

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 Wurmland with wife, Sabina

April 2021

“For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 2:7)

Late Reverend Richard Wurmland spent 14 years in Romanian communist prisons. Mrs. Wurmland 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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmland

MESSENGERS OF GOD

In the USA one hears much these days about corruption in high places. Presidents, aides and cabinet members have been charged, indicted or sentenced for bribery, fraud, perjury, lawlessness. However, the opponents of various administrations don't fare better. At one time, the ASSOCIATED PRESS accused 16 Congressmen investigating such corruption, of having accepted bribes. By way of contrast, political scandals in BRITAIN and GERMANY are quickly covered up, though these countries have had their share of public exposure to the misdemeanors of men in authority. The press and other news media rivet our eyes on the political scene. This is a diversion. The root of the evil is somewhere else.

Almost all these members of government are church-goers. They have spiritual shepherds, priests, pastors, and rabbis. How did these tend their sheep? Do they not know the spiritual state of their church members? Is a priest or pastor not responsible for the spiritual well-being of his flock? Does he not teach them to come to KIBROTH HATAAVAH (in Hebrew "the grave of lusts," Numbers 11:34) and there bury the lust for fame and riches and power?

When the Jews left Egyptian slavery, they had to wander forty years through the desert before entering PALESTINE, the holy land, which they could have reached after a journey of a few days. This happened because among the leaders who had to make the assessment of the situation, only two, JOSHUA and CALEB, had fully followed the Lord wholeheartedly! (Numbers 14:24)

The way toward the Kingdom of Heaven which is within us, the way of sanctification and of fulfilling God's will in personal and national life is a short one, but did our priests and pastors teach our politicians the "direct route" of following the Lord fully? What politician who knows God Himself can be lured by applause or money? Rather, he should be seated in heavenly places, above space and time, and should view the turmoil within and among nations as vanity. His own goodness, clear vision and love could then become blessings.

The prophet MALACHI does not speak a word against politicians. He has a whole chapter against the clergy. A prophet jeopardizes his public relations when he speaks against the clergy. So do we. Clergymen against whom we speak out are not likely to support us. But it is thus that one shows faithfulness toward the message he has from God. Interestingly, MALACHI generalizes, making no distinction between good and bad clergymen, He spoke with passionate intensity. There surely were good priests in Malachi's time. Being humble, they did not take offense. Humility cannot feel hurt, but rejoices when sin is exposed. The clergy have to choose between enduring these things themselves or bowing to Communism, flattering the tyrants, and lying about non-existent liberties. There is also a movement of Christian socialism, joined in England by important politicians.

The Party under whose leadership they operate is avowedly Leninist. Lenin once wrote in a letter to Gorkii, "Any religious idea, the slightest notion of God, is a most dangerous abomination, to which thousands of epidemics and natural catastrophes are to be preferred." These comrade church leaders have united under the leadership of comrade God-haters, whose program is to abolish all religion. The same intense pro-leftist trend appears in different guises in the Free World. Most churchgoers claim clergy should stay out of politics. But this is wishful thinking. Of what quality is your priest, bishop or preacher in the Free World? I don't care if he preaches well or not. Would he leave his family, his material situation and become a tortured prisoner, or would he try to keep something by compromising? Would he oppose the Herods of today as did St. John the Baptist, paying with his head, or would he be a religious clown in court? Ask your pastor this straight question.



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 Stepan Germaniuk

He suffered two imprisonments during 7½ years and 3 years being banished in the far reaches of eastern Siberia by the Sea of Okhotsk. Read his testimony in the 1/2017 Newsletter and excerpts from his book in the March, April and May 2021 Newsletters.



Baptist Polushin Nikolaevich

8 years of prison while having five children and refusing to become a KGB informer against his fellow believers. He was fined more than ½ of a trained nurse's monthly salary for holding prayer meetings in his home. Read his testimony in the 3/2018 Newsletter.



Krivtsova Natalia

Sentenced when 31, to 3 years of prison in the Soviet Union for teaching Sunday school classes. She knows personally more than 250 Christians arrested in the Soviet Union for their Christian witness. Read her full testimony in the 4/2018 Newsletter.



Balogh Bela

A Reformed-church Christian who was sentenced to nine years imprisonment term. In court he was able to whisper surreptitiously to his wife: “entrust your life again in the hand of Christ!” Read his full testimony in the 4/2018 Newsletter.

Heroes of the Faith Persecuted Christians Helped with your Gifts

7½ Years of Jail and 3 Years Banishment in Siberia

Stepan Germaniuk, A Baptist Minister who Suffered for the faith

Continued from the March 2021 newsletter!

“The time had come for my prison term to end and the KGB (Soviet Secret Police N. Ed.) fell upon me with renewed strength. “You created a greenhouse (comfortable) environment for Germaniuk!” they reproached the administration of the camp. “Immediately take him to another job, so he can feel he is in prison!” The head of the colony transferred me to the chemical production shop where Romanovich worked. It was hard work. It seemed to me that I had never prayed so much before: I would rise up, sometimes, on my knees and cry, crying to God for help.

The end of the first jail-term

I counted the days, months and years, and my term was coming to an end. One day during working hours I was called to the office of the deputy commander. Anticipating what was waiting for me there (probably asking to deny his faith, N. Ed.) I refused: “I can't, I have to accomplish the work-quota!”

They came after me three times and I had to go. In the office of the deputy commander sat two in civilian clothes. They greeted me with open arms, with a smile, reaching out to shake hands.

“I’m a working man, my hands are dirty”, - I showed my palms.

“And if his hands were clean, would he shake hands?” Asked the older man.

"No, I wouldn't do it either," I confessed.

“Thank you for being honest," he nodded with some disappointment.

“Who do I deal with?” I asked. “I need to know who you are. Otherwise, I won't talk to you.” Seeing my categoric rejection, the younger one showed his ID:

“Major Fesunenko. I'm from Kiev, an employee of the State Security Committee.”

The gray-haired man also showed his ID. It was Colonel Volynyuk Ivan Ivanovich from Lugansk.

They started: “Now all over the world there is a unification of religions. Why don't you join this movement? We're here to help you!” "I am now a prisoner, that's why I can't solve any issues. But even if I could, I would be against this movement. It doesn't fit the Bible.”

They abruptly changed the subject.

"We sometimes leave the family for a month, and it's so hard!" Volynyuk said with a hint of sympathy. "You've been without a family for so long. Why don't we think about release? It's very difficult for children and your wife without you!

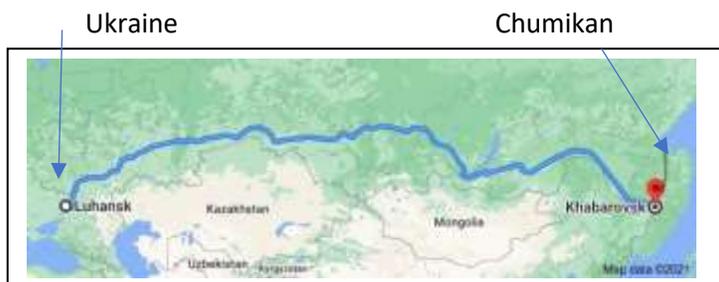
“Let everything go as God has determined,” I replied.

That was the end of our short conversation.

My sentence was over in September 1977. I still had three years of exile ahead.

The closer the day of liberation was, the more anxiety in my heart grew about where I would be sent in banishment. I asked one of the other bosses about it several times, but no one could tell me anything. There were people in the special unit who respected me, but they didn't know anything yet. I had a farewell party with the prisoners. Many people treated me with great respect. It was the last time I reminded them of God.

In the morning, I was taken from **Luhansk prison** to Nikolaevsk-on-Amur (a settlement in the extreme eastern Siberia N.Ed.) I had to go through ten transit prisons, being transported in a prison-wagon. Only on the sixtieth day I arrived at my destination - the village of Chumikan of the Khabarovsk region. In the compartment, which usually is made for four, prisoners, were placed seventeen-twenty people. In such impossible conditions we were transported four days.



After being freed from 4½ years of prison, Baptist minister Germaniuk was banished by the Soviets, all the way from Luhansk, Ukraine, to Chumikan, a settlement in the far eastern reaches of Siberia, by the Sea of Okhotsk. He travelled more than 5,100 miles, for 60 days, in inhumane conditions, in a prison-wagon, 17-20 prisoners jammed into a 4-persons compartment! Subsequently, he was imprisoned again, for 3 years.

On the way to the transit prisons, they gave us a loaf of black bread and a few salt fish. Most of the prisoners ate a pack in one sitting, and then rode hungry. There were always problems with the toilet - the soldiers did not want to take prisoners out of the compartment, and many had to suffer because of it.

At the stations, where we were transferred from the car to the prison-carriage, there were also difficulties. More often than not, prisoners did not fit in the car, and the soldiers pushed us with their boots like firewood.

It is impossible to describe all the tribulations we went through (for 60 days.) I had to see a lot of violence, to endure all sorts of insults. Each prison has its own peculiarities, its own problems. There are a lot of insects in Lugansk, a lot of dirt.

Sverdlovsk prison is very large, and there is a lot of lawlessness in it too. There, the cellmates pilfered my bag after cutting it with a blade and, while I was sleeping, pulled out everything I had. Mockingly they asked, "what do you say?"

"I forgive you," I said. "But you shouldn't have done that. You'd rather ask, I'd give."

After that, I absolutely sincerely thanked God that I had nothing in my bag and I wandered around the prisons like all prisoners.

Novosibirsk prison was the cleanest.

Krasnoyarsk prison is ancient, wooden, but the situation in it is oppressive. They gave me something that looked like a mattress. It is not known how many people slept on it, from cotton wool left only shreds. We were put in a cell for the night. I saw blood on the floor and on the walls. Looks like someone got hit hard, maybe to death. One night we spent the night on death row. Very gloomy room - chairs and table of iron, concrete, on the windows reinforced bars.

The **Irkutsk prison** is special, the situation in it is prohibitively difficult. In the cells there were three-tiered bunks, and it was necessary to climb to the upper tiers on an inconvenient wooden staircase. We came to this prison tired and exhausted and literally fell exhausted on the bunks. But before we could doze off, we were attacked by hordes of bedbugs. They sting mercilessly. We turned on the lights and didn't sleep until the morning, picking insects in soapboxes and jars. This stage of my imprisonment was difficult and at the same time, full of God's blessings. For two months no one beat me, did not offend me. Once one child-support worker - a tall, strong guy, decided to hurt me and began to sneer stupid questions. About twenty people watched our conversation. I have always mentally asked the Lord for wisdom on how to behave, and He has helped me. When the convicts realized that the mocker had not managed to embarrass me in a pickle, they immediately drove him under the bottom shelf. There is such a system - the upper hand is not the force, but the dexterity of the mind. And the child-support worker went quiet, fell silent, and never molested me again.

I have always told everyone about God, about his love and omnipotence. When I went into the cell, I never stopped at the doorstep, as the newcomers do. After saying hello, I would go to the table and say, "I am a believer, let me pray." And began to pray in a whisper. Sometimes I knelt, sometimes I turned to the guard standing up. The prisoners were watching me, and they immediately had a lot of questions. God gave me the wisdom to respond to the trickiest of them, so that detractors and mockers remained ashamed. With God's help I arrived in Khabarovsk. It is very far from Lugansk. I was held in **Khabarovsk prison** for thirteen days. The executive committee couldn't decide where to send me.

God's enemies really wanted to harm my health, to create for me the most difficult conditions, otherwise they could have allowed me stay in Khabarovsk. Khabarovsk prison was distinguished by the fact that from evening till morning none of the guards checked what was being done in the cells. There I witnessed violence, beatings and all kinds of grief.

There was arbitrariness in the cell - who wanted did what he did. Some took away someone's sugar. It was used as a drug. Others hung the bunks with sweatshirts and raped there those who succumbed to their tricks, weak-willed. Despite the fact that I arrived in Khabarovsk prison very tired, I could not sleep in the cell. There was a guy swearing a lot, and in an expletive mentioned the name of God, and I asked him in at one occasion:

“Vova, is there a God?” “No,” he said categorically. “Why do you mention His name, and even with such terrible expletives?” While he thought, I had an answer, I said:

“Stop swearing! It's not safe. There is a God, even though you don't believe it. He's omnipotent, and he can turn your head so that you're going to look back. Please don't swear!”

And he stopped foul language. A couple of days later, a man was placed in our cell, who also heavily swore. “You! Silence!” the convicts told him, “we have a holy man here!”

“A Saint?” The new one asked with defiance. “Does he believe in God? Tomorrow he will renounce Him!”

I was dozing off on the bunks at the time. And when I woke up, the new guy sat down with me. He mockingly asked: “Do you, Father, believe in God?” “Yes, I do.”

I began to tell him what kind of God I believe in, what He did for me, how he loved his creation and quoted many places from the Bible. He listened attentively, listened, and then got up and shouted to the whole cell: “Guys, God is definitely here!”

(To be continued in the May 2021 newsletter! Adapted excerpts from a published autobiography in Russian, sent to the mission by brother Stepan Germaniuk.)

409	Власенко	Валентин	Медведевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казакстан
411	Курбан	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казакстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Даянд	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1958	Украина
416	Барнов	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СВЮРЦОВА	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	Богодирков	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 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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