

## HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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Late Reverend Richard Wurmland with  
wife, Sabina

**February 2018**

" Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

(Matthew 22:29)

Late Reverend Richard Wurmland spent 14 years in Romanian communist prisons. Mrs. Wurmland was imprisoned nearly three years also for her Christian faith in some of the same prisons.

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmland

Is There Any Need for the Christian Faith?

The answer to this question depends on another question. Is there life after death? If all ends up with death, if God does not exist, nor judgment, nor reward, nor punishment, if man does not answer for his actions, then, of course, religion has no meaning. Apostle Paul writes:" If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:19)

It is easy to show humans are more than their bodies. The needs of the mature body can be easily satisfied in an abundant environment. Yet we read many times how rich, comfortable individuals, having all imaginable amenities, surrounded by loving friends and relatives, are committing suicide. In the early 1930s when matches were needed to start a fire, and therefore matches were in great demand, the extremely wealthy Ivan Krueger, named " the king of matches," committed suicide when 52. The reason given was, "being depressed." His body had no reason to be depressed. Did his body not have enough to eat or wear? Did not his body have the choice of all the pleasures? His body had no reason to be depressed. In his case, the deadly sadness overwhelmed something other than the body.

On the other hand, look at the martyrs. They suffer in prison, hungry, naked, beaten, away from those who are dear to them ... and they sing.

It was to his soul, this suicidal wealthy man, did not pay attention to. There is a Chinese saying, "the soul is like someone totally black, dressed in black, residing in total darkness. If bothered, it easily takes off." Man is built in the image of God. The Bible writes,"(God) made darkness his secret place." (Psalm 18:11) Jesus said, "For

what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37)

In the Book of Acts (16:25-34) we read how while imprisoned "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said," Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And they spoke unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

What made these Christians sing? Who was joyous while their bodies were tortured? At the thought his honor would be tarnished, this jail commander was so desperate, that he wanted to kill himself. Then he was impressed by the probity of his Christian prisoners. He was impressed by the miracle of chains coming undone on these Christian prisoners. He wanted to obtain same redemption. He became a Christian. All above drama was not perceived by the body. The fear of the hurt pride, the joy of having found redemption, all is of the soul. Many non-Christians, many torturers of Christians could not explain how come in direst circumstances the Christian victims of repression could have radiant faces. During my 14 years in communist prisons, I witnessed this university professor asking a simple uneducated Christian farmer: "Please teach me one verse from the Bible. I have thought and talked about all the physics, chemistry, philosophy, history I learned and am depressed in this jail cell, as all these matters are pointless in-between these walls. I see how one verse of the Bible brings you so much peace, joy and you have an inexhaustible content to think about."

The soul is the most important part of a person. The soul it is what is eternal. No one has seen the soul dying. Wise King Solomon wrote: "(God) has also set eternity in the human heart." (Ecclesiastes 3:11) While the body gets old, while limbs become tired, the capacities of the soul to perceive truth do not fade. There is an Indian legend of someone going insane. His craziness was to look in a mirror and claim not being able to see his head. So are those who ignore their soul. Jesus also said: "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)

Many theological schools teach Apologetics. Apologetics offer recent archeological, medical, historical and even scientific discoveries arguments, trying to prove some how that certain statements in the Bible are correct. Many try explain how the Ten Plagues over Egypt or the description of the miraculous Parting of the Red Sea could be made more believable, as having taken place. Lord Jesus though says NOT to read the Scripture in the feeble light of archeology or science discoveries, but in the light of the absolute power of God. Even an atheist need concede, man did not create the universe. Once we accept that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" what else would be impossible to God and what description of God's miracles need be made more acceptable by our comments? Every moment we live, is a miracle. Elihu in the Book of Job, puts a stop to the long winded discussions between Job and his friends, by telling them: "If (God) set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." (Job 34:15) There is no alternative, no choice to faith in the Power 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 Jilava.

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 the Richard Wurmbbrand 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 inside Romania and Eastern Europe, some help needs be sent through the local Romanian nonprofit Sabina Wurmbbrand Christian Association. "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)

### **Russian Christians Helped with Your Gifts! Forced into a 20" x 20" Narrow Cell!**

Pastor Ghenadi Efremov writes: "I was born November 1954 and in 1983, was ordained as a Baptist pastor in a church in Leningrad in the former Soviet Union (now Sankt-Petersburg, Russia.) The 1980s were difficult years for our churches. Great communist persecutions took place, the house of prayer was confiscated. Many church brothers were imprisoned for their faith. All church personnel was condemned to various terms of communist imprisonment. I, as the minister in the church, conducted many a service at outdoor gatherings. Often, in the forests around Leningrad, far away from the city. Several times, I was arrested, imprisoned for 15 days and subjected to big fines. In October 1986, I was arrested and jailed in the city of Leningrad. The first day in prison I spent in a narrow, square cell nicknamed "Bottle" because it was square and only a little over 20 x 20 inches in size. In such a cell I was forced to stand up. Suddenly I heard a voice: "You will be in jail only a little while." This voice was repeated once. I understood that this was the voice of God, and in my prayers I thanked Him a lot. After this impossible narrow cell, I was transferred to a larger room where there were more detainees. I was summoned by the Soviet police interrogator and was told I would be sentenced to 5 years of prison, and all my possessions would be confiscated. At home, the wife remained with 3 young children. After hearing the voice of God, I doubted the KGB investigator threats. Indeed in March 1987, five months after having been arrested, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev initiated what is called the "Perestroika" a term meaning "a reform." I was told to write a request to be released. I did not believe the communists and did not write anything. But in May of the same year, 1987, I was again visited by the prosecutor in prison and he told me the following: the Article of the Penal Code under which I was charged (sedition against the Soviet communist state by holding unauthorized Christian meetings) had been abrogated. Same day I was released and went home. Thus I obtained my freedom, 7 months only, after having been arrested. The voice I heard from the Lord, was right. For all thank God."



**Together with wife Efremova Nina, the Efremovs have a big family: 8 children and 22 grandchildren. He pastors a church of more than 500 members and over 250 children.**

Help for Refugees, 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 Organizations described in Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, a list of organizations eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions. May be checked online at: <http://www.irs.gov/app/pub-78/> (To find, enter the EIN!)



## Christian Helped with Your Gifts Four Years in a Communist Prison for Teaching Children To Pray

**Pastor Ritikov Vladimir Pavlovich** writes: "Thanks to God for forgiveness, redemption and the gift of eternal life. I also thank God for the narrow path, He directed us to walk upon, in order to enter His Kingdom. I was born September 1959. My parents were baptized Christians and educated us, 10 children, in the Christian faith. Thank God for their faithfulness. My father, Paul Timofeevich, was sentenced to be imprisoned four different times by Soviet communist authorities for his stand for the Lord. In 1979, because we organized summer camps for Christian children, I ended up imprisoned myself. My father and one of my sisters (Galina Vilchinskaia) were arrested as well. The communist court judge charged us with the "crime" of having organized many Christian summer camps in different cities, all over the Soviet Union. This communist judge also claimed, we had taught the children to hate and overthrow the Soviet Social and Political System. During the trial we were allowed to say a few words in our defense. I tried to draw the judge's

attention to the fact that most accusation documents on file were faked and did not reflect actual facts. We stood accused of reading the Bible to the children participating in the camps, we were charged with singing songs glorifying God, with praying with the children. So as to keep us longer imprisoned, the Soviet authorities prolonged their investigation by a whole year and two months. After being sentenced to 3 years imprisonment, I was sent to the Zabaikalia Region, Chitinskaya Oblast in Eastern Siberia, closely bordering Mongolia. This is a region of most harsh climate. Temperatures in January-February, go down to -40 to -47 degrees Fahrenheit. My father was imprisoned in another jail, in the Ural region. Our mother remained home to fend for herself and my minor siblings. Local communist authorities initiated a lawsuit against our mother (Galina Iurievna Ratikova) to be deprived of her maternal rights, so that all the minor children be taken from the family, to a communist orphanage. Praise God this did not happen and all my siblings stayed with mother. The authorities and the KGB proposed to me denying my faith. In return, I was promised freedom. Because I refused, I was savagely beaten often and suffered other tortures. Many times I was placed in a solitary stockade. I refused any compromise and sign any document. In my suffering misery, I still remembered how the prophet Daniel of the Bible was thrown into a den with lions. I praised God for knowing I am not tried so intensely, to have been thrown down a pit with lions!

God put an end to these torments and mockery. Since the end of 1987, I am currently serving in a church in Krasnodon, Ukraine. Due to the ongoing war with Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine, the situation in our city is very tense. We have no jobs, almost everyone is unemployed. Pensions, even so low (about \$50/month, NT) are paid late. We hope for God's mercy. **Thank you so much for being with us in these difficult times.** God bless you!" Church Pastor of Krasnodon: Ritikov Vladimir Pavlovich



## Christian Helped with Your Gifts Christian Witnesses Beyond the Polar Circle

**Baptist minister Tuliupa Vladimir Feodorovich** writes: "I was ordained, during the communist regime in the former Soviet Union, in a local unregistered church in Donetsk, now in Ukraine. On July 10, 1985, I was arrested and interrogated in the Regional Prosecutor's office for an entire day. Then, I was locked up in a small cell with only 5 other inmates. Surprisingly, one of them had a big bag of good food. He pretended protecting me, showing a keen interest in the secretly-circulated magazine "Khrestianin" ("The Christian") and he even began to inquire about the Word of God. I spoke to him from the Bible about God, about repentance and about being born again. One day he uttered a prayer. He mimicked Christianity. Since he pried me with many questions, I was well aware, as confirmed

later, he being nothing more than a trained KGB informer. While under investigation, the KGB agents were terrorizing my family, the wife with the seven children, threatening to confiscate their apartment and throwing them all out in the street. After 5 months of interrogations, I appeared in court, refused the communist lawyer and spoke boldly in my own defense. When the judge announced the sentence, believers present in the court, threw flowers in my direction. I was sentenced to three years in prison for: "Spreading Rumors against the Soviet System." In one of the prison cells crowded with 24 other prisoners, I was able to witness daily of God, of faith and repentance. Because of that, I was punished being transported all across Siberia to a prison in Zima, the Irkutsk Region. I was released in October 1990. Together with my family, we live now since 27 years, working as missionaries, in Nadim, Russia, beyond the Polar Circle. Our son Romar pastors a church, not far from here, in Salekhard, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia. For all we thank God. Your brother Vladimir Tuliupa."

## Christian Helped with Your Gifts Husband and Wife, Both Imprisoned for Faith

**Goman Vitalie**, was born in 1956, in a family of Christians. He writes: "My parents were part of the persecuted church in the city of Kiev. Our gatherings were taking place in the forests around Kiev. From childhood I experienced the life of the underground church.

The love for the church and the work of the Lord has been rooted in my heart since my childhood. When I was a kid at school, I was hiding the fact that I was a believer until I started being active in the church. I was elected the youth leader. By the 80s in our church there were over 200 young people. At our youth gatherings we prayed for those who were imprisoned and for those Christians who were in the Soviet Army. At that time there were many foreign students from the African and Asian countries in the city of Kiev. They also attended our meetings. All this attracted the attention of the communist authorities. They started looking for who was the organizer of these meetings. On Easter Day I was arrested by the Soviet militia (KGB.) Everything had been discovered.

The Soviet secret police (KGB) sent out to our assemblies young informants who recorded everything that was happening at these meetings. One day two young men entered the courtyard of the church, I met them politely and asked them where they were from. They replied being from a northern Ukrainian city - Konotop. At the youth gathering I gave them the floor, but they could not speak. When they left, I wanted them to read from the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles, where it was written how Apostle Paul became a believer, having been before someone who fiercely persecuted Christians. Not long after this visit of these two young person, I was arrested in 1984 and jailed in the prison in Kiev. The investigation lasted 3 months, being accused under the Soviet Criminal Code. I was sentenced to 3 years in prison for violating the Law of Cults and damaging the Soviet and Social System. To serve my punishment I was taken to Siberia. After a year, from Siberia I was once again transported to Ukraine, the city of Kiev, to persuade me to cooperate with the authorities. This trip lasted more than a month. These trips in cattle-wagon-like train-cars, through the vast territory of former Soviet Union, were the most difficult part of a communist prison sentence. Still, God has not taken away mercy from me all these three years. I was released in 1987, shortly before a general amnesty was announced for all Christians held in Soviet prisons. That's when, my future wife, Liuba Ivashenko, was released as well. After our marriage, we settled in Kiev, Ukraine.

Now we serve God, we have a great family. We remember with joy the years of our youth and what we have been able to do for God."

## Christian Helped with Your Gifts KGB Officer Impressed by Christian Lady!



Sister Liuba Ivashenko  
**GOMAN** with husband Vitalie.

Sign reads: "Love the Lord!"

Goman Liuba writes: "I was born in 1961 in the region of Cerkassy, Ukraine, in a family of Baptist Christians. My father was a pastor in the church and moved to Kiev in 1968. We became members of the Kiev city church, located on Phukov Street. I was actively involved in the life of the church and was asked to participate in the distribution and transportation of Christian literature. After a while, I was proposed to take part in the activity of the underground "Khristianin" (The Christian) Publishing House. We distributed this unauthorized, underground magazine all over the Soviet Union. For instance we spread it even in today's Republic of Moldova (at that time part of the Soviet Union.) When distributing it in a village called Obreja, myself and an entire group involved in the printing of the New Testament in Moldovan, with Cyrillic characters, ended up arrested by the KGB. For the investigation we were transferred to a prison in Kishinev. All investigators were local KGB officers. I was the youngest and the investigators were hoping to find out from me all the information. They ended up very disappointed as I was refusing to answer all their questions. One woman-officer asked me, "What are you thinking?" I answered how I remembered a childhood story, of two friends entering a forest. A bear appeared, so the stronger of the two, quickly climbed up a tree. The other stretched down on the ground, feigning to be dead. The bear approached the "dead" man, sniffed, appearing to whisper something in his ear. Once bear gone, the tree climber jumped down and asked his friend, "What did the beast whisper?" The bear told me, "to never befriend a coward" was the answer. Amazingly, the officer ended up admiring my steadfastness and courage in faith, in not betraying the other Christian coworkers. Without commenting further, the lady-officer left me speechless, showing herself having great courage by opening a drawer, taking out a Bible and handing it over for me to read. She repeated this surreptitious support at every interrogation session. A hidden agent of the Lord! I still ended up being sentenced by the Supreme Court of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic to 2 1/2 years of prison. I have served my sentence in the women's prison of Rusca. My father, Ivashenko Iakov, and a brother lived in Soviet Moldavia. I was released in 1987 during Mikhail Gorbachev's rule. I thank God for the path he has led me upon, during all this time of persecution. God has blessed me a lot, now we have a large family of 9 children and many grandchildren. I also wish you the blessing of the Lord to be upon you!"

**Christian Helped with Your Gifts  
Five Years Communist Imprisonment for  
Printing the New Testament**



Picture of **Savelieva Valentina Ivanovna**, 28, published in the Soviet Union, in the secretly circulated Christian magazine Khrestianin ("The Christian") at time of her arrest by the KGB, in 1982.

Christian sister Savelieva Valentina Ivanovna, born December 1954 writes: "I spent my childhood in the town of Budyonovsk, the Stavropol region of southern Russia, Soviet Union. My family were Baptist Christians and I was baptized as a teenager, joining the unregistered, underground church. We did not have a stable place for our gatherings. We assembled surreptitiously at the homes of different faithful Christians. Soviet authorities tried find out constantly what was happening in our church. Here and there, the KGB communist police found out some information, but the true secrets stayed secret. Our underground church leaders were hunted by the communist police. Their pictures were displayed at all police stations, with dramatic inscriptions: "Exceptionally Dangerous Criminals."

Places where Christian literature was printed, who was responsible for organizing this work, where all the materials, the paper, the chemicals, the printing equipment came from, what was the distribution method of the already printed literature, all this information remained unknown to the Soviet KGB .

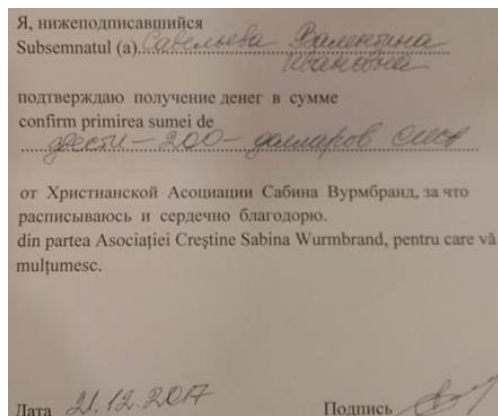
Being in the church, I was an active part of the church life, educating the children in the church. The families of the faithful were numerous, and we divided the children by age in groups of 10-12. I did not have any special literature for Sunday school. →

The only book we used to work with, was the Bible. At the same time, in the church, I was also engaged in the printing of underground Christian literature. In the winter of 1982 I was arrested and investigated by the Soviet police, named for short the KGB. While detained, other inmates who were also informants, approached me trying to get information on my case. I was well aware of who these people were. I avoided any conversation with them. For all my Christian work in the church, I was sentenced to 5 years of communist prison. These five years of prison, were spent in the Far East, in the Irkutsk region, in prisons laying on the shores of Lake Baikal. In winter temperatures dropped sometimes to -40 to -47 degrees Fahrenheit. The food was poor, devoid of any vitamins. Under these



circumstances, I was exhausted. Thank God for He sustained me all these 5 years. I was released in 1987. I have beautiful memories of the zeal for God of all the youngsters in the Church.

*Recent picture of sister Savelieva Valentina Ivanovna*  
**Thank you for not forgetting us. Good God bless you and have you in His watch!"**



A receipt for support from sister Savelieva