

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

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February 2016

The Gospel of Luke 16:19-21

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, **And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table...**”



Late Reverend Richard Wurmland with wife, Sabina

Late Reverend Richard Wurmland spent 14 years in Romanian communist prisons for his Christian faith.

Mrs. Wurmland was imprisoned also for nearly three years in same prisons.

From an unpublished Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmland

Being In The Spirit

I often had wondered of this beggar, Poor Lazarus. Why should he desire just crumbs? In my life, I was often hungry. Myself was left an orphan when only 10. Then I was in Nazi prisons and later in communist prisons. Still when I was very hungry I did not long for crumbs. I wanted sumptuous meals. In the Biblical Parable of the Prodigal Son we read how, when hungry, "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." (Gospel of Luke 15:16) Why would he have been satisfied with just eating husks like swine? In the material world what you can obtain is very delimited. But in the world of the spirit we may have great goals. The spiritual blessings we may ask from God are limitless!

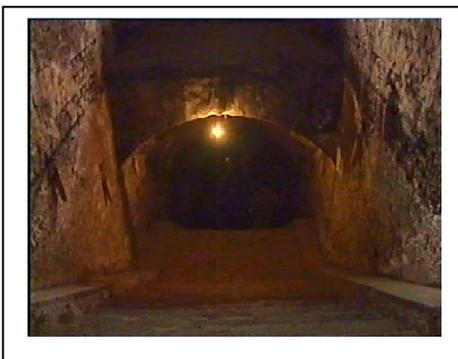
One evening when I walked with my wife towards home, she mused "Richard, how do you feel Hell is?" Without giving it further thought I answered, "Hell means to be alone in darkness and remember!" Only three days later, on a Sunday morning, I was kidnapped by communist thugs off the street, while on my way to church. I was placed for two years alone in a narrow cell, 30 feet beneath the ground, right under a main Bucharest square, much visited by foreign tourists. During years I did not see anyone except communist torturers. I was not taken out for any walk or fresh air. I did not see, sun, moon, star, flowers, snow. I was alone in darkness and I remembered. In real life it is easy to forget the past as we have TV shows, society. But there, there was nothing to distract the mind. During 14 years I was imprisoned, I never saw any book. Sometimes, when alone I would try communicate with a fellow prisoners by tapping Morse code through a wall. When other prisoners found out through Morse code tapping who I was, a minister, they asked me to listen to their confessions. It was incredible to hear confessions of other prisoners sitting in darkness and remembering. They

all started with the wrongs they have done as children, small lies, petty theft and so on. They confessed how they had made their parents suffer.

One of the most terrifying confessions I heard was from a fellow Christian evangelist who after an exhausting Christian meeting was asked by a teenager to teach him the way of salvation. He excused himself for being too tired that evening and asked him to come back next day. The teenager never showed up again. Now suffering in a communist prison he underwent an exhaustive interrogatory by his torturers for 5 days and 5 nights. When falling in swoon they poured cold water on him and the interrogation continued. He confessed how out of fear of his torturers he could speak for so many days and nights, feeling guilty he could not afford a few minutes with an inquiring teenager.

I did not remember only my sins. I remembered also all the blessings, all the understanding I obtained in the past through the Bible. The world of memory is not the physical world because every so many years all atoms in our bodies change. Memory proves we are more than our bodies. The wise Solomon wrote how God placed in us the thought of eternity. It is the world of the spirit. By not having material enjoyments, in suffering you learn to enjoy the world of the spirit. In the spirit you can obtain more than crumbs and husks. If our goal in life is a material goal, like desiring to make money, then if one is placed in a jail, evidently he cannot accomplish such a material goal. If my aim in life is to follow the Lord Jesus then nothing may deter me from reaching this spiritual goal. In the spirit one is not limited to being inside the four walls of a Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal or Catholic Church. One is able to be in all the churches, in communion with all God's saints.

Many times in prison we were given soup of rotten carrots or there were times when we were given only a slice of bread a week. In those times, we Christians were able to rejoice and praise God knowing that our sisters and brethren in the Free World would eat three rich meals a day and relish freedom. In the world of the spirit there is no distance. From a prison cell, persecuted Christian brethren can travel in the spirit and pray for everyone. The Gospel of John writes, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (Gospel of John 3:8) Many times when enjoying our freedoms we have success and are blessed, it is because another Christian in dire constraints had prayed for us. Thus that's the direction the wind of the Holy Ghost blew from. In the spirit blessings are not divided into small crumbs. In the spirit we all Christians are one. In communist prisons I was with some former millionaires. Now they were poor possessing nothing. Many a former politician, important university professor would approach a simple Christian farmer and tell him: during all these years I thought of all the politics, physics, economics and am so depressed and bored. I witness how every day from one Bible verse you can extract so many teachings. Please teach me also from your memory a verse from the Bible. Such simple Christians show us the world of the spirit, a life of burning love, or shining faces rejoicing, in the boundless blessings in limitless understanding God gives us. The Bible writes: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) This means being in the spirit!



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.

“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)

A speech by brother Dorin Gavrilă, Director of the Agape Orphanage, at events held in the month of December 2015 at the Bucharest Athenaeum Hall and at the Maranata Church in Arad, Romania. These events, attended by over 1,800 Christians, commemorated 50 years since late Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand and family escaped communist Romania.

Tonight we commemorate 50 years since the Wurmbbrand family escaped communist Romania and the voice of Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand started to be heard loud and clear in the Free World. Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand did not limit himself to speaking only of the horrors of communism but he passed from words to deeds. He tried to soothe in a practical way the sufferings of those Christians who under communist regimes underwent imprisonment and many other kinds of persecution for their Christian faith.

Once the population of Romania got rid of communism, after 1989, Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand understood to apply practically the words found in the Epistle of Apostle James: “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)

One of the German ministers I met used to tell me, "I never understood theology when in school as I understood it when listening to this man!"

Reverend Richard Wurmbbrand helped orphans way before communism came to Romania, when during World War II he organized smuggling of Jewish kids from ghetto camps under Nazi occupation or after WWII, when he gathered war orphans in his own home. When Reverend Wurmbbrand arrived for the first time back in Romania after the communist regime fell on Christmas 1989, he met my mother in law Mrs. Martha Teodorescu-Schell, an old friend of the family. She shared with sister Sabina Wurmbbrand her vision of taking care of Romania's orphans differently from the existing communist state orphanages where out-of-luck orphans had known only neglect and hate. In her new orphanage such orphans would be surrounded by Christian love and would be taught how in turn they should love their fellow men. Sister Sabina told her, "if you have such a vision, why don't you start right away." On the spot, Sabina reached into her pocket and gave my mother-in-law whatever money she happened to have on her, while seeing to it for the creation of larger funds necessary to start a Christian orphanage....

Following the passing into eternity of the Wurmbbrand couple, some of the initial founders continued supporting the orphanage. Brother Michael Wurmbbrand, their son persevered in supporting us in word and deed, doing all he could for the Agape Orphanage. We celebrated this year 21 years since the Agape Orphanage started. About 90 orphaned children did live and were raised here. Many of them grew up, are working, are even married and have children fully reintegrated into our society. Many who are Christians, came back for having a communion, for encouraging the younger children during so many difficult moments they are going through as orphans. At this moment we are taking care of 30 orphans, ages 2 through 22, some having arrived to be university students.

Our care for these orphans starts with Christian teachings and the environment is like that of an extended family. We treat these orphans as being our own family. The Agape Christian Children Foundation is fully accredited by the state and appreciated for its social assistance results. All the children in our orphanage come out of difficult, disorganized, alcoholic or extreme poverty environments. All who work with us either hired or volunteers, try with God's help to continue this missionary commission started by the Wurmbbrand Family on behalf of orphaned children. We try to honor God and bring a ray of light into the dark life of these hapless children so that we will have the grace to be among those who look forward to the glorious return of our Lord.

Orphans at the Agape Orphanage participating in a Christian play.



Images from the communist women prison of Târgșor, Romania where Sabina Wurmbrand and many other Christian women suffered. From a public program of the Romanian State TV

Your gifts have allowed us to help financially several orphanages including the Agape Orphanage in Pascani, Romania, an orphanage started by my parents, Richard and Sabina Wurmbrand; the Richard Wurmbrand College in Iasi, Romania and many elderly Christians (between 70-100 years old), who spent years within communist prisons in Eastern Europe because of their Christian witness. Some of them were held in common cells with my parents. Thank you for all your prayers and gifts. Michael Wurmbrand

Christians helped with your gifts
Melania Ritiu



Melania was born in 1925 in Beius, Romania. Her life story is entwined with intense religious persecution and suffering of the church under the previous communist regime in the northern part of Romania. Her father, Grigore Ritiu was a minister in a village called Sipinta, in Maramures, Romania.

In 1948 he was followed by the communist police to be arrested, so together with some parishioners they hid for 2 years in a cave while the rest of the family underwent fierce persecution. Eventually the location was betrayed and he and most parishioners were sentenced to long years in prison. Many died in prison.

Her brother was arrested on 7/3/1948 and sentenced to 7 years of prison which he fully executed in one of the worst communist prisons of Romania, the Aiud prison. On 1/24/1951 she was arrested together with her mother. Mother died in prison and her corpse was disposed off by the secret police at the medical university for dissection.

Melania had a younger brother who also underwent fierce religious persecution. He lived in Bucharest, therefore now at 91 she lives in Bucharest as well.

Christians helped with your gifts
Rebreanu Cornelia



Rev. Rebreanu
Petre, deceased

Before his death, Reverend Rebreanu wrote: "I thank you from all my heart for the help sent by Mr. Michael Wurmbrand to my numerous family, needing this help. Please advise what else should I do with this money. **I was imprisoned in the Communist prison camps during 15 years** and I suffered in a terrible way. God brought me back home. I finished my theological studies and that's how I answered the call to serve Christ." We continued to help his widow, 81 years old (picture above.)

Erdes Varvara Josepha



She was imprisoned 8 years under communism for underground religious activity starting in 1957 (also 2 years more under house arrest, banished in a no-man's-land in the Baragan fields of Romania, where the Reformed Church minister Visky Ferencz's family was held.) She is 93 years old and she was by profession and worked for 20 years as a registered nurse.

Please share this newsletter with all your Christian friends list, church lists or send us their addresses (with their permission) so we may send them this newsletter! HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC. A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation, P.O. Box 5161, Torrance, Ca. 90510, USA. Email: hfr@helpforrefugees.com ; **Read more at website: <http://helpforrefugees.com>**

**Christians helped with your gifts
The Todor Couple**



Todor's widow wrote to us: "I come from an extremely poor family being born in 1927 in the Doftana village, Prahova County, Romania. I worked as a servant from the age of 10. With 17 I married, my husband being as poor and we had a daughter. At 21 I became a Christian having to suffer for a few months the strong opposition of my husband. God miraculously changed his heart so that we both got baptized in 1948, on the same day and from an unbeliever he became a zealous missionary. Once passing in front of a prison he sighed, "how much I wish I could witness to all who are imprisoned here." Eventually life went on. He became an evangelical preacher and the communist authorities sentenced him for his Christian underground activities to 17 years of prison. He was tried together with another group of 12 Christians including a famous Christian

writer Vasile Moiescu. Mrs. Moiescu dared shout in court, at this communist show-trial: "I am happy my husband is here for the Name of Jesus Christ."

"For two years I had no news of my husband. After another two years, following many written demands to the government and many protests by Christians abroad since some of these Christians were known beyond Romania's borders as well, these sentences were commuted and in 1962 I received my husband back. Many a-time my husband reminisced how during his stay in communist prisons he met "authentic Christians who helped him grow the inner spiritual man." His biography may be found in a book published in Romanian, "The Prisoners of Hope" by the Reformed minister Ferencz Visky, himself having suffered for his faith as a Reformed Church minister in Romania's communist jails.

"In 1996, thirty-four years after my husband's release from prison, he went to be with the Lord leaving full of faith and entrusting me in God's hands. So far I had two strokes, I lost my sight partially, am bedridden and so I am in wonder I am still alive. I look forward for my Lord to come again, for me to meet again my husband and Michael Wurmbbrand's parents (whom I knew.) Thank you for all the Christian love you have shown to me. Maranatha! I greet you with the Bible verses found in Psalm 20:

"5 We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfill all thy petitions.

"6 Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.

"7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." Maria Todor