

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

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“And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, it is better for me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?” (Jonah 4:6-10)

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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmland

How to Obtain God's Mercy?

The shadow, in the Bible, is an image of the transitory. "Our days on earth are a shadow," says Bildad. (Job 8:9) "Man flees as a shadow and continues not," says Job himself. (Job 14:2) "Man spends all the days of his vain life as a shadow," says Solomon. (Ecclesiastes 6:12) He had inherited this thought from his father David. "Our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding." (1 Chronicles 29:5)

Jonah was one of God's prophets. Jonah's way was not one of obedience, but, on the contrary. He doesn't agree with God's plans for himself and for others. He runs away from God. Many people sent by God refused at first such high calling. Examples abound in the Bible, like with Jonah, the prophet. But God does not run away from Jonah. On the contrary, will look for him and bring him back with a strong hand. God seems to say: "Your running away was only a break; go on from where you left off".

God tried to impress upon Jonah obedience with a storm that was about to make the ship capsize. Jonah was fast asleep through this terrible storm. His fellow travelers had to wake him up,

shouting "What meanest thou O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." Even being miraculously delivered from the belly of a giant fish, Jonah ends up angry for lack of some shadow. God continues giving Jonah more lessons.

Great prophets like Jonah are sometimes "exceedingly glad" in what is very transitory. He had first made himself comfortable to sit under the shadow of a tree, forgetting that whatever a man shelters under, is transitory. Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the shadow given by a tree. But next day a worm smote the tree. Another vehement wind destroyed his comfortable abode.

There is nothing which we construct for ourselves or chose for our own safety, which will not be destroyed. Nothing lasts forever, not even civilizations. Neither will we last forever here. Every tree dies one day. Dies also the worm which ate it. Dies also the prophet who sat under the shadow of the tree. Nineveh to whom he has preached will also have passed away, though it repented. Believers die as do unbelievers. There is no sense about being exceedingly glad because of a shadow. Tomorrow you will wish to die because you lost this joy. But neither will the despair last. It is transitory like every sentiment. Then the earth on which the trees grew, on which men were sometimes glad and sometimes angry, will also burn. Everlasting is only God at whose mercy we are and who says "Should I not spare?" Nineveh he will not spare forever. He spares nobody forever on this earth. Lazarus, like the others whom Jesus resurrected, had to die later again.

Prophet Jonah delivered a most unwelcome message of doom and gloom. Nineveh was facing utter destruction. They should have gone mad on this preacher. Yet, the opposite happened. They acknowledged the suffering of those around them by renouncing mirth and wellbeing through extensive fasting. They acknowledged the poverty of others by covering themselves with sackcloth and by sitting on a heap of ashes. They cried to God, as the text indicates, "mightily." Why? They invoked God's mercy through repentance.

Christians don't seek their comfort in the shadow of what passes. They are not depressed because of defeats and failures. Victories can follow. They are not inebriated by successes. They also do not last. Remains forever only God. Remains His word "Shall I not spare"? Shall I not spare in eternity the soul which has trusted in me? They have an untarrying source of joy: it is the joy in the Eternal Lord, whose mercy they obtained for their eternal souls, through repentance.



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



Goman Liuba and Vitalii

A Christian couple each imprisoned 3 years in the former Soviet Union, for spreading large amounts of the forbidden religious publication Khrestianin (The Christian.) In it, were published names, addresses, sentences and even pictures of many imprisoned believers. Read how Liuba's courage impressed a KGB officer. Read their testimony in the 2/2018 Newsletter.



Pastor Tuliupa Vladimir and wife, minister in Nadim, Russia, beyond the Polar Circle

Brother Tuliupa left behind wife and seven children when sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. Many Christians in former Soviet Union, threw flowers in court, admiring his courageous testimony. Deported to most northern regions of Siberia, the family remained there when freed and communism fell. Read his testimony in the 2/2018 Newsletter.

Persecuted Christians Thank Our Donors for Help Received



Baptists Tatiana and Oleg Popov*

Sister Popov wrote: “Dear brother Michael, this is Tatiana Popova. I have been receiving help from you for the last two years and wanted to say thank you! I read your mother’s book and heard about your family”.

“Because of our Christian faith, my husband Oleg Popov was sentenced to **three years of imprisonment** on December 8, 1981. He spent the term in the town of Tyumen and was released on December 8, 1984. When he was arrested, I was left with four young children. The oldest girl was 4½ and the youngest daughter was 3 months old. Of course, without the help of the church

and the believers, life would not have been possible. Thanks to them, I've been able to survive for three years. Prior to the arrest, my husband had a church youth leadership position and involved himself as well in the surreptitious transport of Christian literature, like Bibles, spiritual song collections, and so on. Prayer services took place in the homes of believers, for which they were often subjected to fines, arrests and many divine services were being dispersed by the police. Church leaders were arrested and imprisoned. In prison there were "interrogations" with the leaders of the prison camp. They denied God. He was placed in a punishment cell. There he contracted pneumonia several times. He was obliged to work as a painter, which also led to lung disease. Again, he fell ill with pneumonia, was treated with some antibiotic. This resulted in a blood-clot and he died last year.”

* Oleg Popov was a Christian poet and song composer. One of his songs is regularly performed at Christian Baptist congresses in the northern regions of Russia.

Persecuted Christians Thank Our Donors for Help Received

“Dear brother in Christ, Michael Wurmbrand

I heartily greet you and thank God and yourself for your kind heart, compassion for the suffering and for the aid sent to me. We do have the book of Richard Wurmbrand, and I have read it albeit a long time ago. I do well understand how painful and difficult it was for you to bear such suffering. My own father also served 10 years in hard-labor camps. Even though he wasn't tortured like your father, it isn't sweet in any prison or labor camp. During that time, I had my mother, 4 brothers and 3 sisters, but you were all by yourself! However, I believe that our heavenly Father never left you. He is especially close to those who suffer for His Name's sake. May He in this moment be your Comforter, Helper, and protect you for His heavenly Kingdom so that you would receive your full reward. Heb. 6:10 “For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for His Name in serving the saints as you still do.”
Sister Margarita”

“Greetings, brother Michael. We have received your letter from Los Angeles. We thank God for your diligence and work and care for those persecuted for the Gospel! We read your father's book “Jesus Christ Descends into Prison Hell” (In God's Underground, N. Ed.) It is written very strongly. Bless you! We are also alive and well, thank God. My father, Alexey Pavlovich Pilipenko, will write to you in more detail in a letter, he will soon turn 89. With Christian greetings, his children Alexey and Antonina”



“Dear brother Mikhail Wurmbrand

Thank you for the letter and many thanks for the link to the book “Tortured for Christ”. It was very useful and interesting to read, because the memories of those years and what they had to endure for Christ are still alive in the memory. Thank you cordially for your kindness to provide financial assistance. May God reward you a hundredfold for your care and help! The attached file contains my details and my son's account where help can be sent. God bless you. Raisa Matviychuk”

Raisa Matviychuk, (now 80) imprisoned for the faith under communism, when a teenager. Her testimony: “After the baptism, my sister Galya and myself were instructed to tutor in the Christian faith the children of an unregistered church of Radivilov (now in Ukraine.)

There was no literature and we wrote Bible verses on small pieces of paper or wrote whole psalms by hand in notebooks. One day when we had gathered for another children's meeting suddenly there was a heavy knock at the door and on the threshold appeared the local teachers from the school where we studied, representatives from the school administration, a total of 10 persons. A criminal case was opened against myself and my sister. The following Friday I was taken by the police from work to an apartment in Rivne to pick up my ID, sign some confession-statement and was summoned to appear in the prosecutor's office the following Monday. The investigation began. Though I was a teenager, I was retained and interrogated. The prosecutor asked about the church, who was in charge, who was the church-leader and who had instructed us to do Christian work with the children. I was threatened with a rubber truncheon, but thank God they did not beat me up. From the prosecutor's office we were taken to the Rivne prison where we were held in cells. The interrogations lasted 5 months. Such interrogations took 8-10 hours a day. They used moral pressure. We were told: “Your mother does not stop crying. Just confess you renounce God and you may go home immediately.

Otherwise, you will be tried and sentenced to prison. Why are you silent? Already Nazaruk and (they named) other members of the church gave us information and they will be released to go home. You will be sentenced to ten years of prison and you will be forgotten. No one will care for you!" Inside me, my Savior's gentle voice was repeating, "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be troubled, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and support you." I answered to God: "Thank You, my Lord, for your consolation!". Then we were sent to be sentenced by the communist court. And here in the court, my sister Galya was sentenced to 2½ years or prison. Myself was sentenced to 3 years of prison. Since I was a minor, they cut later the sentence in half. After 2 weeks we were taken by a prison wagon to a prison in the town of Odessa (at the time, in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.) After humiliating physical searches, we were moved into a cell holding 56 inmates. The bunkbeds were full of bedbugs. Since we worked in a large warehouse holding 270 sewing machines, other prisoners would receive in prison extra food-rations. I asked the guards, why I could not get same. I was answered, "Because you mention God too much in your letters. " Then I answered, "thank God that I may suffer for my Lord and the precious Savior who gave His life for me." One day my imprisonment (most likely because I had been arrested as a minor) ended up unexpectedly. After the release, my being surveilled by the KGB (Soviet police, N. Ed.) continued unabated. In order to be able find work, I had to change my last name. Eventually I got married and, moved to another city. The Soviet Union regime fell, my country Ukraine became free. God blessed us with 9 children. Thank God, all children, are members in the church and so are my grandchildren. In 2017, the Lord called to Him, in the 68th year of his life, my dear husband. "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." (Psalm 25:10)

Orphans Helped with your Gifts Letters from Children in the Agape Orphanage, Pascani, Romania

The Agape Orphanage was started in 1993 in the city of Pascani, Romania, by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand and his wife Sabina. Initially sheltering 56 children, it houses now 36 and is managed by the Christian couple, Carmen and Dorin Gavril. The running expenses of the orphanage when started in 1993, amounted to about \$25,000 per year. Due to many new requirements of the European Union and galloping inflation, the orphanage needs over \$120,000 per year to function properly. The Romanian government covers some expenses, but due to shortage of funds, the orphanage must rely on local donations of food-packages, cans and containers. Some of its grown-up kids have worked in the fields. Some of the children wrote spontaneously moving letters. In order to protect minors, last names are not being disclosed.



“My name is Ionel P. I am one of in our family four siblings. Since my father was a drunkard, mother left with my sisters and abandoned us (the boys) in the care of our grandmother. My grandmother being old and sick and being unable to care for us, we arrived at the Agape House. From my point of view, the Agape House is ideal for me, offering me a step toward a better future. I am in 9th grade; I like social studies and drawing. I would like to continue superior designing studies and start a harmonious family.”

Uite numele lui Ionel P. Este unul din cei patru copii din familia mea. Deoarece tatăl meu era un bărbat rău, mama a plecat cu sora și a lăsat în grijă noastră pe bunica noastră. Bunica noastră fiind în vârstă și bolnavă, nu putea să ne îngrijească. Astfel, am ajuns la Casa Agape. Din punctul meu de vedere, Casa Agape este ideală pentru mine, oferindu-mi un pas către un viitor mai bun. Sunt în clasa a 9-a; îmi place studiul de social și desenul. Aș dori să continui studiul superior de proiectare și să încep o familie armonioasă.

Ionel P.

Read translation on next

Orphans Helped with your Gifts Letters from Children in the Agape Orphanage



“My name is Monica and am fifteen. I came to Agape in 2012 due to a difficult situation in my family. Due to drinking, my father sold our apartment and we ended up having no place to stay in and how to support ourselves. Following a social-services investigation, myself and siblings, Alex, Serban and Bia, were sent to the Agape Placement Center. Here we were warmly received by the personnel and the other children. Since living at Agape I made lots of friends both locally and in Germany. I went to summer-camps, excursions, I received gifts on my birthday, on Christmas and on other occasions. We eat well, whatever we might need. The personnel are not swearing at us, are not violent. We were educated to give a helping hand where needed, like in the kitchen, laundry, yard. We were taught household skills. Here, I learned of God. Reading the Bible, going to church, I learned how to praise God with playing guitar, on the piano and the mandolin. I would like continue getting closer to God. For the future I would like to finish high school and become a clothing designer and then have a family in which there should be love and harmony, so my children should have a happy and beautiful abode.”

“My name is Marin C. and come from a six-siblings-family from (the city of) Bacau. I was brought to this wonderful place due to my mother having no means



(to raise us) after the death of my father. Here I feel safe, well taken care of, and have all I need. Even more I am in 9th grade, in a good high school. I would like for the future to have a profession, I liked having since my childhood, in the commercial field as a seller and would like to be able reunite my entire family.”

409	Власенко	Валентин	Медфодьевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казахстан
411	Куркин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казахстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бычков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СКВОРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЕВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варавин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Ляшенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Ткаченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отмахов	Вениамин	Александрович (Валерианов	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Фадеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богодимов	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миняков	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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