

## HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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Late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand with wife, Sabina

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“And He marveled because of their unbelief.” (Mark 6:6)

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 prisons.

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand

### The Son of God marvels

He had come unto His own and they received Him in a stable. Later, some humble shepherds came to worship Him. Most likely they did not bring milk or cheese for Mary and Joseph. They were followed by the Magi, rich wise men, who coming from afar they brought precious gifts; but perceiving that they might get in trouble with the local king, Herod, if they continued to adore the Savior, they never returned. Apparently, they no longer cared about the One whom they had acknowledged as the King of the chosen people. But the Son of God could only marvel how His descent upon the earth produced a cruel slaughter of innocents in the little town of Bethlehem.

As He grew up, the Lord continued to marvel about this strange world. On one hand He marveled of the lack of faith of his next of kin. “Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” (Mark 6:4) Yet, “when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” **When Jesus heard it, he marveled,** and said to them that followed, **“Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great**

**faith, no, not in Israel.”** (Matthew 8:5-10) He marveled to find strongest faith where least expected (a hated gentile of the occupying Roman army) while finding unbelief in His own nation.

In Gethsemane, He was "sore amazed." (Mark 14:33) He wondered how a gesture of love would be used as a gesture of betrayal. "(Judas) that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast." (Matthew 26:48) So when kissed, Jesus exclaimed in disbelief: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48)

Jesus marveled how the greatest of his apostles, Peter, would deny Him repeatedly, while at the same time, the whole band of disciples would forsake Him and flee, and He, the incarnate Creator, would be arrested by His creatures!

After 430 years of slavery in Egypt, Jews had witnessed incredible miracles God brought about: the 10 plagues he punished the Egyptians with, so the Jews could be freed. Yet, when about to witness the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, they were scared of the pursuing Egyptian chariots. Full of sarcasm they said unto Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

Moses had to reassure their lack of faith: "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Exodus 14:11-14)

Jesus marvels about the fact that so many witness His marvels and yet do not marvel. He has to marvel in their place. He was not discouraged by men's attitudes but "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Jesus is God. How can God marvel and be amazed at such foreordained situations? Well, the Lord takes our place in all things. He knew no sin, but became sin for us and bore on the cross the punishment we deserved. He marvels in our place because we lost the habit of marveling. From Bethlehem to Golgotha, Jesus marveled about what He experienced. He also marvels at what happens today. You also are disregarded sometimes by your most beloved, even though you have done the right things. You cannot have a better fate than that of the Master. Marvel a little bit, and imitate Jesus by going about doing good. Jesus marveled about men's attitudes. He did not seek for explanations. When He met hatred, He did not investigate its cause. He says, "They hated me without a cause." (John 15:25) The same is true in the realm of the spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8) Some believe, some disbelieve, some are cruel, some are meek. You, on your part, must not lose time investigating the "why" of attitudes. Go around doing and teaching 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.

“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)



Julia Andreevna Romanov,  
born 1936, at time of arrest.

### Christians Helped with Your Gifts! A Fulfilled Prophetic Dream!

*[Sister Yulia Andreevna Romanov, now 82, sent us a long description of her suffering inside Russian communist jails. In short, she described how she had been arrested by the Soviet communist authorities on October 11, 1971. The Soviet police charge against her was her having been part of an underground Christian organization titled Council of Relatives of the Imprisoned Christians led by Lydia Mikhailovna Vins, the mother of Georgy Petrovich Vins, a Christian leader who was already a-third-generation prisoner of the Soviets because of his courageous Christian witness. Eventually Lydia Vins and her son were freed from prison due to international protests and their whole family, exchanged for two Soviet spies, made it to the US. Yuliya Andreevna not only remained in a Soviet jail but ended up on same prison cot where Mrs. Vins had laid upon while imprisoned.*

*She had a fulfilled prophetic dream of her sentence being reduced to half that greatly impressed all fellow prisoners and made them attentive to her Christian testimony. We encourage readers to look up the part we reproduced in the previously issued November 2018 Newsletter, you may find on our website: <http://helpforrefugees.com>, third column. The second half of her testimony continues below!]*

Being an adult already, I prayed once to the Lord: “if you want to use me even in a prison - I am ready!”

As soon as I entered the cell in the preliminary detention center (KPZ), and walked in the overcrowded cell-room, I heard a girl whose name I found out later to be Vera (Faith, in English) singing the Christian hymn “Do not grieve, my dear soul.” I was so happy and asked her: “are you a believer?” She answered: “no!” I told her: “how come then you sing our hymns!” She explained: “my mother is a believer, believers came to our house, sang these hymns, so I learned this one.” Then she said: “Yuliya, when you entered our cell, your face showed being depressed, so, I decided to encourage you, by singing a song I imagined you knew! Even more, I want you to know, you are here in this prison-cell at my request!” I was surprised, I told her: “How is it possible? After all, we do not know each other!”

Vera began telling me of herself: I have been under interrogation for 4 years already, I was separated from my baby and I am innocent! Today I wanted to commit suicide. But before taking such a dramatic step, first time in my life, I prayed: God, if it’s true that You exist, send me a believing woman in my cell! And now (by your appearance here) it’s obvious to me that there is a God!” After telling all this to me, she was about to be taken to another interrogation-session and she asked me: “let us now pray together, that I should again end up in same cell you are, that we should continue our being-together!” The Kiev Prison was huge, holding about 5,000 people! Full of sudden faith, I hurriedly told Vera: “For sure we will be in the same cell!” When she left, I asked the Lord in fervent prayers, I should end up in the same cell as Vera ‘s!

Meanwhile I was brought into a box-type cell, only a door, no table, no chair, no window. I saw all the walls and the entire floor stained with fresh blood! I was horrified at this moment and I fell down and began to ask the Lord to make my faith firm and help my mind not break down. I imagined that this is a torture chamber! I don’t know how long I was there. The door

opened, I was escorted out. It turned out not to be the way I had imagined! I found out later someone had tried commit suicide in that cell by opening their veins, therefore the bloody traces.

They took me to the 4th floor. On the way I accidentally looked in the mirror and did not recognize myself there: I had turned totally gray while in this narrow box-cell. My whole hair had been black when entering it. I was 35 years old.

When I got back into the general cell, before I could reach my cot (which used to be occupied, as I explained before by the famous Christian lady-prisoner Lydia Vins) here comes into the same cell, Vera! My prayers had been fulfilled! How joyful I found out moreover her bunkbed was next to mine! So, the Lord again answered my prayers and our fellowship could continue. Soon Vera was rehabilitated and freed. Criminal charges against her were spurious. (She had worked before as a PR in an airport. Thieves had stolen some items and unbeknownst to her had placed such in her storage place, while she could prove she was unaware. it took 4 years of investigations to rehabilitate her.)

Myself, a Christian (unlike common-law prisoners) was interrogated for half a year before the trial took place. After the trial, a lawyer visited me in prison. I told him: "I have already had my trial (at which I received a three-years sentence) it is too late for you to defend me!" He answered: "your interrogator asked me come to you, so that I could do something to shorten your prison term; I will try help you out!" I replied: "if the Lord intended to shorten my term, it will be so through you!" There was a



Now sister Yuliya Andreevna Romanov with her niece

convict who was in charge of announcing all official answers to all the petitions made by prisoners. This man asked me to write a letter to the Supreme Court, telling me that this letter would be read by my defender. At the end of my letter, I added: "I do not appeal to your mercy, I would like to see your love at least once in my life."

I woke up one morning, feeling something very hot under the pillow I was sleeping on. I did not understand, I thought: "what do they want do to me this time?" I jumped up, there was a small lamp near my bunk, I took a newspaper roll from under the pillow, I opened it, and in it were 2 large, cooked potatoes! I immediately understood everything: prisoners found out that I had a birthday today and decided to surprise me! I started kissing and thanking everyone. And in the morning, when I began to descend from the upper plank beds, I saw a large flower-straw on the nightstand under the plank bed and a poster hung on the wall with a birth day greeting!

I couldn't understand who could think of me. Fellow- prisoners told me: when they took you to the hospital, Zina, the cell-foreperson asked everyone: if God will reveal to me some mercy, Yuliya will return. Then she ordered prisoners grab some flowers. At night, Zina found one of the prison-cooks and asked he cook these two potatoes. She also arranged for someone to draw a poster. Yes, the Lord was very close to me and miraculously encouraged me during these sorrows and trials!

There was another incident I would like to describe: By mistake I had spilled some hot gruel-soup on the shoulder of one of the female prisoners. These prisoners were common law convicts held for violent crimes. Before I could apologize, she poured hot water on my face and I got burned. Without getting angry I sat down and she provoked me: "woman, this is the first time in my life, I witness such quiet reaction! Where did you get such power?" I replied: "my Lord gives me this power!" While I was changing, I was all the time talking to the Lord so that He would send me the right thoughts and feelings. My fellow prisoners though revolted against this common-law woman prisoner and made a petition to the prison-foreman who called me in, to sign a prepared complaint. I asked: "what will happen if I sign it?" The foreman answered: they will put her in a high-security punishing stockade for 6 months! After his reply, I took the complaint and in front of all of them, I tore the paper to pieces.

Being very sick I was taken to the prison hospital. The prison doctor sarcastically ridiculed me saying: "You are a Baptist Christian! Let your God heal you!" I lay on the couch and called out to the Heavenly Father, thinking that maybe I will die soon and wouldn't see people close and dear to my heart: my mother, daughter, sister or friends. I mentally said a "goodbye" to them. Suddenly a small swallow alighted on the edge of the window of the prison hospital room. I stretched out my hand toward the window and to my surprise - the swallow did not fly away! I took the bird in my hands, then her wings fluttering she returned to stay on the window sill, it seemed looking back at me, as if saying goodbye and flew away! I took this bird as a messenger from Heaven to comfort and encourage me. I felt the nearness of the Lord. While in prison I composed some Christian poetry that I could remember later on and wrote it down, when I was free.

Eventually on the day of my release, I left so many prisoners behind. Many of them, without even knowing me personally, having heard only what was said about me, about my Christian testimony, also came to say goodbye to me. When we all came to the gatehouse, the prison authorities came out to meet us. All of them were very surprised by so many prisoners wishing to say goodbye to me! And then there was a woman prison supervisor, walking and sobbing, embracing me. All the authorities were in great surprise, one of them tried reprimanding this woman by name and asked: Tatyana Ivanovna, what happens, on whose side are you? She answered: (You don't understand) how much good (Yuliya) did to me in these one and a half years of prison! Then she squeezed me in her arms!

When I reached the exit, all the prisoners asked me: Yuliya, when you get out of the area, look back at the prison-camp! I did just that and saw how the prisoners climbed onto the roof of the dining room and everyone waved to me, some with a handkerchief, someone with an apron, and the woman-supervisor climbed onto one of the guard-towers and from there she was waving goodbye.

Until the end of my life I cannot forget it! How many favors the Lord showed me when I was under interrogation, during the harsh prison time and how such an unforgettable farewell was also due to His great Grace! Praise and glory to Him! If my testimony is encouraging even one soul, then I did not write all this in vain! Stay with the Lord, dear friends in Christ and pray for me. With warm greetings to all of you - Yuliya Andreevna Romanov.

**Christians Helped with Your Gifts!**  
**Reverend Filip CRACIUN (deceased\*)** suffered  
 nine years of communist imprisonment  
 for his faith



He was born in a family with 12 children. He completed a theological degree in the Romanian cities of Alba Iulia and Iasi. First, he was imprisoned, between 1945-1947 in the Soviet Union. The Romanian communist government arrested him for refusing to be part of the state-recognized church and

he was imprisoned in 6 different prisons from 1948 to 1955. He was again arrested for holding underground church meetings and Bible studies between 1959 and 1960. He became an ordained minister in 1964.

**Here is how he described his sad life in the communist prisons of Romania:** When arrested he was kept for a week in an underground cellar with his feet in water to his knees. Then he was kept in the prison of Baia Mare for a whole year in a prison cell in total darkness. From time to time he would be sprayed with cold water or taken out to be beaten. He kept his sanity by unceasing prayer. He would receive his meager food ration every second day. Reverend Craciun was then transported to the Danube slave-labor prison-camp in barracks unheated during winter. They had to walk daily about 10 miles to work and anyone collapsing was just shot. The many prisoners who died of hunger, freezing cold or tortured were buried in large common graves. Being still young he survived and was freed after four years. These prisoners were warned not to disclose what they went through or will be arrested again. Indeed, he was rearrested for 11 months after having been discovered participating in underground Christian meetings, organized surreptitiously to help him become a minister.

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	Тислен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бачило	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СКВОРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЙВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варовин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Лашенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Ташенко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Половин	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отмаков	Венедикт	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Федеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Австрия
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Австрия
429	Богородице	Александр	Валериевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миников	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

**Christians Helped with your Gifts!**

Above, a 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 and over 110 of other languages. Many of their testimonies you can read in the monthly newsletter. Testimonies available also on the internet at:

<http://helpforrefugees.com>.

*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 in all Eastern Europe or Russia, some help needs be sent through local nonprofits in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova. Help for Refugees, Inc. PO Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA. 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 tax-deductible. \*(For many Christians we have helped in the past, now deceased, we continue where possible helping, a surviving spouse. Reverend Craciun has never been married.)*