

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

Michael Wurmland, President

Tel. (310) 544-0814, Fax: (310) 377-0511.

PO Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA.

Email: 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



August 2020

"He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack;"

(Proverbs 28:27)

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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmland

RENOUNCING IMMATERIAL POSSESSIONS

In Florence, Italy, the (communist-revolutionary) Red Brigade leader Furbolone planned a bank robbery - what the Brigade terms an "expropriation." The communist ideology is to take away property through violence from the rich.

Two revolutionists disguised as policemen had to stand at the entrance to the building, while two others entered to force the teller to give up the money. A car with a false license plate number waited in front of the bank to assure the escape. Furbolone himself, disguised as a beggar, sat on the steps of the Santa Maria Church opposite the bank, from which post he was to give the signals commanding the operation.

A young girl, on the way to school, ascended the church steps for a short prayer. Seeing the beggar, she took her lunch out of the bag, broke off a part for herself, and gave him the remainder. Irritated at this interruption in his plans, Furbolone wanted to push the girl aside. But all at once he was struck with the thought: this is a human being who looks upon me with love, who considers me honest and worthy of esteem. Instead of giving the signal for the burglary, the notorious terrorist took the sandwich from the smiling girl and entered the church with her. His criminal life was at an end.

Rich men of the West, who shun poverty for themselves, are ignored when they tell the hungry to bear their poverty without rebelling. Communist propaganda is very effective.

Everyone can receive a blessing by helping the poor. But the richest blessing is reserved for those who become poor themselves, who give to God all they have, desiring nothing for themselves, though they may administer goods on God's behalf while living on a modest level. Saint Paul wrote: "and having food and raiment let us be therewith content." (1st Timothy 6:8)

Still, it is easier give away material wealth, rather than become "poor in spirit." Those wealthy in spirit can have the happiness of the fulfilled duty, of great achievements; but the complete happiness - the kingdom of heavens - belongs only to those "poor in spirit." Apostle James wrote about poor who are "rich in faith!" James Epistle 2:5 reads: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world **rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?**" Giving away physical belongings is easier though than renouncing immaterial possessions: self-pride, theories, renounce your self-justifying thoughts, renounce greed.

A beggar once said to an emperor, "If you are going to give me anything, it must be on one condition." The emperor, who had never met such a beggar, asked what the condition might be. "You must absolutely fill my bowl," said the beggar. "I'm no beggar! I can fill your small bowl even with diamonds," replied the emperor and he ordered it done. Many precious stones were poured into the bowl, but they disappeared as they fell in. Now the emperor said in a rage, "Even if my whole kingdom disappears, I cannot allow this beggar to embarrass me." But the diamonds continued to vanish. Finally, the emperor asked the beggar to tell him the secret of the begging bowl. "It is made of human ego, of selfishness," replied the beggar. "It gloats everything, yet remains always empty, hungry, never satisfied." Luxurious cars, big bank accounts, fine houses, high positions and reputation are just challenges to the ego to demand more.

There is though a way this "bottomless bowl of human selfishness" be filled up. "The unsearchable riches of Christ" can fill "the bottomless bowl of human selfishness." How so? The Gospel recounts how two of Jesus' disciples, James and John, came unto him, saying, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. "They "did not know what they asked for." Jesus said to his disciples: "whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefs, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. "(Mark 10:37-45) Thus "the unsearchable riches of Christ" were described by the Lord Jesus Himself: The Son of God Himself being our servant and we following Him in sacrifice for truth. The only real glory is to renounce glory. Even heavenly beings cast down their crowns before the throne of Christ. (Revelation 4:10)



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 Wurmbbrand 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 testimonies in our past newsletters at <http://helpforrefugees.com> (third column!)



Suffered 9 Years and 7 Years in Communist Prisons for the Faith!

These two nuns, Olimpia (left) and her sister Antoneta (right) gave secret shelter in 1950, to several ministers who were sought and about to be arrested by the Romanian communist secret security (secret police) service. Read about them in the 8/2017 Newsletter.



Suffered 3 Years in Soviet Prisons for Printing the New Testament

Mikhail Deshko could have been freed early, had he accepted become a KGB (Soviet Secret Police) informer. He did not! Above, the Deshko Family with their faithful 14 children. Read brother Deshko's testimony in the 9/2017 Newsletter.



Christians Helped with your Gifts 2 Years Communist Sentence for Teaching the Bible!

Sister Galina DULIA wrote: “We lived our childhood in the (former) Soviet Union during the years in which believers were persecuted. Parents taught us the fear of God, together we read the Word of God and prayed. We tried not to miss the meetings that were held in the homes of believers.

When 16, God taught me repentance and my soul was filled with the joy of salvation. I said to the Lord: “Lead me as you want.” And the Lord led. In the spring of 1966, there was a call for those who wanted to be baptized. I thought that I was still young (and by nature was shy.) But a voice sounded inside: “If not now, then never.” The next time I declared my desire to enter

into the covenant with the Lord and received the holy water baptism.

It was 1967, I graduated from high school and on the advice of my parents, applied to enter a medical school. Though I studied very well, I was not received since I was not a Komsomol member (the communist Youth Organization, N. Ed.)

I continued my work in the unregistered Baptist church. We read the Word of God with children, memorized rhymes, prayed, gathering secretly in different homes. In one of the houses, representatives of the communist authorities, even my school principal, caught us teaching children. While writing the citation, our minister Ivan Petrovich (now with the Lord) was included as well. Underaged children were summoned as witnesses. Three of us (including my sister) were accused of organizing an illegal religious children school.

In 1967, brother Alex asked I marry him and on August 13, 1967, our marriage took place. But by the end of December, my sister and I were arrested and put in a prison cell in our city. On February 7, 1968, my sister turned 18 and the prosecutor allowed me to congratulate her. They made us meet inside the police station. We just hugged and burst into tears and we had to part. They took me to a regional prison in a prison van. Every Monday they took me to the prosecutor's office to be interrogated about the children school. We were three in the cell.

(continued on next page)

A middle-aged woman, who later admitted that she was placed-in to obtain more accusatory information on my case. The second was a 17-year-old girl, a thief. She knelt down to pray near the bunk and she touched my (pregnant) tummy. I asked: 'Why are you doing this?' She answered: 'I want you to pray for me.'

The interrogations lasted 3½ months. Before Easter I was allowed to go home. A month later, a trial took place and my sister and I were sentenced to different terms. Under article 138 (2) of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. I was sentenced to 2 years of prison in a general labor colony. Since I was already pregnant, they gave me a 1-year suspended sentence in order to have a baby and then serve the sentence. Since the Church and parents prayed, wrote petitions, the term that I served was counted as the time I had been imprisoned already. They did not arrest me again.

I am very grateful to my Lord that He was always with me. I am grateful for His school in which He taught me His lessons: to read and study His Word more, never be offended by anyone, to see the beauty of His Creation. This was useful to me for all my life. We have been married for 53 years. The Lord gave us 11 children (one died in a car accident.) Everyone has families, they serve the Lord. We have 70 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. All praise the Lord. In June 1994 the Russian government issued me a certificate of rehabilitation."

Christians Helped with Your Gifts

Anatol Kirilyuk Three Years of Communist Imprisonment for Conducting Christian Youth-Meetings



Brother Kirilyuk wrote to us: "Greetings! In the seventies and eighties of the 20th century, the Church of Christ (inside the Soviet Union) suffered very difficult times. In the city of Lugansk (even now in the Russian occupied Ukraine, N. Ed.) police officers and the district executive committee appeared, often unexpectedly, in our church meetings, gave citations and issued heavy fines to all those present at the services. They demanded that we stop the meetings and if we did not stop, they used physical force and dispersed us.

At one of the services in the house of the Zolotarev family, they arrested me and took me to court and imprisoned me at first for ten days. Searches were made in my house and spiritual literature, magazines and fraternal sheets were confiscated.

The communist Secretary of the Executive Committee, named Bogracheva M.K. told me personally, that if it were in her power, she would personally shoot us all. I answered her, 'Thank God, you do not have such power!'

On 2/10/1980, I worked in a factory on first shift and the master (mechanic) approached me and said 'Anatol, proceed to the master-mechanic room!' I went into the master's room, and there were three police officers sitting, and one of them said: 'Come with us!' When I asked 'where to?' He replied, 'to the city prosecutor's office.'

When they brought me to the prosecutor's office, the city prosecutor asked me: 'How will you be able to live? Change your (Christian) views and behavior in your church gatherings. Will you continue violate Soviet law?'

(continued on next page)

He showed with one hand, 'there is your house' and on the other side, 'there is a prison!' To this, I answered him that I do not violate the laws of our freedom of conscience and of our Christian faith. And he took a rubber stamp which he applied and said: 'to prison!'

They took me to a detention center. When still imprisoned, nine month later, on November 25, 1980, I was taken to court. They handled me as a dangerous criminal, since I was taken to court in a paddy wagon (a police van) having a separate solitary cell in which you could only stand.

By the courthouse, there were many of our friends, brothers, sisters and youth. They did not allow anyone into the court except my wife and my father, pretending there were no seats. The hall was filled with people who were brought from government enterprises and some from my factory where I worked.

The judge found that 'the defendant Kirilyuk, being one of the leaders of an unregistered group of Baptists in Lugansk, violated deliberately the requirements of (communist) laws on the separation of (Soviet) schools from the church. It can be seen from the case file, that he systematically violated the requirements of both the provisions on religious associations and the (Soviet) legislation on religious cults.'

Witness Bogracheva M.K., the executive committee secretary testified in court that 'Kirilyuk the Baptist schismatic is one of the organizers of (church) gathering in homes (in a specific case) the home of the Sazhnev's family. He was repeatedly subjected to administrative penalties for violating cult laws.'

A similar testimony was given by the deputy chief of the police department, and the deputy chief of the criminal investigation department of the police department, named Ovcharenko and its head person, named Petrenko.

Witness Zelenskaya testified in court that 'on December 9, 1979, together with Zhuk and Kotykh, they visited family Volkov's dwelling, block 5, Apartment 29. They saw 19 children being present in the apartment hallway and in the hands of the children were (Christian) books and notebooks. Kirilyuk gathered up children from all over the city, conducted classes to teach religion in violation of (Soviet) laws.'

The sentencing document stated that 'in view of such circumstances, the preliminary investigative (communist) authorities correctly qualified the actions of the defendant Kirilyuk according to part 2 of article 138, of the Soviet Criminal Code. Because he intentionally violated the laws on the separation of the church from the state and the school from the church, based on the foregoing, the court found Kirilyuk A.P. guilty, and sentenced him to imprisonment under the subsection 138 (2) of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, to three years of general regime prison.' They sent me to the city of Poltava to serve the sentence, in a prison named ITK No. 16.

In spite of all the oppression and persecution, the Church grew big spiritually and the Lord added the saved to the Church. Like it is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah in the 54th chapter, verse 17: '**No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*'"**

Christians Helped with Your Gifts

Baptist Deacon Sentenced to 2½ Years of Communist Prison



His grand-daughter wrote to us: "Chepets Ivan Filatovich (now 91) from the Dnipropetrovsk region (in today's Ukraine, formerly part of the Soviet Union) served God from young age. When 27 he married Ryabinka Polina Nikolaevna from Nikopol. They had 3 daughters and

one son. He organized Baptist home-church meetings. Such meetings were disrupted by the Soviet secret police (the KGB) and attendees were fined more than one third monthly salary. Even his youngest daughter Lilly, ended up being fined 12 rubles for having played the piano when accompanying the Christian songs. Such house meetings were organized because the communist authorities forbade children be brought into the church gatherings. After three short detentions and warnings from the communist authorities, he ended up being sentenced to 2½ years of prison. He was convicted under article 187-3 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The accusations read: 'attending Christian children meetings, preaching the gospel, holding home church-services.'

Brother Chepets served the entire term in the Donetsk region, Telmanove district, of the village of Myrne, together with other imprisoned fellow believers Antonov P.I., Nagornai* A., Shkarovsky Pavel*, Polishchuk N.P. These brethren were engaged in the forced labor of weaving nets and if someone could not cope with the norm, then others helped. Christians worked well and were respected. Once the tower guards had to go and the car broke down and they called Antonov Pavel and the breakdown was quickly fixed. The brothers also shared food, clothing. At 23, Chepets son had paralysis in both legs and since his wife had died, Chepets took care of his son for 27 years. His wife died when he was 83. At the moment, I.F. Chepets lives with his daughter, Zhurba Nina Ivanovna in the Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk region. He has three daughters, one granddaughter and four great-grandchildren."

* See testimonies of Shkarovsky Pavel and his brother Anatoly, also of Nagornai A. in our May and November 2019 Newsletters.

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	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Биченко	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	Таличенко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	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	Богородинов	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 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:** <https://helpforrefugees.com>

Help for Refugees, Inc. PO Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA.

Email: 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.