

# Tortured for Christ

(Book notes)

Richard Wurmbrand



- ✪ Has been translated into 65 languages and millions of copies have been distributed throughout the world
- ✪ In the Body of Christ victory, courage, resilience, and tenacity know no borders, no skin color, no nationality, but are given equally to all by the Holy Spirit
- ✪ T.S. Eliot describes a martyr as one “who has become an instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has found freedom in submission to God.
- ✪ According to the original Greek “martyr” means “witness”.
  - Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:1-2
  - But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8
- ✪ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Phil 1:29
- ✪ Richard Wurmbrand has undergone sufferings to the point that death would have been preferred to life itself
- ✪ Even today Christians endure horrific sufferings and even die for their *witness* to the life and power of Jesus Christ
- ✪ He grew up an atheist and says I had the grace to be one of the chosen of God for reasons that I don't understand
- ✪ I convinced myself that there was no God, but I was sad that such a God of love did not exist
- ✪ The Nazi times taught us that physical beatings could be endured, and that the human spirit with God's help can survive horrible tortures
- ✪ I longed from the first day of my conversion to be able to witness to the Russians, a people raised (brainwashed) from childhood in atheism.
- ✪ The betrayal by many official church leaders compelled us to create an Underground Church in Romania: one faithful to evangelize, preach the gospel, and reach children for Christ. There were two aspects: our secret ministry among Russian soldiers, and our work with the enslaved people of Romania.
- ✪ Speaking of a Russian officer he said: “He longed for God, but had never seen a Bible. He loved God without the slightest knowledge of Him. I read to him the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of Jesus and after hearing them he danced around the room in rapturous joy proclaiming, “What a wonderful beauty! How could I live without knowing this Christ!”
- ✪ We had to translate the gospel into the “Marxist language” in order for the Russians to identify with it. It was something we could not do by ourselves, but the Holy Spirit did His work through us.
- ✪ When Christians in free countries win a soul for Christ, the new believer may become a member of a quietly living church. But when those in captive nations win someone, we know that he may have to go to prison and that his children may become orphans. The joy of having brought someone to Christ is always mixed with the feeling that there is a price that must be paid
- ✪ We should never stop at having won a soul for Christ. Every soul won for Christ must be made to be a soul-winner.
- ✪ I was in prison with one who had left behind six children and who was now in prison for his Christian faith. His wife and children were starving and he might never see them again. I asked him, “Have you any resentment against me that I brought you to Christ and because of this your family is in such misery?” He answered, “I have no words to express my thankfulness that you have brought me to the wonderful Savior. I would never have it any other way.”
- ✪ Several brethren of the Underground Church joined the Russian secret police so they could report the activities of the secret police to the Underground Church. It was difficult for them to be despised by family

and friends for wearing the Communist uniform and not reveal their true mission, yet they did so because of their love for Christ.

- ✪ Thousands of believers from churches of all denominations were sent to prison at that time. The prisons were full, and in Romania, as in all Communist countries, to be in prison means to be tortured, and the tortures were unspeakable.
- ✪ A pastor was compelled by the Communists to betray his brethren but he resisted steadfastly. Eventually they brought his fourteen year old son to the prison and began to whip the boy in front of his father, saying that they would continue to beat him until the pastor said what they wished him to say. He bore it as long as he could then he cried to his son, "Alexander, I must say what they want! I can't bear your beating anymore!" The son answered, "Father, don't do me the injustice of having a traitor as a parent. Withstand! If they kill me, I will die with the words, 'Jesus and my father-land.'" The Communists, enraged, fell upon the child and beat him to death. He died praising God.
- ✪ What the Communists have done to Christians surpasses any possibility of human understanding.
- ✪ We saw that Communism is not from men but from the devil. It is a spiritual force – a force of evil – and can only be countered by a greater spiritual force, the Spirit of God.
  - For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Phil 6:12-13
- ✪ The cruelty of atheism is hard to believe. When a man has no faith in the reward of good or the punishment of evil there is no reason to be human. Communism has destroyed any moral sense in them.
- ✪ I learned from them. As they allowed no place for Jesus in their hearts, I decided I would leave not leave the smallest place for Satan in mine.
- ✪ All the biblical descriptions of hell and the pains of Dante's Inferno are nothing in comparison with the tortures in Communist prisons. There are things that simply cannot be told – too terrible and obscene to put in writing.
- ✪ The prisons were overcrowded and the guards did not know us by name. They called out for those who had been sentenced to get 25 lashes with a whop for having broken some prison rule. Innumerable times a certain pastor went to get the beating in the place of someone else.
- ✪ In 8½ years in prison I had lost much weight, gained ugly scars, been brutally beaten and kicked, derided, starved, pressured, questioned, threatened and neglected. None of this had produced the results my captors were seeking so in discouragement and amid protest over my imprisonment they turned me loose.
- ✪ It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners and it was understood that whoever was caught doing this received a severe beating. A number of us decided to pay the price for the privilege of preaching, so we accepted their terms.
- ✪ One great lesson arose from all the beatings, tortures and butchery of the Communists: that the spirit is the master of the body. We felt the torture, but it often seemed as something distant and far removed from the spirit, which was lost in the glory of Christ and His presence with us.
- ✪ It was a crime to help families of Christian martyrs. Many families of jailed Christians in Communist countries nearly starve to death.
- ✪ I hate the Communist system but I love the men. I hate the sin but I love the sinner. I have not the slightest bitterness or resentment against the Communists or my torturers.
- ✪ The Jews have a legend that when their forefathers were saved from Egypt and the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea, the angels joined the songs of triumph sung by the Israelites and God said to the angels, "The Jews are men and can rejoice about their escape, but from you I expect more understanding. Are the Egyptians not also my creatures? Do I not love them too? How do you fail to feel my sorrow about their tragic fate?"
- ✪ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? Joshua 5:13-14
  - If the one met by Joshua had been only a man the answer could have been "I am for you" or "I am for your adversaries", or even "I am neutral." These are the only possible human responses to such a question. But the Being whom Joshua met was sent from the Lord and, therefore, when asked

whether He was for or against Israel, gave an answer that is the most unexpected and difficult to understand: “No.” What does that “no” mean? He came from a place where beings are not for or against, but where everyone and everything are understood, looked upon with pity and compassion, and loved with fire.

- There is a human level on which Communism must be utterly fought against. On this level we have to fight against it. But Christians are more than mere men; they are children of God, partakers of the divine nature. Therefore, tortures endured in Communist prisons have not made me hate Communists. They are God’s creatures; how can I hate them? But neither can I be their friend. Friendship means one soul in two breasts. I am not one soul with the Communists. They hate the notion of God – I love God.
- In the spirit I am seated in heavenly places with Jesus; in the sphere of the “no”, in which, notwithstanding all of their crimes, the Communists are understood and loved, a sphere in which there are angelic beings trying to help everyone attain the highest goal of human life, which is to become Christlike. Therefore, my aim is to spread the gospel to the Communists, to give them the good news about Christ, who is my Lord and loves the Communists.
  - But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Eph 2:4-6
- He has said Himself that He loves every man and that He would rather leave ninety-nine righteous sheep than allow the one that went astray to remain lost. His apostles and all the great teachers of Christianity have taught this universal love in His name. The Christian teaching is clear. Communists are men and Christ loves them. So does every man who has the mind of Christ. We love the sinner even though we hate the sin.
  - For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Matthew 18:11-14
  - For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16
- I have seen Christians give away their last slice of bread (we were given one slice a week) and the medicine that could save their lives to a sick Communist torturer who was now a fellow prisoner.
- And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: Luke 10:23
  - The disciples had just come back from a tour through Palestine where they had seen horrors. Palestine was an oppressed country. Everywhere there was the terrible misery of a tyrannized people. They met sickness, plagues, hunger and sorrow. Jesus said that because they had not seen only the suffering but had also seen the Savior. For the first time they understood that after this miserable existence comes a beautiful life.
- I saw in the shabby, dirty, weak martyr near me the splendidly crowned saint of tomorrow.
- God sees things differently than we see them, just as we see differently than an ant. The Bible calls the sufferings of martyrs “light afflictions. To be in prison for fourteen years is a long period to us but the Bible call it “but for a moment” and tells us that these things are “working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”. This gives us the right to suppose that the fierce crimes of the Communists, which are inexcusable to us, are lighter in the eyes of God than they are in our eyes. Their tyranny, which has lasted almost an entire century, may be before God, for whom a thousand years are like one day, only a moment of erring astray. They still have the possibility of being saved. The gates of heaven are not closed for them – neither is the light quenched for them – they can repent like everyone else.
  - For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor 4:16-18

- Only love can change the Communist and the terrorist. Hatred blinds.
- Christians, tortured by the Communists, rewarded their torturers by love. We brought many of our jailors to Christ. And we are dominated by one desire: to give Communists who have made us suffer the best we have, the salvation that comes from our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Lenin wrote: "Every religious idea, every idea of God – even flirting with the idea of God – is unutterable vileness of the most dangerous kind, contagion of the most abominable kind. Millions of sins, filthy deeds, acts of violence, and physical contagion are far less dangerous than the subtle, spiritual idea of a God."
- Sin must be called by its name. Communism is one of the most dangerous sins in the world today. Every gospel that does not denounce it is- not the pure gospel.
- The Underground Church is a poor and suffering church, but it has few lukewarm members. I suffer in the West more than I suffered in a Communist jail because now I see with my own eyes Western civilization dying.
- The quietness and rest for which I long would be an escape from reality and dangerous for my soul. The West sleeps and must be awakened to see the plight of captive nations.
- We cannot always judge man for only one part of his attitude. If we did so, we would be like the Pharisees in whose eyes Jesus was seen as bad, because He did not respect their rules about the Sabbath. They closed their eyes entirely to what would have been lovable in Jesus, even in their sight.
- I have found truly joyful Christians only in the Bible, in the underground Church, and in prison.
- 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.
- Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. Mat 10:32-39
- "How a Communist girl found Christ" (letters)
- Although we are called to take every opportunity to help those in need, we are to recognize that the "rite" of Christians is to be persecuted. Although not all of us are called to suffer persecution when trials do come we should not be surprised but rather should rejoice that we have been considered worthy to suffer for Christ.
- Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Heb 13:3

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