

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

Michael Wurmbrand, Director

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 needy Christian refugees from Ukraine! Where needed, content and pictures are dated.

March 2026



"And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So, the people of Nineveh believed God." (Jonah 3:4-5)

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

**From a Bible meditation by late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand:
The Immediate Need For Faith**

Prophet Jonah delivered a most unwelcome message of doom and gloom. Nineveh was facing utter destruction. They should have gone mad on this preacher. Yet, the opposite happened. They acknowledged the suffering of those around them by renouncing mirth and wellbeing through extensive fasting. They acknowledged the poverty of others by covering themselves with sackcloth and by sitting on a heap of ashes. They cried to God, as the text indicates, "mightily." Why? Because we are told: "they believed God." Because they believed God they acted with great urgency to save themselves! The Bible describes Moses performing when in Egypt certain miraculous feats. The leaders of Egypt of those times, the magicians around the king, the Pharaoh, were not impressed a bit. They could perform similar feats of magic. But God's miracles of destruction escalated and then "the magicians said unto Pharaoh, this is the finger of God!" (Exodus 8:19) We humans might not be sure and debate of this or that, yet it is sure: "we did not create this universe!" In the Book of Job, Elihu says to Job, "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." Facing doom and gloom the most hardened atheist starts praying. Thinking like that, it comes easy, "to believe God."

If we read or hear the daily news we can feel how much hate surrounds us. We are doomed unless we believe God rather than human politics and doctrines of hate. We are doomed because

we are more interested in our peace and wellbeing, instead of teaching our children, our youth about our fellow believers suffering persecution in so many other parts of the world. Our youth knows next to nothing how it is different in countries where believing in God is forbidden. I was invited to preach in a church. The pastor who had known I suffered through 14 years of communist prison tried to introduce me saying, "we cannot understand Pastor Wurmbrand. I never hungered a day in my life, how could I understand when he describes receiving only one slice of bread a week while in solitary confinement in a communist prison? I do not know what it means to suffer." Then impolitely, I interrupted, I stood up and asked: "how come you do not know what is hunger? How come you never fasted? How come you never inquired what happens to your fellow believers in so many countries where they do suffer tortures?" On another occasion, I was invited by a Lutheran bishop who heard of my story of suffering in communist Romania. The bishop told me: "We want to help the persecuted Christian, send them Bibles and Christian books and help financially the families whose relatives are in prison and so on and I think we could give \$50,000 from our funds in Minneapolis for this ministry." I asked him: "When do you think we could start?" At the time, \$50,000 was beyond my wildest dreams! The bishop replied: "You are refugees, you don't understand how a budget works. I don't have these \$50,000. The budget is already made for next year so we cannot allocate this sum next year to help the persecuted believers. Maybe we'll bring it up and approve it two years from now and give it to you three years from now." He was extremely honest and innocent and totally not prepared for our mindset and our urgency to help persecuted believers. Up to this point the discussion was extremely friendly and favorable. But I replied this bishop: "I know how you could give us the money now." "We can start it in one or two weeks." I spoke fluent English but with an accent. The Lutheran bishop became curious and asked himself how this guy just arrived from a communist country, Romania, would have any idea of coming up with \$50,000. I told him: "It's very easy. We write to all ministers in the diocese to give up 15% of their salary, but not for good. We are just borrowing from them and in three years' time when you approve the budget, we pay them back." The bishop quickly dismissed me and then sent a letter to all his pastors. He wrote: "Please do not invite pastor Wurmbrand to speak because he is irrational! He is crazy! Here is what he proposed: "he wants you to temporarily lend 15% of your salary for three years in order to help the suffering Christians in the communist world!" Those who believe God, ask with great urgency, like the first Christians, "Brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:37)



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 last 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 is the Richard Wurmbrand College, a high school in Iasi where many children of disadvantaged families are able to study.

“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)

**Christians helped with your gifts
Husband Imprisoned Five Times**



**Sister Leontevna Ludmila
SAVCHENKO**

Mrs. Savchenko wrote: “My husband Savchenko Nicolae Roman was sentenced to 8 years of prison.

While in prison he met Christians, who witnessed to him from God's Word. Thus, while already imprisoned he became a dedicated Christian.

He became a staunch missionary-minded believer. Once freed from the first common-law prison sentence, his new Christian activity got him, three years of Soviet prison but this time it was for his Christian witnessing. When freed from this sentence he was resented to a 3rd and 4th term of imprisonment.

Even in the periods he had been free, because of his fervent activity, he had to pay heavy fines. The Soviet press and radio publicly criticized his Christian activity.

We were threatened many times by the communist authorities with the taking away of our children.”

Christians helped with your gifts

**Suffered for his Christian Faith 5 Years Imprisonment
and 5 Years Siberian Banishment**



Muravleov Nicolae PETROVICI

This brother wrote: “At age 20 when drafted into the Soviet army, due to my Christian beliefs, I refused give the allegiance oath as a weapon-carrying soldier (for the atheistic communist state.) For this I was sentenced to 5 years’ imprisonment. I served nearly 3 years of this sentence in the town of Baku. I was freed under a general amnesty. I was baptized as soon as I came out of prison in a church in the town of Saratov. Then I married and because of my Christian witness I was arrested again being taken right out of church during the Easter church service. The communist state sentenced me to five years of prison and five years’ banishment into forced living in Siberia.

Because we held underground Christian house meetings, our house where my wife and I lived with two small children, was confiscated. My wife was expecting our third child who was born prematurely and died after 6 months. I never seen this child. Ten years later I could return to Saratov and redeem my property. Again, because of our Christian activities, the Soviet authorities decided to take away our 6 minor children. A meeting was organized by the communist authorities everyone voting to take away the children of all believers and place them under state care. Fortunately, the local enforcing agencies (police, social services) refused carry through such a heinous decision and this is why: the main state KGB prosecutor died unexpectedly and to everyone's amazement the second prosecutor of the KGB died also shortly thereafter in an accident. Thus, the local powers got scared to act against the believers. We remain thankful to the Lord for all His care during our entire life.”



Christians helped with your gifts

Pastor NICHITA Gheorghe

**Four Years in Communist Prisons
for Being an underground Baptist Minister!**

He wrote: "Since I was active inside the former Soviet Union, in the underground printing work named "Chrestianin" (the Christian) I was arrested three separate times, sometimes for only as long as a fortnight. A fourth time I was arrested and remained imprisoned for four years.

We had inside our home regular underground Christian meetings with over 200 persons. So, our personal home was a true "House of Prayers." Many times, I was fined with as much as a half-monthly-salary. The KGB searched our entire home four times. The Soviet police confiscated much Christian literature as in an annex to our home we multiplied such literature by means of a hectograph (a duplicator using a gelatin reproduction medium) and had an apparatus for binding Christian books.

We continued serve the Lord. The Lord blesses us and we gladly accept worshipping Him. We encourage you with (many) Bible verses like Apostle Paul wrote:

In the Epistle to the Romans 14:8: "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

In 1st Corinthians 3:9: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

We thank you for your sacrifice. The Lord reward it and bless you all."



SMIRNOV Nicolae Vasile

He was born in Dedovsk, a suburb town of Moscow, Russia in a family of Baptist believers. His father was a deacon of the church. His father, together with all church-serving personnel were arrested and sentenced to five-year deportation into Siberia. His parents' home was taken away by the communist state and an additional sentence of 3 years was slapped on his father.

Sister Yana Ivanova wrote: “We are an international Christian family. I am from Ukraine. My husband is from Siberia in Russia. We went to serve in Russia, namely in Pskov, we lived and served God. When the war began, we went to Turkey. There were refugees from both Ukraine and Russia. We served for them and they for us. We were not given protection. And we were forced to return back. Our pastor from Russia, Konstantin Lupashtyan, moved to Romania and serves in a church where there are refugees from Ukraine and Russia. We went to Romania. Romania gave shelter to our family. We serve in a Christian Ukrainian church.” (Ivanova family below.)



Sister Natalia Havtura wrote: “When the invasion of Ukraine began, it was going to be scary. At that moment I was very sick (at the moment too), thrombosis of the lower extremities. And I was also breastfeeding, my brother took us from the apartment to his private house (I could not walk well). We lived there for almost a month... we survived, of course, like everyone else - there was a rush for food, but thank God that we survived. In March, my city was bombed and we woke up to the blast wave blowing the door open, the whole house was shaking. Then we decided to leave home. This decision was very difficult, because at home we had hope, parents, brothers and sisters. They helped me get to the Moldovan border. Mom with a baby in her arms, older daughters nearby - the unknown... not knowing the language, where to go??? What to live for? But thank God we were met by believing volunteers. We were fed, warmed and helped to get to Romania for free. We went through so much here, without money, without knowing the language, but with the support of our brothers and sisters. They helped us find a stroller for the little one, and provided support. (Havtura family and Ukrainian church group below.)



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	Мефодьевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Космичев	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	Вялков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВІТНИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СКВОРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЕВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варакин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубещий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Лашеню	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Тюченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отмахов	Вениамин	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савиненко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Фадеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богодинов	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миньков	Павел	Дмитриевич	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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