

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

A tax-exempt, non-profit corporation

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We help orphans and elderly Christians (many in their eighties, even 90s) who had been imprisoned for their faith in present or former communist countries. At this critical moment, we also help many needy Christian refugees from Ukraine!



Late Reverend Richard Wurmband with wife, Sabina

January 2026

Announcement:

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

"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

Late Reverend Richard Wurmband suffered 14 years in Romanian communist prisons. Mrs. Wurmband, Sabina, was imprisoned for nearly three years, also for her Christian testimony, in some of the same communist prisons.

**A Bible meditation by late Pastor Richard Wurmband
LOVE KNOWS NO PREJUDICE**

In Jesus time, Nazareth was a small village. Its population was extremely unfriendly to Jesus. The Gospel of Luke describes how the local religious leaders tried to kill Jesus. We read, "after He spoke all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them went his way." (Luke 4:16-29)

Nathanael, who spoke the words of our text, was guilty of one of the most destructive sins: showing irrational spitefulness toward an entire group of men. Every group of people contains a variety of persons with different personalities and characteristics.

A Lutheran pastor told me, "I have an emotional complex against the Baptists and Pentecostals." He did not realize that he had confessed to a much graver sin than if he had said, "I spread consciously a great lie!" His duty was to give up his prejudice immediately for we must forsake every sin.

Every prejudice excludes the person holding it from any possibility of right thinking.

Many will not accept Jesus because He was Jewish; others because He was white. The Pharisees could not admit that a Jewish prophet could come from Galilee, Israel northern province having a large Roman and Greek population (John 7:52). Others took offense at His belonging to the lower class. They asked in a mocking way, " Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matt. 13:55).

Some ask themselves if the church about which so many bad things are said can give anything of value.

God is the Father of us all. There is good in all groups. The Moabites, on the whole, are described how they had behaved badly toward the Jewish people. The Bible narrates how a Moabite king hired a magician named Balaam who tried again and again unsuccessfully to curse this Jewish nation who had miraculously escaped from Egyptian slavery (The Bible Book called NUMBERS, chapters 22-24). Yet, later on from this Moabite population came Ruth, one of the Bible's saintly women to whom the Scripture dedicates a whole book, a great-grandmother of king David. The Samaritans had gone astray from the true religion, but Jesus tells us about a Good Samaritan.

Flee any racial, national, or denominational prejudice. Judge every person on his or her own merits



The Communist Jilava Prison.
Entrance to the underground cells.



Prison cell with bunkbeds 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.

Where possible, we try to obtain in order to help, addresses of their surviving children.

Read their full testimonies in our past newsletters, as indicated below!



Brother Stephen
Ghermaniuk wrote:

“In previous times (living in the Soviet Union) we underwent much suffering and persecution. In 1973 I was sentenced the first time to 7.5 years of prison. The first 4.5 years I was imprisoned in the Lugansk Region of the Soviet Ukraine. Afterwards I was deported to the Siberian far east close to Khabarovsk. I was transported during 2 months all the way to the Okhotsk Sea shores.

I suffered in a very terrible climate. In 1983 I was resented a second time to 3 years of prison. Two years later in 1985 my wife was also sentenced to three years of prison. Our five children remained without a father or a mother. Brethren and sisters in the church took care of our children. When freed from prison in 1986, my wife was still imprisoned. I was carrying food packages to her prison. In prison she became very sick. We suspect the KGB having contributed for her to get so sick. She died only two months after being freed. I greet you with Hebrews 6:10, ‘For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints.’”



Sister **Vilcinskaia – Sapoval Galina** suffered 4 years in Soviet prisons for organizing in 1980 a children's camp named "the Forest Church." Most children in this camp came from families in the Soviet Union whose fathers or mothers had been arrested for their Christian faith. The children ages were 9-14. The children in the camp were from all parts of the territory of the Soviet Union. (Read the full testimony of these persecuted brethren in our online newsletter dated 11/2017 at: <https://helpforrefugees.com>)



Apartment house destroyed through Russian bombing in Mariupol, Ukraine. Over six million refugees have fled so far from Ukraine to different European countries.



“My name is Tetyana **Yakovenko**.

We are from Ukraine! The small cozy town of Pologi, located in Zaporizhia, is our little homeland. A charming, rich land with wide fields of wheat and sunflowers, with blooming cherry orchards and bright glades of red poppies and blue cornflowers.

Our parents were born and passed away here, our children were born and grew up here, my husband Viktor and I were born and happily lived many years of our lives here. We worked on this land - I have been in the educational field for almost 40 years, my husband has been in railway transport for over 50 years. Here we met with our friends, rested, enjoyed life and were simply happy!

This was until February 24, 2022...

And then - shelling, devastation, tears, pain, suffering... And unanswered questions: "WHY? FOR WHAT? How could this happen?" After 10 days of the full-scale invasion of the Russian army on Ukrainian soil, our city was occupied by the enemy. Life in the city suddenly changed – machine gun fire, shell explosions did not stop around the clock, helicopters and planes circled over the city incessantly.

The city was without electricity, gas, water, and communications. Pharmacies, shops were broken and looted by the enemy, the district hospital and residential buildings were damaged by the explosions. The blood of the city's defenders was shed, among whom were our acquaintances and friends.

One enemy shell hit our summer kitchen. My life was saved, a true miracle because I was in this kitchen and had just left when the explosion thundered. The kitchen and our house were damaged, part of the roof was demolished, and the glass in the windows flew out.

We hid from the shelling in a neighbor's basement, where we stayed for more than two weeks. It was very cold there (23 degrees F), damp, dark, without any conditions for a normal existence. We had little water and food, we saved money. We lit a candle for a short time.

We were afraid to even speak out loud, I cried all the time. And we prayed. We prayed as best we could, the words came straight from the heart. I firmly believed that God would hear us and take this terrible grief away from us.

At that time, the enemy was already ruling our yard - stealing our property, food and mercilessly trampling our hearts.

Very difficult memories, painful. My husband Viktor says that he still feels the icy touch of the enemy machine gun barrel on his back when Russian soldiers took him out of his native yard.

We could not live like this any longer and began to look for ways to leave the occupied territory. For two days we stood at the enemy checkpoint, waiting for permission to leave, losing hope. We were lucky, we were able to leave for Zaporizhia. EVERYTHING was left behind, to which we will never return.

By the will of fate, with a few suitcases, overcoming a long and long journey, we escaped from the war and ended up in Estonia, in the city of Tallinn. Now I understand that it was not fate that brought us here. I am sure that it was God's will!

Of course, in Ukraine, my husband and I went to church on Orthodox holidays, lit candles, had an iconostasis at home, lived with God in our hearts and believed that he exists. I have the strength to admit that in the most difficult times of the beginning of the war, I lost faith for a moment. I could not understand why God turned away from us, did not see our suffering.

For the first six months, my family and I lived in Tallinn on an ordinary ship, which was adapted for temporary residence of Ukrainian refugees. At that time, there were more than 2 thousand refugees there, we were placed in a cabin without a window, there was not enough fresh air, because there were four of us living there. It was hard to get used to it, we missed our homeland, our family and friends very much. As they say, grief does not come alone. During these six months, my husband had two heart attacks, in January he underwent a serious heart operation. His health has deteriorated greatly and he is scheduled for another operation - on his eyes.

I was diagnosed in oncology, with metastases. I underwent the first course of chemotherapy and radiation, but the complex treatment is still ongoing. By that time, the time spent on the ship had ended and we were forced to rent a small apartment. There was not enough money all the time. It seems that this will never end.

Once (it was on Easter) my husband and I were invited to serve at the Evangelical Christian Church "Salt of the Earth". Everything struck us: the friendliness and goodwill of all the brothers and sisters present, the warmth and care of Pastor Pavlo and his wife Natalia Duchenko, the simplicity and trust in communication. I felt that it was the Lord who showed us the way to this Church and entered my heart.

After all, the Lord Himself knows when we need His word, His support. Since then, my husband and I have been coming to the Church "Salt of the Earth" every Wednesday and Sunday, at home and in the church chat we read the word of the Lord, glorify and thank Him for every moment of our lives. Thanking God and the Church, we receive a small amount of food assistance, we were given a blood pressure monitor and a thermometer.

From Pastor Pavlo we learned about the assistance to refugees by the mission called Help for Refugees. Pastor Pavlo, in connection with our difficult situation, advised us to write you a letter with a request to provide us with the help that we really need, especially in this difficult time. I am sure that very soon our lives will change and shine again with bright colors of faith, happiness and joy!

I have a family: husband - Viktor Georgievich, daughter - Alina, one son - Anatoly, the other is Igor."

Ukrainian Christian Refugees Helped with your Gifts

April 16, 2022 (see update below*)

Dear contributors:

My gratitude to all who donated generously toward helping so many refugees from Ukraine, a true flood of displaced individuals. More than four million have escaped the current war and another three 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, one 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 closer to the 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 dependable 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 three adults and twelve children. Most of these refugees entertain the illusion of taking refuge out of their native country and their lodging and work, for a brief 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.

*(Update: Refugees still pour-in most days in 2024 at the rate of 8,000-10,000 and more than 6,000 daily at start of 2025.) Michael Wurmbrand

409	Власенко	Валентин	Мерфуревич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнилевич	1958	Казахстан
411	Кураев	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Леон	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казахстан
413	Романен	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бычков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВИННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СВЮРЦОВА	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	Озмязов	Вениамин	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Федюка (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богодимов	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония

Above, a **sample only** of a lengthy 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 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 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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