

Voice of the Martyrs Founder Reveals Chilling Story of His Own Christian Persecution

Richard and Sabina Wurmbrand were Jewish Christians from Romania who were imprisoned, mistreated, and (especially Richard) brutally tortured for their unwavering faith. They would not bow the knee to the spirit of the age. They would not submit to the godless communist agenda (or any other godless agenda). They would only bow the knee to Jesus.

But they did not suffer hardship and imprisonment because of a one-time, cavalier act. They did not just wake up one day and say, "Let's do something radical for Jesus." Instead, year after year, they determined to obey the Lord, regardless of cost or consequence. Then, when the great crisis came, they were ready to obey once again.

When the Nazis occupied Romania, Richard risked his life preaching the gospel, being arrested and beaten for his unflinching faith. Then, in 1944, the Nazis were displaced by the Russians, who began to establish their communist regime in Romania, with one million soldiers occupying the country. Then, the great test came.

Richard and Sabina were attending the government sponsored Congress of Cults along with other national religious leaders, and the event was being broadcast on live, national radio. As one religious leader after another publicly praised communism—I'm talking about Christian leaders praising an atheistic regime, in the name of Christianity—the Wurmbrands became sickened in their spirits.

Sabina said to her husband, who by then was well known in Romania, "Richard, stand up and wash away this shame from the face of Christ! They are spitting in His face."

He replied, "If I do so, you lose your husband."

She answered, "I don't wish to have a coward as a husband."

So, he made his way forward to the podium and prepared to deliver his remarks (and I remind you: this was airing live on national radio). As reported by the Christian History Institute,

When Wurmbrand stepped forward to speak at the congress, there was a hush as everyone anticipated his endorsement of the new government. Into the electrifying silence fell Wurmbrand's proclamation to 4,000 delegates that their duty as Christians was to glorify God and Christ alone. He was hustled from the podium and from that moment became a marked man. As he continued his ministry, the government watched him.

Three years later,

On the morning of Feb. 29, 1948, as Wurmbrand walked to church to prepare for the morning service, a secret police van pulled up beside him. Two men pushed him into the van, which quickly drove away. Thrown into prison Wurmbrand ceased to exist as though he had disappeared from the face of the earth. His name was registered as Vasile Georgescu, and he was forbidden to pronounce his real name, even when speaking to the guards. When foreign ambassadors or family members inquired about him, 'Wurmbrand' did not appear on any list.

But that was not the end of the story. Hardly.

Richard Wurmbrand endured two terms of prison totaling 14 years. Sabina continued their underground church work, but was also incarcerated for three years in Romania's terrible labor camps. Wurmbrand became so ill in prison that he was put into what was called the "dying room," where guards sent prisoners who were expected to live no longer than a few

days. Wurmbrand survived for more than two years before being released from the dying room. During that time he ministered to many people before their deaths.

Finally, in 1965, friends ransomed the now-freed Wurmbrand family from Romania.

Multiplied millions of Richard Wurmbrand's most famous book, *Tortured for Christ*, have been distributed worldwide, having been translated into scores of different languages. (When I asked him in 1993 if his book was the most translated book of the 20th century, he smiled at me and said, "No, the books of Agatha Christie!")

Wurmbrand also founded the Voice of the Martyrs, a ministry that for decades has brought awareness of the suffering church to believers across the globe. And so, what was meant to destroy the church only made it stronger.

As Wurmbrand said in *Tortured for Christ*, "Persecution has always produced a better Christian—a witnessing Christian, a soul-winning Christian. Communist persecution has backfired and produced serious, dedicated Christians such as are rarely seen in free lands. These people cannot understand how anyone can be a Christian and not want to win every soul they meet."

For these persecuted believers, following Jesus was not a matter of convenience or comfort. It was not simply the choosing of a better, more prosperous life. Rather, as he said, "A man who visits a barber to be shaved, or who orders a suit from a tailor, is not a disciple, but a customer. So, one who comes to the Savior only to be saved is the Savior's customer, not His disciple. A disciple is one who says to Christ, 'How I long to do work like Yours! To go from place to place taking away fear; bringing instead joy, truth, comfort, and life eternal!'" (From his book *In God's Underground*.)

We are called to be disciples, not customers, not consumers,

not casual seekers of carnal convenience. Instead, with joy, we deny ourselves and take up our cross daily (see Luke 9:23). And by God's grace, we walk worthy of our Lord. That means that we love Him more than father or mother, more than son or daughter, even more than our own lives. That's what disciples do. (See Matt. 10:37-39, Luke 14:25-33.)

We only bow the knee to Jesus! {eoa}

✖ *(Excerpted from Michael L. Brown, The Silencing of the Lambs: The Ominous Rise of Cancel Culture and How We Can Overcome.)*

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