

# How to Organize an Underground Church - Part 4

by Richard Wurmbrand

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*The underground church continues to work despite persecution, maintaining faith and spreading the Gospel in communist countries.*

**Duration:** 25:08

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:20, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 11:1

**Topics:** "Underground Church", "Faith in Adversity", "The Underground Church"

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## Description

Richard Wurmbrand emphasizes the unwavering faith in Jesus, regardless of circumstances, asserting that even if Jesus were dead, He remains a savior. He discusses the importance of certainty in faith, likening it to mathematical truths that remain unchanged regardless of personal trials. Wurmbrand shares his experiences in solitary confinement, highlighting the necessity of spiritual exercises and the power of prayer, even in the darkest times. He encourages believers to remember past blessings and to maintain a joyful spirit, even amidst persecution. The underground church, he explains, has existed since biblical times, and believers must continue their mission despite oppressive authorities.

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## Transcript

If Jesus is dead, she loves a dead Jesus. When she sat near the tomb of the dead Jesus, who could do nothing for her. He could not lift a finger for her.

He could do no miracle to her. He could not speak to her words of comfort. He could not wipe away her tears.

Nothing. He was dead. But he was a saviour.

Living or dead, he was a saviour. Living or dead, he was not able. What if you tell me that he is dead and loving just as much as when he was alive? And if the whole church would have died and would have lost its faith, there is no motive for me to lose my faith.

We have to arrive to a certitude in faith. I told you yesterday that the word to doubt does not exist in Hebrew. It does not exist in the Old Testament.

And it does not appertain to this, but may I point to you another Hebrew word which does not exist. I have been very often accused by leaders of the World Council of Churches. They have written against me.

And they have written always, Wurmbrand paints the situation behind the Iron Curtain in white and black. It is not so. There exists the grey.

And I told them, I accept this if you show me in the whole Bible the word grey. The Bible does not know the colour grey. There exists in the Bible blue.

There exists grey. There exists white. There exists whatever you like.

Grey mixture does not exist. A thing is true or untrue. It is right or it is wrong.

It is white or it is black. You have to go with the world or you have to go with Christ and so on. And now the Bible does not have the word, the Old Testament, the Hebrew, does not have the word to doubt.

And we must be sure in these problems of faith as I am sure about the table of multiplication. And 2 and 2 are 4. This is true. If my father is alive or if he has died, it makes no change in mathematics.

Makes absolute. If I am satiated or I starve, if I am free or if I am in prison, if I am beaten or if I am caressed, the truth of the mathematics does not change. 2 plus 2 caresses are 4 caresses.

And 2 and 2 beatings make 4 beatings. 2 and 2 make 4. And then the certainty of truth and the love like that of St. Mary Magdalene makes you to be able to resist brainwashing. Resist to the extreme.

I don't wish to pose as a hero. I am a man. And as every man I have had my flaws and my weaknesses as others.

And therefore we exist as a church to encourage each other in moment of weaknesses. And under this terrible pressure I at a certain moment whispered to a brother near me. He was a Presbyterian minister, a very good Christian.

And I whispered to him, Brother, I believe that I have lost my faith. I don't think that I am anymore a believer. And he with a smile which never left him asked me, But did you ever believe? I said, Yes, I surely did.

He said, Then remember one verse of the Bible. When Virgin Mary comes to Elizabeth, Elizabeth tells her, Blessed is the one who has believed. In the past tense.

Elizabeth does not say, Blessed is the one who believes. Blessed is the one who has believed. If you have believed, you are blessed.

Live on this blessedness. I can't tell you what these words have meant for me under those circumstances. I don't know how good theologies are if you can put them in a book of theology.

But we did not live on theology in that time. Nobody lived on theology. And you live on past memories.

Therefore the Bible says it. Don't forget, praise the Lord and don't forget His past blessings which He has given to you. We remember the past blessings even if now I pass through a dark night of the soul.

I jumped from one question to the other because thoroughly the watch also jumps. But after a tea break we will have the occasion to put questions and we will come back to this. One of the great problems for an underground fighter is to know to feel out his solitude.

As I told you, I have been three years in solitary confinement. I was lucky. I met a prisoner who was 17 years in solitary confinement.

And we were with absolutely no book. Not only the Bible, but not even a novel, nothing. No book, no scrap of paper and no pencil.

We never heard a noise. There was absolutely nothing to distract our minds. You looked at the walls, that was all.

Now normally a mind under such circumstances gets mad. If you will read great books about prison life as Papillon and other such books which are very valuable to be read for a future underground worker just to catch the atmosphere of prison as much as a free man can catch it you will see the maddening influence of being alone during years without anything to distract your mind. Now I can tell you from my own experience how I avoided becoming mad.

But this again has to be prepared by a life of spiritual exercise beforehand. How much can you be alone now? Without the Bible. Just you for yourself alone.

Without switching on the radio or a record player and so on. Now I and many other prisoners we did it like this. We never slept during the night.

We slept during the day. The whole night we were awake. You know that a soul says blessed are those who are at night in the house of the Lord.

One prayer at night is worth ten prayers during the day. All great sins and crimes are committed during the night. The great robberies and burglaries and drunkenness and travelling and adultery and everything.

This whole life of sin is a night life during the day. Everyone has to work somewhere in a factory or in a college or somewhere. The great sins are committed during the night.

But the demonic forces are forces of the night. And therefore it is so important to oppose them during the night. And vigils are very important.

I don't know how it is in South Africa. I don't know. But in America vigils are completely unknown.

Completely unknown. But I know in my country even before the communists took over my son Mihai when he had the age of three, four he knew about vigils. He was brought up in vigils.

The whole night we would pass in prayer. These are children of three and four. While we prayed they would pray a little bit then they would kick each other then we would spank them a little bit then they would pray again a little bit then they would fall asleep under some tables then we would give them something.

That's how they were brought up with vigils. Now we awoke when the other prisoners went to bed when the signal was given for going to bed. And now I had I put it in this first person I don't wish to speak about myself but I speak of my experience it was the experience also of other prisoners we filled our time with a program which was so heavy that we could not fulfill our whole program.

We started with prayer a prayer in which we traveled through the whole world. I have been to South Africa too. We traveled through the whole world and prayed for each country where we knew the names of towns where we knew the names sometimes we knew names of men of great preachers in Britain or in America I don't know where.

It took us a good hour or two to come back and we prayed for pilots and we prayed for those who are on the sea and those who are in prisons and then the Bible says one of the great joys which everyone can have even in a communist prison cell in the Bible it is said rejoice with those who rejoice. And I thought now there are somewhere families are gathered with their children and they read the Bible together and they say jokes to each other and they are so happy with each other and I can rejoice with them. And here is a young boy who loves a young girl and dates her I can be happy about them.

And there they have a prayer evening and there is somebody who studies and there is somebody who enjoys just good food and so on. We could rejoice with those who rejoice. After having traveled through the whole world I read the Bible from memory.

Now to memorize the Bible is very important for an underground worker. The Frelimo will not give you Bibles to read. I can assure you neither the Zimbabwe or the Swapo or how all these gangs are called they will give you no Bibles in prison.

And we learned the Bible we read the Bible out of memory. And just to make us also laugh a little bit I will tell you one thing which happened once I lay on the few planks which were my bed and I read out of memory from the Gospel according to St. Luke the Sermon on the Mount and I arrived to the part where it is said when you are persecuted for my name's sake rejoice and jump for joy. You remember that it is written like this.

And I said how could I commit such a sin of neglect Christ had said that we have to do two different things one to rejoice this I have not and the second jump for joy this I have not done. Now it must have been said that Christ had said jump. So I jumped.

I came down from my bed and I began to jump around. Now I don't know how many of you are jailbirds how many of you have been in prison already.

They would not say they would not say well now in prison the door of the cell has a peephole and the guards look in and he happened to look in just while I jumped around so he believed that I got mad and they had the order to behave very well with madmen so that those who were shouting and banging at the door and so on should not disturb the order of the prison and so he immediately entered the garden quieted me down and said you will be released you will see everything will be alright just remain quiet I will bring you something and he went as to a little child you know when he is naughty and he brought me a big loaf of bread our portion was one slice of bread a week and now I had a whole loaf and cheese if you would know it was white never eat cheese just simply eat cheese first of all admire its whiteness it is beautiful to look upon and sugar and then he told me a few nice words again he locked the door and he left and I said well I will eat these after having finished this chapter and I laid down again where did I remain yes when you will be persecuted for my name's sake rejoice and jump for joy because great will be your reward and I looked at this loaf of bread and cheese really the reward was great so the next thing which we did is we read the Bible from memory we memorized it we meditated it I composed this before I broke down under the effect of doping I composed every night a sermon beginning with dear brethren and sisters and finishing with a man and after I composed it I delivered it I put them afterwards in very short

rhymes so that I could remember them you know the essence of the sermons and here are two books sermons in solitary confinements and if prison walls could speak I have memorized 350 such sermons when I came out from prison I wrote them down I can't find a publisher who should publish 350 sermons but some 50 of them had been published already in two books sermons in solitary confinement and if prison walls could speak sermons which I just delivered God hears the angels hear and the angels have wings and perhaps they take the thoughts to somebody else and God made it the angels made it they are published and they are published in many languages and they are helpful but we filled our time with this I composed books I composed poems I thought about wife about children then I thought it is very important it has no sense to sit in prison and not to rejoice so I told myself every night jokes but only always new jokes which I did not had not known before so that I might be able to to laugh sometimes I cheated you know I just changed the name instead of Moshe it was Chaim but somehow and now as I remember those jokes some of them are written down in this book sermons in solitary confinement they were all optimistic they were all optimistic one joke which it shows now I could not reproduce but it shows me how I felt then one of the jokes was that a woman says to her husband Peter what should I do?

I have set on my false teeth and I broke them and the husband said be happy be happy that you would have set on your natural teeth so I saw the good side in things out of bread I have made a chestnut and some of them I made white with a little bit of chalk in the wall and the others were grey and I played chess with myself and never believed the lie that Bob Fisher is the greatest chess master of the world he won in the last match with Spassky he won eight parties and lost two I in three years never lost a party either with white or with black it was always I who won now it is very important the result why I told you all these things is that it belongs to the secrets of the underground worker when he suffers never to allow his mind to become depressed because then the communists have you

in his hand your mind must be continually exercised it must be alert it must think it must everyone according to his abilities compose different things and so on now my time has passed I have to tell you I wish to finish just this I will keep you just five minutes more and then we will have a tea break the underground church is not something new now after having worked so many years in the underground church now I read the new testament with new eyes when I read the Acts of the Apostles Barthabas called Joseph Simon called Nigel now if he is Simon why should he be called Nigel and if he is Barthabas why should he be called Joseph and why should one James be called son of the sunderer and why if he is Simon should he be called Peter now I had never known any explanation for this you will

find so many names changed in the new testament now that is exactly what happens in the underground church I had so many names in the underground church all kinds of names wherever I went in a town in a village I could not say that brother Burma has come in one time it was Basil it was called so and so called so and so so we have nicknames we have some very strange expressions in the new testament now the new testament is really the word of God I believe in the literal inspiration not in the verbal inspiration I don't believe in the verbal inspiration I believe in the literal inspiration of the Bible every letter now if every word is from God why are there some so useless words it is written in Luke Jesus prayed in a certain place now what sense are these words you can't pray otherwise in

a certain place you have to be somewhere when you pray then why are these words in a certain place he came to a certain city now every city is a certain city but you said nothing when you said in a certain city now that is exactly the language of the underground church when I traveled around the country and I came back I would tell my wife I was in a certain city and there in a certain place I met with a certain brother and we decided that at a certain hour we will meet in a certain hour in a certain home and we find

now again exactly the language of the underground church Jesus wished to have a supper with his disciples now the normal thing for him would have been to say go on that and that street at number so and so ask about Mr.

Johnson and there in Mr.

Johnson's house prepare a supper for me instead of this he says enter into Jerusalem and you will see a man wearing a picture which was a very rare thing at that time because the women were those who drew water from the well and you will see a man with a picture go after him don't ask him that's exactly how we do it when we have some prayer meeting we would not give an address because I don't know if you are not a Jew we would tell you you stand at the corner of that street or you sit in a public park and you will see a man passing with a blue necktie with a with I don't know what and go after him and if anybody asks the other what is your name then we know he is an informer of the secret police so the underground church is something which existed already in the time of the new testament

and with this we have finished with all the critics of our organization we have critics too don't believe that I never speak about those who praise us we have such ones too but I will speak about our critics we have critics those of the work ones of churches and others who say that what we do is unlawful before God because a church should not work underground and we have to obey the authorities they give money to the frelimo which also obeyed authorities they give money to the urzit to obey authorities now in the bible it is written what an authority is it is a ruler who punishes evil and rewards good an authority which forbids the word of God puts itself outside of any human sphere nothing no bible verse applies to it every authority has its flaws and has its injustices and has its

abuses because no government is constituted of saints it is constituted of sinners no? so they do right things and they do wrong things the principle thing they should not hinder a caterpillar to become a butterfly they should not hinder a bird to become a flower they should not hinder a sinner to become a saint as long as they allow me this i don't expect from them to be saints dropped from heaven i expect from them that they do sometimes good things and sometimes wrong laws which they can change after a couple of years or so on i will respect them as authorities but if they take away the very sense of my life the sense of the life of a caterpillar to become a butterfly and the sense of my life is to prepare myself for a more beautiful existence in heaven we don't feel any duty towards

these communist authorities and we just our mission just continues this underground work and we help this underground church in communist countries i give you just a glimpse of a few of the problems which this underground church has so that you might have somehow an image about how it looks like and now may god bless you and now we will have a tea break and after this i will answer your questions this class on how to organize an underground church was well timed a few months later angola and mozambique fell into communist hands jesus to the communist world is presently engaged in smuggling aid to our brethren in those countries this presentation is distributed by diane publishing an outreach of reverend richard wormbrand who was a prisoner of the communists for 14 years in his homeland of

romania reverend wormbrand is also founder of jesus to the communist world jesus to the world

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