

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.**

**At this critical moment, we also help many Christian refugees from Ukraine!**



Late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand with wife, Sabina

DECEMBER 2023

**Announcement:**

Free copies of the paperback books written by Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand: **"Reaching Towards the Heights"; "Tortured For Christ"; "Was Karl Marx a Satanist?";** and **"The Pastor's Wife"** by Sabina Wurmbbrand, may be requested using the order form at the <https://helpforrefugees.com> internet site. (See third column!)

"Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet," (Acts 7:48)

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From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand

**WHERE IS GOD?**

The Hebrew Bible instructs all Jews to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year: in spring for Passover (feast celebrating the escape from Egyptian slavery) in summer for Shavuot (feast celebrating the first fruits of the harvest) and in the fall for Sukkot (commemorating the time the Israelites spent in the wild — in huts of their own — after being freed from slavery in Egypt.) What a shock the words in above Bible-verse must have been for the Jews of old. They traveled yearly from countries far away, came afoot or rode on camels or even faster, on horses, hundreds of miles to their own country in order to fulfill the obligation, imposed upon them by their religious laws to make frequent pilgrimages to Jerusalem. When they had arrived in the Temple for the purpose of meeting God, the words of the prophet were read to them: "The Most High does not dwell in temples made by hands."

Where then can man find God? And what are temples for if God is not in them? Temples of old as well as those of today serve to point to the first real tabernacle, which the will of the Most High placed among cattle, in a stable.

Soon it will be Christmas. Christmas is the time of year when we are reminded of this first temple in which dwelt the One who has the fulness of the Godhead. The Communists, do not

know the message of Christmas. They believe that, by destroying churches, they will destroy people's belief in God.

In all countries in which communists gained power, the first persecution was not against capitalists but against churches. When Stalin became the dictator of the Soviet Union, his first decrees were about the closing of nearly 10,000 churches and imprisonment of all the clergy. Many churches were destroyed. The number of clergy killed ran into the tens of thousands. During the Cultural Revolution of Mao Zedong in communist China all religious activities were banned and Chinese Christians were imprisoned, tortured and killed. This is because atheistic communists do not understand that God's dwelling is not in man-made temples. Our High Priest shone most beautifully when He hung naked on a cross. And the One whose birth we celebrate this month was resurrected in glory after his crucifixion. The fight of the Communists is vain, because they don't know the nature and power of the Most High.

The Son of God has become a babe in a manger because He loved us. His incarnation was an act of sheer kindness. He owed us nothing. But He condescended to be our friend and to save us, though this has cost Him a whole life of suffering and crucifixion.

God only knows everything. Even angels can be mistaken sometime. When the Lord Jesus was born, the angel of the Lord said to some shepherds, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people." Alas, the birth of Christ was not to be an occasion of joy for all. King Herod feared that the Holy Child might once take his place on the throne. He commanded the slaughter of all the babes born in Bethlehem. The Christmas event produced many tears and much grief to the parents of the slain children. Thus the first "Christmas" was immediately followed by the murder of the innocents, and there was lamentation and mourning even with Rachel, who is in heaven! (Matthew 2:18)

We cannot tell you the usual formal words "Merry Christmas," because we know about murders of Christians going on in communist countries and about the planning of mass-murders in the whole world. Now when you bring joy to children around you here is what even a communist Soviet atheistic magazine published to combat the religious upbringing Christian parents give their children growing under communism. The editor derides the believing parents but is obliged to publish an amazing testimony about Russian Christian children who defy communist, atheistic teaching. Thus Nauka I Religia of July 1969 cannot explain what Yuri a boy of 12 said: "In my prayers, I ask God to give me strength to fight those who are against God. We have to fight them not with the sword, but with the Bible." Another boy of the same age says, "I ask God to forgive my sins, to make me strong and there should be no evil in me."



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 and their Families, 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!)



### **AZAMFIREI Stefan**

was arrested when a soldier in former communist Romania and asked at first to just renounce his faith. Since he refused, he was sentenced to nine years imprisonment.

Read his testimony in our online 2/2015 Newsletter.



### **BOANTA Ioan**

wrote: "In my youth I was sentenced (by the communists) to a forced labor camp. I completed 2 ½ years of prison in former communist Romania for my religious convictions. At my trial the judge stated, 'your bones will rot in prison.'"

Read his testimony in our online 2/2015 Newsletter.



### **PANTELIE Petre**

wrote: "I was sentenced by the Military Tribunal in Constanta (Romania) and taken (to execute a three years prison sentence) at the (construction of the Danube) Canal. Our strength is in the Word of God in which our Father assures as those who shall remain faithful to the end will receive the crown of life, Rev. 2:10." Read his testimony in our online 3/2015 Newsletter.

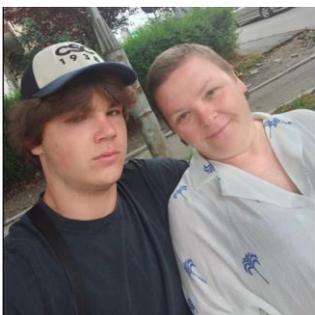


### **Rev. CRISTESCU Gheorghe**

wrote: "My underground church activity was uncovered by the former Romanian Communist secret police only a month after being ordained and was sentenced for conspiracy against public order to 6 years imprisonment."

Read his full testimony in our online 3/2015 Newsletter.

## Christian Refugees of the Ukrainian-War Helped with your Gifts!



### **Sister DUKH Zhanna wrote:**

"In February 2022, the war began, which changed my life. I lost my job and every day was scary from explosions. I lived in constant stress. And I decided to save my life and the life of my son (Dmytro). My husband stayed at home because he is in the military. And remained to save the country. We hid in basements, because constant explosions prevented us from living peacefully, and the sound of sirens was terrifying for my family. When crossing the border, there were long queues and all the people were stressed. Here in Romania, I fell seriously ill with breast cancer, I underwent 8 physical therapies and an operation, now I am in a period of rehabilitation. I also go to the Evangelical church, reconciled with God and am preparing for baptism. Together with my brothers and sisters, we serve God in Bistrita, Romania. Thank you very much for your help, God Bless you."

**Apartment house destroyed through Russian bombing in Mariupol, Ukraine, where 40% of whole town has been close to obliterated.**

**Over 8 million refugees have escaped so far from Ukraine into different European countries.**



**Testimonies of Christian Refugee Families from War-Torn Ukraine, Helped with your Gifts!**

**SHAKH Sergii wrote:**

On the night of February 24, Russia entered the territory of Ukraine and started a war. We decided to leave Ukraine. I hope nobody will need our experience. We wish you peace!

**LOGVINENKO Daniil wrote:**

We woke up because of the sound of explosions. It was dangerous to stay in the city. I was worried about my children. I am the only caregiver in the family. One of the children is disabled.

**Alina GUSAR wrote:**

Several days ago Russia started a war in our country. Early in the morning we heard dreadful explosions in our city. We understood that it was no longer safe to stay in Ukraine, so we decided to leave.

**OKISHOR-LAZARIEVA Iryna wrote:**

On February, 24, being in Kyiv, we were woken up by the sound of explosions. Our whole family immediately left for Chernivtsi; then we crossed the border with Moldova and then – with Romania.

**RADCHENKO Daria wrote:**

We left Kyiv on the night of February 24 because we heard explosions. My father and my sister's family stayed in Ukraine. We travelled with a man who was not allowed to cross either Moldavian, or Romanian border. I drive really poorly. I ended up in a foreign country

**TLOKOZ Olha wrote:**

At around 5 a.m. we were woken up by our friends' phone call who told us they had heard explosions. After that phone call, we decided to leave. On our way we heard explosions. After three days we managed to cross the border. We thank God for being able to get to Romania where we found all the necessary things.

**BIELOUSOV Sergii wrote:**

At around 5 a.m., on 24/02/2022, we were woken up by the sound of explosion. We took our children as quickly as possible and left the city for Western Ukraine by car. Later we found out that our district was one of the zones with the most active military actions. With God's help, over the next three days we managed to get to Romania and found temporary shelter there.

**LUBENSKII Oleg wrote:** We lived in the district which was used for the defense of Kyiv, that is why there was a big chance of finding ourselves in the fighting zone. Our children and 6 grandchildren all decided to leave the country, and we followed them.

## Testimonies of Christian Refugee Families from War-Torn Ukraine, Helped with your Gifts!



**Sister YESYPENKO Irina Anatolevna wrote:** “My family and I are from Mariupol, Ukraine. Our family consists of three people, my husband Nikolai worked as a bus driver No. 24T, my daughter Ekaterina went to the first grade, I worked as a cook of semi-finished products. We lived quietly and calmly, never thinking that everything in our lives would change in an instant. On February 24, 2022, I woke up to the sound of sirens and explosions. For the first couple of days, we did not understand what was happening, but we hoped that all this would pass us by.

Every day everything became scarier and scarier, we lived not far from the AZOVSTAL plant and had to go down to the basement because it was impossible to stay in the apartment on the ninth floor. On 03/03/2022, all utilities were turned off, and we had to fetch water and cook food on the fire in the intervals between the shelling. We could not leave the city because it was surrounded, after long fighting in the city, our house caught fire twice and we were forced to leave the house at our own risk. We were going to an unknown destination, but God's blessing was with us all the way. We spent the night in abandoned houses, moving from house to house every day. When we reached the village of Stary Krym, we met volunteers who helped refugees. They gave us first aid and evacuated us to Rostov-on-Don, where we were met by another group of volunteers with whose help we arrived in Estonia. Arriving in Tallinn, we found out that there is a church "Sol Zemli" that helps refugees from Ukraine unite and pray, and also helps with food. That's how we met Pastor Pavlo Duchenko (Utskhve), who told us a lot about God. We started going to this church and accepted Christ into our hearts. Wherever we go, we continue to walk and we pray for Ukraine and for our loved ones.”



I send a photo with my younger sisters (Iryna, 13 years old, and Olena, 20 years old). My name is Maria (GORENKOVA!) I received this letter, which says that I can fill out a form for receiving assistance. That's why I want to share my story: At the beginning of the full-scale invasion, I and my younger lived in the city of Kyiv. We have only my mother, but at that time she lived in the Kherson region. At the beginning of the war, we went to the Kyiv region together with the members of our church to a family we knew, and unfortunately the situation was difficult, since the fighting was going on 3 km from us and we could not return to Kyiv to our rented room and go further. For 8 days we slept on the floor, prayed a lot and finished the last food (all 8 days under shelling.) But on the 9th day, familiar volunteers from Zhytomyr Oblast came for us and we were able to leave, and for another month we stayed with friends in the Lviv region. It so happened that on March 28, we left for Sweden with only backpacks on our shoulders, because we could not take things,

only documents, since my fiancé (already a husband) worked here. We were hosted by a Swedish family we met through Facebook and we lived with them for 9 months. Since my mother lives in the Kherson region, part of it was occupied and we did not have contact with her for more than a year, now we can call after de-occupation (unfortunately, she does not want to leave.)

## Ukrainian Christian Refugees Helped with your Gifts

April 16, 2022

Dear contributors:

My gratitude to all who donated generously toward helping so many refugees from Ukraine, a true flood of displaced individuals. More than 4 million have escaped the current war and another 3 million are expected to come out. If one reads the daily news, one will be convinced easily these are not exaggerated figures. These are persons who flee from extensive bombing and continuing total destructions of whole towns.

It happens that my birth country, Romania, and the Republic of Moldova (also a Romanian language country) have together the longest common border with Ukraine. At the same time, Romania is one of the poorest countries in the European Union and Moldova is economically worse. Between Romania and Moldova so far, nearly 1 million Ukrainians have sought asylum already. **Refugees come at times at the rate of 10,000 every 24 hours.** Most of these refugees are women with 3 to 8 children. Fortunately, many other countries in Europe and North America are accepting to resettle these refugees if they can arrive there. Many churches outside Romania, have sent transportation means, like buses and even chartered flights. These refugees speak Ukrainian and Russian. Here and there, the communality of the Romanian language is of help, since some border localities like the university town of Czernowitz (name in German, Cernauti in Romanian) where my mother was born, used to be part of Romania before WWII. Some of the younger generation might have a little knowledge of English.

Through many reliable contacts of many years in Romania, we concentrated on helping with local Romanian currency of US \$200 to \$2,000 per family of **Christian believers**-refugees. Many came out with hardly more than the shirt on their back. There were miles-long lines at the border. Through the local Christians who deserve all praise, we provide pocket money given in hand for food and believers' lodging for a few days, until there is a partial resolution as to near-future plans of settling some place somehow or moving-on further to other countries. \$2,000 seems to be a large sum for an elderly couple who could escape but most couples come out with larger groups of 10 to 15 children and grandchildren. Just as one example, we paid for a Victoria village home, \$6,000 for a one-month lodging and food for 3 adults and 12 children. Most of these refugees entertain the illusion of taking refuge out of their native country and their lodging and work, for a short time but the way the news comes out on this prolonged war, I doubt this will be the case. I believe these refugees will remain refugees for many years to come. We publish in these newsletters a few testimonies and some receipts of scores more, documenting what I wrote above. Again, thanks and God Bless, **Michael Wurmbrand**

409	Власенко	Валентин	Мефодьевич	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	Лященко	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

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 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> column together, show year of birth and the most recent 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 repeated help to about 120 such elderly Russian-speaking Christians and over 110 speaking 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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