

## 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 Wurmbbrand with wife, Sabine

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### Announcement:

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

*"Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord"*

(John 21:12)

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.

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR JAILED CHRISTIANS REMAINING HUNGRY?

The disciples were hungry and the Lord Jesus had provided them with a meal. In this case, He, Himself, prepared it. In other cases, an angel was charged to care for a saint. When the prophet, Elijah, slept under a tree, an angel touched him and said unto him, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baked on the coals and a cruse of water at his head." (I Kings 19.6) It is easy to believe in these miracles after having eaten well. When I was in the communist prisons, you have to work hard slave labor to get food. Our imprisoned brethren do not suffer only physically. Their faith is stressed, too. Doubts arise. "The Lord is almighty. He could provide food for the first apostles or for Elijah. Why does He not provide some for me?"

Deeply distressed, we pondered this question during many years. The brethren who are in jail today in Red China, Cuba, all countries persecuting Christians, ponder it too. We found the answer. God has provided the necessary food for the Christian prisoners. Only that this time, He has entrusted with it not angels, but their fellow-Christians. As He had charged an angel to feed Elijah, now he has charged the Christians of the free world to provide with food their imprisoned brethren. But many of those who have the task to feed martyrs steal what God has given them for this purpose and deprive the martyrs of their due. Many pro-leftist churches spend from their

offerings to help communist revolutions, even guerillas in different countries. There are Christian organizations that build themselves sumptuous headquarters or pay lavish trips to their employees. According to Bible ethics this is money "stolen" from the martyrs. Never did any pastor announce, when the offering was taken, "Now give for guerillas who will murder." The church members were told that they give for the church or for missions which will teach men to love their enemies and not to constitute gangs of killers. The church members were told that they give for charity, to which nobody is more entitled than those who suffer for Christ's sake. The martyrs are provided by God, but some of the church leaders steal the money due to them and give it for leftist causes!

Don't blame only the leftist church leaders. Our neglect obliges the sufferers for Christ to hunger. God has entrusted every one of us with goods, telling us through His Word to use a part of it for the martyrs and their families. The Bible teaches "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." (Hebrews 13.3) Only that many of us do not care. We neglect this duty, not knowing the words of St. Ambrosius: "If your brother starves and you withhold your help from him, you are a thief; and if your brother dies from starvation, when you could have helped, you are a murderer." God has provided food for all the martyrs and their families. Christianity in the free world is rich enough to help them.

American President Nixon had the illusion that talking to Mao-Zedong will open Red China to the Gospel. How come they did not know the deceitfulness of Mao and all Chinese communists? In 1965, Mao published an article entitled, "Let a hundred flowers blossom. Let a hundred schools of thought contend." He encouraged everybody to criticize freely Communism. He wrote, "We shall see which flowers are the best and which school of thought is best expressed, and we shall applaud the best blooms and the best thoughts. From now on, it isn't only 'Long live the Communist Party,' but also 'Long live all the parties.' We and the other parties must live in a prolonged period of peaceful co-existence and mutual guidance." Dupes believed him and began to criticize the Party. So, Mao arrived to know all his adversaries. After three months, the slogan, "Let a hundred flowers blossom!" was abandoned, and there was a terrible clamp down on the critics, among whom many were Christians. God has provided. Unfaithful stewards or some duped, have stolen the provisions and use them against the interest of the people of God.



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!)**



**Minister Emil Riti**  
(deceased)

Suffered 14 years in the Romanian communist prisons. At one time he was in same cell with pastor Richard Wurmbrand. At trial he declared: “Had I not been a minister, I would have strived to become one, to confront the communist atheists.”

**Read his testimony in the 10/2018 Newsletter.**



**Baptist Catherine Barin**

Was sentenced to 2½ years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union for spreading among children an illustrated Children Bible printed at the initiative of pastor Richard Wurmbrand. She protested lack of freedom to the communist leader Leonid Brezhnev.

**Read her testimony in the 10/2018 Newsletter.**



**Baptist Ivan Frantzevich Tevs**

Was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union, for serving Holy Communion only once! This was called a “slandering” of the communist state.

**Read his full testimony in the 10/2018 Newsletter.**



**Baptist Aida Skripnikova**

At left, age 32. At right, after 4 years imprisonment in the former Soviet Union. She was kept 10 days and nights in solitary confinement for having a Gospel.

**Read her testimony in the 10/2018 Newsletter.**

## **Murdered After Telling Billy Graham the Truth!**



### **Heroes of the Faith! Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts**

**Brother Simendyaev’s wife wrote:** “My name is Simendyaeva Tamara Alfredovna. I am the wife of Alexander Ivanovich Simendyaev, who was convicted for the Lord in the Soviet Union and died under mysterious circumstances. We have two children, Yura and Leah. My husband came to God at the age of 30. After the conversion, he immediately joined the youth of St. Petersburg. He began to take an active part in evangelism. At that time there were difficult times for the church, but Alexander was very zealous, he worked even when there was no one to help him. Sasha had a very close relationship with God. Sometimes he read the Bible at night and fell asleep on his knees. Our church was severely persecuted during this time period. The meetings took place in the woods, since the house of prayer was

confiscated. The authorities constantly dispersed the services. The members of the church found out about the place of the meeting at the last moment, so that the KGB (Soviet secret police, N.T.) could not find out the place of service.

(over)

The sermons at these meetings focused on strengthening believers because the church needed to stand and survive during this time. At the same time, the church did great things. They preached in the city, in the park, in the cemetery and on the trains. The crowded places "of choice" were the Alexander Nevsky Prospekt, the Kazan Cathedral.

Sasha was one of the active preachers in such evangelism, for which he was arrested several times. The brothers were imprisoned and without being released, when their prison sentence term ended, they were given repeated sentence terms. The number of the church membership was dwindling and the brothers were very worried about it. Only a small handful attended the meetings. Despite this, the ministry did not stop. Seminars were held, children's meetings were held in homes and forests. Literature was published surreptitiously with support from the West. All information about the situation of believers in the Soviet Union went out to the West. Some Western ministers stood up for the persecuted brothers, publicizing the oppression of believers in the USSR. People who worked against the church in the USSR met obstacles from the West, and therefore the communist state began to make propaganda that we had complete freedom of religion.

At this turning point, the world famous preacher Billy Graham was invited to our country. He was to take part in the worship service at a registered church. The authorities wanted to pretend to him and make a worldwide propaganda that there was no persecution of believers in the Soviet Union, when in fact persecution was intensifying. Christians were left without houses of prayer, those printing secretly Christian literature were arrested and the terms in prisons for the brethren were extended. My husband Alexander, was an active participant in every underground church event.

Before the arrival of Billy Graham, a small group of trusted believers in our church was assembled. They were instructed to meet the world-famous preacher with printed texts showing the real dire situation of believers in our country. In connection with this action, there was fasting and prayer, the brethren prepared both in Russian and English 6 large silk posters stating that we have severe persecution of Christians in our country. The posters showed there were at least 500 small children taken away forcefully from their families since their fathers were in prison for preaching the Gospel. The posters told how it was prohibited in the country to distribute and print the Gospels. The posters when unfurled, urged to pray for the prisoners. The posters had to be unfurled in front of Billy Graham.

It was very difficult to get to the planned service, as individual invitations were distributed and only to certain people who were not members of the nonregistered Baptist brotherhood. Photojournalists were supposed to attend the service and therefore all information was checked. We knew how the consequences would be very grave and could cost lives. Each participant in this unfurling of the posters action was given a choice. If someone had some kind of fear and doubt, they should not have participated, but simply fast and pray. It was decided that Sasha would be the first to unfold the banner.

Immediately after Billy Gram's sermon, Alexander went to the pulpit and, standing on a bench, unfurled a poster. Everyone was in confusion, the camera flashes of the correspondents flared, the rest of our group also unfolded their posters. Billy Gram was amazed, his face displayed a sense of horror, he lowered his head and left the stage in silence. This was the last "cry" of the believers: "everything is not as they say!"

(Continued on next page!)

After that, a representative from the KGB came to the presbyter of the church and said: "The arrival of Billy Gramm was the program of our party and you raised your hand against it. We will not forgive you for this. "

Some time later, our presbyter V.A. Filipov was arrested. and two other brethren. When they were on trial, Sasha was a witness. In the testimony of Sasha, he was told by the KGB to tell a lie, something Sasha refused. He was given a prison term of 1 year.

A year later, the prison term of our second presbyter Makhovitsky and that of the evangelist Azarov ended. There was a large meeting-service, attended by many believers also from other cities. The police came to this service. They took the leading brothers and took them to the police station. The rest of the believers followed them. It was a solemn demonstration in which the Christians were singing. The police began to arrest the brothers and sisters from the crowd and take them away. I also was arrested that day.

Sasha was arrested as the organizer of the procession. He was not released from the police precinct but together with two more brothers he was transferred to the Kresty local prison and criminal cases were opened. He was sentenced to almost 3 years of strict regime. Before the trial, he was tall and corpulent, weighing about 250 Lbs. After being left to hunger and being tortured in prison, at his trial his weight was only about 150 Lbs.

All sorts of abominations were committed in the prison cell where common criminals were encouraged by the authorities to beat up the Christians. The Lord kept Sasha as he was in fasting and prayer all the time. He defended the truth of the gospel in his cell. No one could abuse him. Sasha was a courageous person. When it became very difficult in this cell and he had no more strength to endure, Alexander prayed to God about this and the next morning he was transferred to another cell. Eventually this group of brethren began to be released from prison, but my husband was one of the last to get out of prison.

Sasha served 2 years and 8 months. and at the very end of the 1988 year, he was released. Two children were born in our family. Despite family concerns, Sasha was still the same zealous and active in the work, and grew spiritually. The desire to suffer for Christ remained in his thoughts.

Unfortunately at 31, I became a widow. When our eldest son was 2 years 8 months old, Sasha's life ended under very suspicious circumstances. He went by train to the Ukraine. The woman who rode with him in the compartment testified later that Alexander read the Bible all the time during this trip. There were also three stout, tall men in his compartment. At a long stop in the city of Vinnitsa, at 6 o'clock in the evening, Sasha went out to rest a little on the station platform. The burly men followed him. These men and Sasha did not return. They were not there at night, but in the morning the three allegedly appeared on the train together with the police.

The disappearance of Sasha was explained by claiming having been hit by a train. It looked incredible, because at such a crowded station in an intense time, the tragedy remained unnoticed by anyone, the train was not stopped, the engine driver was not informed that a person could have been killed under his train, there were no real witnesses either on the train or from the street. No blood was found, either inside or outside.

(over)

His death was reported to me only after 2 weeks. This is the period after which you can bury a person as an unidentified person (so that there is no investigation) although Sasha had a phone number in his pocket. The responsible person of the train asked me to describe my husband, what kind of person he was. He was surprised that the train personnel were not questioned, they were not summoned to the prosecutor's office. After learning what kind of injury was received, the responsible person said that it was not connected with the train. I told him that my husband was in prison for the Lord and there were threats upon his release. The machinist assumed that Sasha was murdered like the famous Orthodox priest Alexander Men (murdered in 1990, before Ukraine seceded from Russia, N.T.) When called to identify the corpse, I saw a swollen body that was kept with black bruises on the hands, black fingers and there was no head. They showed me clothes and glasses, splattered with blood, but intact. There were only 2 witnesses in the investigator's case, whose testimonies contradicted one another. One testified that Sasha jumped from the train somewhere in the middle of the train. The other witness claimed that Sasha jumped from the last carriage. When I came away from the identification, I saw at home an open Bible on Sasha's table with a sheet of paper and there was a poem, a prayer: "I am reading the Bible, it's already night, I pray for the salvation of people in all nations, for blacks and whites, I see the light, I am coming to You." My husband never wrote poetry and this turned my soul around. Twenty years later, the person responsible for the service at which Billy Graham preached, came from America to our church. Leaving the pulpit, he said: "I am tormented in my conscience and I have come to ask for forgiveness. Before my eyes, I constantly have that tall man with a banner in his hands." To which our presbyter replied: "And Sasha is no longer alive." We think and believe that his holy desire was fulfilled and he suffered for the Lord and now a crown of glory is prepared for him. Now my children, Leah and Yura, are in church and serve God, they have families. I already have four grandchildren. Thank God for everything that I had to go through and for the wonderful 4 years that God gave me in the marriage to Sasha. “

*Our mission has sent help to this faithful Christian widow!*

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	1959	Украина
416	Бычков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СКОРЦОВА	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	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отмазов	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 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: website: <https://helpforrefugees.com>**

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