

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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April 2019

"Enter into thy closet and . . . shut thy door".
(Matthew 6:6)

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

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand

Jesus' Politeness

Jesus had been brought up in a very small house. The whole family lived in a one-single-room home. He said later that one candle "giveth light unto all that are in the house". (Matthew 5:15) As was usual in the Orient at the time, this single room was probably shared sometimes with the owner's sheep or cattle. Even in conditions of utter poverty, men who wish to lead a spiritual life must "enter into their closet"; they must assure for themselves hours of absolute privacy when they can be alone with God. A spiritually-minded Christian flees the noise of the world. The world should not have an easy access. Telephones must be taken off the hook during the season of prayer. Solitude with God must be the most important preoccupation of the day. If you read the newspaper first, you will fill your mind with its lies. A Christian home should not have the TV and radio blaring incessantly.

I write this letter to help you come to a perfect union with God and to encourage you to commune in childlike confidence with your Father. Value your inner privacy if you really wish to live, not just exist.

Shortly after the end of World War II, I was pastoring a church in Communist Romania. The country was occupied at the time by half a million Russian soldiers. Since I spoke Russian, I led a missionary evangelistic endeavor among these. During the night our church members threw

Russian Gospels and whole Bibles into the open train carriages where these Russians held quarters.

I succeeded to baptize a Soviet soldier secretly in my home. After the baptism we asked him what specifically had attracted him to Jesus. He gave the amazing answer, "The politeness of the Lord." He had been impressed by the story in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24. The Lord had met, after his resurrection, two of his disciples and had spoken with them on the road. When they neared the village, they were seeking he made as though he would have gone further" (v. 28). It is the only place in which Jesus is shown dissimulating his real intentions. He wished to stay with them, but they had "to constrain" him to do so (v. 29). The soldier said, "I drew from this story the conclusion that Jesus is very polite. He would not intrude into somebody's privacy. He comes into somebody's heart only if He is much desired.

"I hate Communism," he continued, "because it is impolite. Through indoctrination and brainwashing from kindergarten till death, through monopolizing all public media, the press, the radio, the television, and obliging us to attend endless meetings in which we have to listen to their materialist teachings, they break into our hearts like burglars. We are overrun by them. They destroy the closets into which one could withdraw. In Jesus, I met for the first time a polite being. I was very much impressed on reading the words of the Son of God, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and open the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). He who has every right would not come in otherwise. The Communists enter our homes without knocking; therefore, I abandon them and come to the polite Jesus."

This man loved privacy. He had loved Jesus because of his gentle call to commune with Godhead in solitude.

Door-To-Door Preaching of Atheism

The Russian communists have published a book "THE POWER OF THE GOOD WORD" by the atheist lecturer ALMAZOV. It declares from the very beginning that "The principal atheist commandments of our leader Lenin, are: militant irreconciliation toward all religions, and clever strategy and tactics in the war against Christianity. We still have to do a great work to make our country fully atheistic." Further, it describes how, at the school for physics of the University of Moscow, 800 students were changed into militant atheists (what has this to do with physics?) and had to go from house to house to believers of every age, to convince them to leave their faith.

Before this work began, through spying upon people, the authorities had spied on people to obtain exact information about the religious attitude of every citizen in that particular quarter. The book also describes how they invaded houses, whether or not they were welcome. Intrusion into privacy is the number one characteristic of Communism. The communist definition of an individual is: a mass of people divided by the millions which constitute it. Communists want us to lose our uniqueness, our ability to have an "inner closet." Communists collide with a fearful opposition: not a political party or a terrorist plot, but the opposition of those who spend their days in solitude and are open only to God's love.

A Saint Whose Name We Are Not Sure Of

SOLZHENITSYN, the Russian Nobel-prize winner, expelled from his country, tells in the third volume of GULAG ARCHIPELAGO the story of an evangelist. He never published volumes of sermons, was never on TV, had no mass-rallies. His name was not even sure. SOLZHENITSYN says that "it seems to have been ALEXANDER SISOIEV."

As the creed says no word about the sermons of Jesus, but only that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified and buried, history tells us about this man "called perhaps SISOIEV" only that he was an evangelist and that he was shot in the KENGIR concentration camp, after having spent many years in prison enjoying quiet communion with his Lord.

(Kengir is a village in central [Kazakhstan](#). During the [Soviet era](#), a [prison labor](#) camp of [Steplag](#) division of [Gulag](#) in [Kazakhstan](#) was set up adjacent to it. The camp, which was situated near the central-Kazakhstan city of [Dzhezkazgan](#), near the Kara-Kengir River, and held approximately 5,200 prisoners, was the scene of a notable prisoner uprising in the summer of 1954. Editor Note)

At that time shooting of the innocent was an everyday occurrence. But this man "called perhaps SISOIEV" had been a man apart. Those who looked at him "took knowledge that he had been with Jesus," though he was unlearned and ignorant like Peter and John. (Acts 4:13) The camp inmates had taken with resignation the beating and shooting of other prisoners, but when this saint whose name is not even sure was shot, the whole camp of over 4,500 common-law prisoners—among whom were murderers, burglars, thieves, and some 500 political prisoners, rebelled. They refused to work and attacked the guards. Their supreme request was that the person responsible for the shooting of this Evangelist should be punished.

In the end, the Communists quenched the revolt after having killed about seven hundred political prisoners and criminals, who died showing their love for and solidarity with a man about whom we know nothing except that he knew how to keep his privacy, that he knew how to commune in quietness with God, that he had an inner closet even in a common prison cell. Perhaps instead of having conferences about modern evangelization methods, it is more important for us to be like the one "whose name was perhaps SISOIEV."

We have picked this case at random. We could as well have spoken about ZDOROVETS, terribly beaten in a Soviet prison, about DUBIZKI to whom poisonous food was given in jail, about PETER SIEMENS whom the Communist called "a poisoner of souls" because Siemens brings people to Christ. He has been sentenced to three years of prison. These men are great not for what they wrote or spoke. We do not know their words. But we do know that they have been much alone with the Lord, and as a result they shine now like stars in the firmament of the Gospel and in the memory of their fellow prisoners.

The prophet wrote: "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him". (Habakkuk 2:20) We write to call you to this deep silence in which you will hear the Lord's voice.



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)

Some pictures of Christians Imprisoned for the Faith, Helped with your Gifts!



Mikhail Pshenitsyn,
5 years in Soviet Jails
See 2/2017 Newsletter.
(40 days hunger strike for a Bible)



Pop Cristian (his father
was sentenced to 13 years of
communist prison.) See
Testimony: July 2015 Newsletter.



Szabo Margareta, 85
Husband sentenced to 13 years
of communist prison. See
Testimony: 11/2015 Newsletter.



Baptist Pastor Oleg Perbikovski
2 years of communist prison.
Testimony: read 10/2016
Newsletter.

See biographical testimonies for above Christians at <http://helpforrefugees.com> (third column)

Christians Helped with Your Gifts



Dear, and loved by the Lord, whole team on this mission!

Reminding me of the very difficult times, I want to share with you the following: In 1970, took place a meeting in our house-church celebrating the great feast of Lord Jesus' Transfiguration.

The police came into the house, and with them, as usual, civilian clothed Soviet KGB (secret police.) I read from the Gospel and explained finally the reason and significance of this holiday.

On September 24, 1970, I was arrested. From the prison in Sumy, after the trial, I was moved to another prison in the Romny town (part of the former Soviet Union, now in Ukraine, NT). And then, in winter, they moved me to another prison in the Poltavsk region, the Bodavka station. The road was very long, and my feet ended up frozen. When I got there, these two brothers were ending their prison terms: Koplík Nikolai Ivanovici and Ciaika Boris Andreevici. Brother Koplík worked as a welder, and since we were together (in the same cell) he noticed the poor state of my health. He received a cup of milk and he often gave it to me all. After these two brothers had been released, my health worsened much more. In the days that followed, I was seriously ill with tuberculosis. Many times, I was hemorrhaging through the mouth. I also suffered from arrhythmia and had serious and severe headaches. Only the Almighty God, through His mercy, left me among the living. My wife was pregnant with the 6th child when I was arrested. I was released only by the Lord's mercy. With love in the Lord Jesus Christ, your brother Sasin Victor.

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From Dorofeeva Galina

Peace to you dear friends!

I received from you a second letter, for which I thank you very much! Thanks also for your willingness to help me! After I believed and fell in love with the Lord, I also wanted to be useful to Him. So, there was a job for me too - to teach the children in the (underground) Sunday School. I have served in this work for many years. At that time, church ministers, pastors, deacons, those working surreptitiously printing Christian literature, as well as Sunday School teachers, all were often arrested. In 1983, I was arrested and sentenced after a trial, to two years of prison. Difficulties were not few, much humiliation, and inside the prison cells impossible living conditions due also to all sorts of cell (bed) bugs. I was threatened often. Before I was locked up, I lived in an apartment provided to me by my place of work. Because I was imprisoned, when after two years I tried returning home, I was left without a place to live in. Brothers in Germany came to my help. As I write, I'm completely bedridden. I always lie down in bed and when people help me get up, then I might be able to sit, but to go somewhere it is out of question.

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC. has extended for the past 40 years, 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 are the Agape Orphanage in Pascani, Romania and the Richard Wurmbrand College, an Evangelical and accredited high school in Iasi, Romania, where many children of disadvantaged families are able to study. See <http://helpforrefugees.com>.



Christians Helped with Your Gifts

Sister Lavkaitis Vatlava Osipovna was tried in court for her faith by Soviet communist authorities, three different times. The communist court first condemned her pay a fine of 20% of her monthly salary. On September 13, 1968, in Barnaul, she was arrested and then convicted under the Soviet Code, Article 142, Part 2 (Violation of the Separation of School Education from Church Activities.) She ended up being sentenced to three years imprisonment.

At the prison in Barnaul, next to her in the same cell was another sister, who was also condemned for her Christian activities. The term of imprisonment was approaching the end, when the Barnaul Prison was closed, and sister Lavkaitis Vatlava, one other sister in the faith and other prisoners were sent to the Mordovia Prison in the Potma Region of Russia. The travel of these prisoners by railway was tough (over 2,000 miles and nearly five days of travel time for a prison train. NT).

The train was full of prisoners. Each prison carriage compartment held up to 18 people. Vatlava Osipovna ended up being protected though by one of the prison guards, and thus there were only three more people in the compartment she was in. The travel time lasted for a long time, about five days. When cold outside, prisoners were freezing inside the prison carriage.

On their arrival in Potma, prisoners were sent to a regular women's prison. It turned out that the nurse in the colony was a sister in the faith. So, they were already three sisters in the faith. In their spare time, the sisters spoke a lot together, read the gospel whenever possible, sang and prayed. On Sunday, the sisters gathered already at 4:00 am to organize a small church service before other prisoners would wake up. Vatlava Osipovna wrote from memory Christian songs in a notebook. Once such a notebook was confiscated from her. This did not stop her, and she wrote about one hundred songs in another new notebook. There were many searches in their cell, but the Christian sisters succeeded to hide some of the Christian literature.

The food was insufficient. Since Sister Vatlava was an invalid, she was entitled to a better portion than others, and thus she used these bigger portions to share her food ration with others. According to Soviet laws, prisoners were entitled to be visited by relatives. With no explanation, authorities prevented such visits. Vatlava Osipovna was released in 1971 and exactly ten years later, in November 1981, she was convicted for a third time for her Christian faith. At her trial, instead of using her right to a defense speech, she decided to sing a Christian song. No one dared interrupt and many in the courtroom had tears in their eyes. Due to her underground Christian activities she ended up being sentenced to one year of prison.

She spent the term in a prison in the city of Mariinsk (Kemerovo region). Upon arrival, the prison authorities were supposed provide her with a mattress, bed linen and dishes. She received none. She was supposed to climb a steep ladder to her cot. Again, due to being ill she could not and so she slept on the very cold floor. Because she was very cold, she had a strong cough that became worse and worse. When Vatlava received her release certificate, the prison authorities held her longer in the prison hospital ward, pretending she was sick with jaundice. She was not sick, but it was done to harass her because of being a Christian. They put her in the hospital. This was a most painful waiting for her, till she was finally released.

Christians Helped with Your Gifts



Sister Firsova Valentina Constantinovna
(Two Years Imprisonment for the Faith)

Her Testimony: In 1966, Soviet communist courts happen to sentence to several years of prison, two sisters of a Baptist church in the town of Frunze (today, Bishkek. NT) Most of their local church members travelled to the central district court asking for their release. After that, Valentina Konstantinovna and four other brothers were arrested. Valentina Konstantinovna was arrested for being a Sunday school teacher, thus working with children and was sentenced to 2 years of communist prison. For a long time, she was not transferred into an actual prison camp since the KGB authorities debated internally whether to release her or not. Eventually, the decision of the Soviet court was upheld and thus she was sent to an actual prison work-colony. Shortly before her arrival, two Christian sisters of the same group were sent to harsh prison camps in the Ural Mountains. These sisters were mocked by the authorities. They were sarcastically asked constantly, in front of other prisoners, "Why do you need that? Why did you end up in prison? Could you not have stayed silent and just keep your beliefs to yourselves?" Valentina Konstantinovna's church at this time, was constantly interceding in prayer to God for prisoners. She was able to overcome her fears that she might be treated harshly like the other two Christian sisters. Because she had a higher education in economics, she was asked by the authorities and was able to prepare a special annual report regarding production in this prison-colony. Therefore, she was treated mildly by prison authorities. She was allowed to have regular food and even was not obliged to work Sundays. Valentina Konstantinovna had a small pocket gospel she could sometimes read in her cell under the bed-blanket. Every time the prison personnel undertook an unexpected search, she found a secluded place inside her bed, and so no one could find it. Valentina Konstantinovna ends with the words: "God gave me as much as I could endure."

Anyone may use a "DONATE" button on the web site: <http://helpforrefugees.com>

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409	Власенко	Валентин	Мифодьевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казakhstan
411	Иурани	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левин	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казakhstan
413	Романко	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тислен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бячков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕНСАНДР	АЛЕНСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СВЮРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЙВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варавин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Лашенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Таменико	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казakhstan
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Откасов	Вениамин	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савинко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Федеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богородице	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миников	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

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 5th, present country they live in (like Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, etc.) We try obtaining exact addresses, so we may be able to send encouraging help to those still alive. We were able to send help to about 90 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>.

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 tax-deductible.