, Ivan Petrovitch Plett. He used to come to check the quality of the work.

Sometimes the sisters would test me when addressing me: "you have been sitting here since morning till evening. What a monotonous work! Next day same monotony will begin again." However, I did not lose heart. A day will pass, lie down, stretch out and think! This is happiness!

At first, we had almost no cars. The literature was transported on trams and trains. For example, from Fergana we went to Tashkent (in today's Uzbekistan, N. Ed.) then all the way to Kishinev (in today's Republic of Moldova, N. Ed.) Then in an opposite direction and again carrying our valuable cargo of literature. It was necessary to transport tons of it. There are only four or even three of us! An incredible

amount of hand luggage carrying work. Each luggage could not be heavier than 50 pounds, so it would not be obvious, we carry heavy literature. Therefore, we had to interminably repeat same trip again and again. Back and forth! Back and forth!

Arrest

In 1980, at night we were brought to work at a secret printing place, close to the Glivenko farm, located not far from Belorechensk city, in the Krasnodar region, (in today's Russia, N. Ed.) The place was suitable for our work: true wilderness, the nearest house is about one and a half miles away. We thought we could remain and do this underground printing work in the Krasnodar region, for three whole years.

Early one morning though, there was a knock on the door. We woke up. We thought brethren brought us bread. Brother Ivan Petrovitch, looked but did not open the door. He just warned us "Sisters, get ready ..." While waiting for the police to break the door down, brother Petrovitch, chewed and swallowed paper notes with addresses. When he had swallowed everything, he entered our quarter and said: "Sisters, let's get up, pray and praise God! " We calmed down and began to sing. Ten to Fifteen KGB policemen broke the door down and burst into the house. While police officers searched the premises and carried away everything, they considered incriminating evidence, we continued to sing. The house-search lasted until eight in the evening.

Then, we were placed under arrest and were taken to Belorechensky special detention center. This prison having been incredibly infested with bedbugs, these unstoppable bloodsucking insects invaded us. During the first night, sleeping on the floor, I was bitten badly. On the second night, sister Nadezhda Brykova and another one of the arrested sisters said to me: "Honey, you are in pain! Don't lie on the floor, come sleep on our cot." Have friends ready to sacrifice for you - this is happiness! I only slept one other night in this detention center. Thereafter we were transported to the Krasnodar prison. In the cell, the convicts organized themselves like in a gang or a "family." Each "family" got four cups of water, for women to wash their hair in turn. What about me? I had not been invited to any such "family" yet, I was one and therefore could not do it. After several days suddenly in the evening, some woman in a cell that had served three years already and whom everyone seemed to obey, says: "Today, we give all the water to Nina. " I protested "Why?" I was offered twenty-four mugs with water. Amazing! I took care of my hair. It is happiness when we keep the Word of God and we hold fast to spiritual principles, and God cares for us and rewards us for our loyalty!

We, sisters, were five and we all got sentenced to various terms. Nadezhda-Brykova's fingerprints were very faint since her finger-tips were calloused (she was good at feeding sheets into the printing machine.) Therefore, the communist court judges thought she was the most active in this underground printing job. The court sentenced her to four years of prison, while I was sentenced to 3 years in a general regime colony under Article 162/2. I executed the entire prison term.

After I came out, I married at age 31 brother Vladimir Chukhontsev. God gave us 8 children, 1 daughter died at the age of one. Currently we have 7 children and 7 granddaughters! Currently I live in the city of Magnitogorsk. My husband serves as a pastor of the church, and is a member of the Council of Churches of our Baptist denomination. He is constantly on trips for the ministry! To be happy, direct all your energy for the work of God. May be, you will have to work hard not in one, but in five vineyards! Use this opportunity because there is a lot of work in the church. From my youth, I dreamed of being someone who will work hard for God! Glory to God for all His ways and help in my life! Thank you for your concern! May the Lord reward with His blessings!"

Elderly Believers Thank for our Support

Received 5/18/2021:

“Good day, dear brother in the Lord.

I would like to inform you that today we received help 28,662.68 rubles (US \$400.) For us, this is certainly a great support, because **this amount is almost two and a half times more than my monthly pension.** We got it without any problems, a message came from the bank that the money had been transferred to the card. Thank God! And a big gratitude to you that you did not leave us with the paperwork. I confess that I already wanted to do nothing more and give up everything. But you showed perseverance. Thanks again for all the good things. God bless you. Best regards Vera Sidorova”



Each Sister suffered Three Years of Prison
Excerpt from the Testimony of
Nadejda and Vera Sidorova
 (See our 1/1/2018 Newsletter!)

“Together with my sister we were active in an underground printing shop. We issued the forbidden religious publication *Khristianin* (The Christian, N. Ed.) In it, were also published names, addresses, sentences and even pictures of many imprisoned believers. Also printed were tens of thousands of New Testaments. Several Christian workers, us included, ended up arrested by the KGB in 1980. While interrogated, we were offered many times to be let free if we betrayed coworkers and collaborated with the KGB. Since we refused categorically to be traitors like Judas, our sentence was the maximum term of three years prison. We were incarcerated in the city of Sverdlovsk, Siberia, Russia. At the end of the three-years prison sentence we continued our Christian activities and were not caught again. We live together as we have no other family. May God bless you richly.”

This mission continues to help hundreds such elderly believers who suffered imprisonment under communist regimes for the faith.

409	Власенко	Валентин	Мефодьевич	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	Бычков	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	Лашенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Талченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Дочинко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отмазов	Венямин	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савинко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Фадеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Латвия
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богородице	Александр	Валеревич	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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