

Michael Wurmbrand Interview (in Romanian with English subtitles) at The Memorial MUSEUM to the Victims of Communism, Sighet, Romania (2002)

English Transcription

(Start 0:35) Mihai Wurmbrand: “Once my father was invited to speak in a NATO Chapel in Norway. His speech was followed by questions from the audience. An American officer stood up and asked: ‘Mr. Wurmbrand, Pastor Wurmbrand, why can’t we coexist with the Communists?’ My father, without answering the question, he went straight to him, he put his hand in his coat inner pocket, took his wallet out put it in his own coat and said: ‘Let’s shake hands, your wallet is in my pocket.’ The communists took half of Europe, all of Asia, of course they want to coexist, every burglar would like to coexist with the police. It is possible that we don’t have a solution against communism but it’s the same with not having a medicine against cancer, that doesn’t mean that we will coexist with cancer.”

(Start: 1:57) Narrator: Being in Romania for a few days in the summer of 2005, Mihai Wurmbrand, son of Pastor Wurmbrand, paid a visit to the Memorial in Sighet. Built in 1897 as prison for common law offenders, the Sighet prison became, once communism came to power, one of the most terrible centers for the total extermination of anticommunist political prisoners. In 1977, the prison was put out of use and entered a process of degradation. After the fall of communism, the Civic Academy Foundation took over the ruins of the former prison in 1995, intent upon transforming it into a Memorial of the communist persecution. The Memorial preliminary work was initiated in 1993 under the leading of the well-known poet and fighter Ana Blandiana and her husband, writer Romulus Rusan and an important group of historians, architects, constructors, and designers. Made up of a Museum and an International Center for Studies about Communism, the Memorial aims to rebuild and keep the memories of the Romanian people, who, for half a century under communism, have been misled with a false history.

(Start 3.04) Mihai Wurmbrand: “The reason for my coming here was to see this monument of communist persecution, not so much about the politicians of those times as to the persecution against Christians. Because if you take in consideration that politicians, during all times, fight each other, there is no

wonder they put each other in prison. But communists put in prisons hundreds of thousands of totally innocent Christian people, from any denomination, whose only crime was to testify about Jesus Christ and their faith in Him.”

(Start: 4.22) Mihai Wurmbrand: “Romania has, in this prison, an extraordinary spiritual capital. The reason for this being the fact that all nations admire the personalities that they have created. In Romania, true martyrs and Christian saints were born. For example, in the Greek Catholic Church were 12 bishops. Some say that Jesus Christ had 12 apostles and one of them was a traitor. Out of the 12 Greek Catholic bishops, not one made a compromise with the communist regime. What the communist regime required was a little compromise, but they would still rather stay in prison, many of them even die in these prisons, just so they wouldn’t compromise themselves.”

(Start: 5.50) Mihai Wurmbrand: “What really impresses and matures a person is the suffering. I have a principle that I have passed on to many people and that is no man that did not actually suffer can write a book or show values, they can only do that if they suffered and went through them. My father believed that anything that happens to him is God’s plan. Many times he said, with a lot of joy, that he never had a community or a church as good as the one in prison because none of his listeners could walk out from his sermons or avoid them. Also my father was never sad, he never had a moment of depression. There was never a moment when he would state: ‘My life is wasted’ or ‘I lost 14 years of my life.’ On the contrary, he considered these 14 years to be very useful for all of the people he met and his own spiritual life. When he was released from prison in ’64, it so happened that some foreign missionaries, Americans, few days after he was released, so he still looked like a prisoner that just got out of prison, came to our (small) attic (room.) There were, maybe, around 40 local Christian people gathered, because many would come to see Pastor Wurmbrand who had been released. One of them, who lives in LA still, recently recounted in public his first encounter with Pastor Wurmbrand. He was telling how he came into this attic where there were 40 people and in the middle was this man who was somewhat older, very weak, who spoke and was laughing and he asked me, I was in the same room, ‘I want to meet with Pastor Wurmbrand, who is Pastor Wurmbrand?’ I pointed and said, there is Pastor Wurmbrand. He said: ‘That is not possible, Pastor Wurmbrand was in prison, this man is voluble, he talks, laughs, are you

sure this is Pastor Wurmbrand?' I said, 'I am absolutely sure.' He then asked me, 'What makes you be so sure?' 'This is my father, he is right there!'"

(Start: 9.48) Mihai Wurmbrand: "My father always believed that the renewal of mankind, a society, or a country starts with a personal renewal of every man's heart. Everyone needs to realize they are here, on this earth, invited and one day they will be invited to leave this earth. It is a temporary existence. And in this temporary existence, the most important message for us is our eternal relationship with the Creator of this universe. In my father's memory, I try to encourage everyone, all the Christians, in Romania especially, to follow my father's example, to go without compromise until the end, up to the hilt, through the walls. My father never thought about keeping his position, or watching out because he had a family. Without any compromise, every time, he walked straight ahead. He is an example worldwide. It is really hard to be the son of a great man because anyone who meets you wants to meet a copy, a clone, of this great man. But it is also gratifying to be the son of a great man, it is like having a legacy, a big baggage, that was handed down to you. My father was the type of person that would keep to his word. One of my most powerful stories happened when I was only six and a half years old. Right after World War II, a Christian from the West brought my dad a piece of fabric in order to make himself a new suit. Every morning, he would tell me differing moralistic Christian stories and one such stories I was told in that period was about a selfish woman. A beggar came to her door and after many pleads, she threw him a piece of rotten cheese. That night, the woman dreamed she went to heaven and there was this big feast where all the saints were presently seated at this enormous table and she wanted to sit down, but an angel came and pulled at her sleeve and told her to sit at a different tiny table where there was the rotten cheese because all the people at this table gave what they had best, but she'd only given the rotten cheese. Then of course my father told me that when we have, we should give what we have best and not throw our garbage to other people. So it happened that two days after this story, my father was proudly trying on, how they used to do it in the old times in Romania, a brand new suit made out of this fabric brought from the west in the mirror. I was there with him and said: 'Now you have two suits, and brother Vaisman, in our church, always comes with a patched suit to church. You should give one of the two suits to brother Vaisman.' So my dad asked me

right away which one of the two suits should he give away. And, without missing a beat, I said: 'The suit you would want to wear in heaven is the one you should give away.' In the same afternoon, my father called this older brother, Vaisman, and he gave him the new suit, that was brought from Switzerland, right in front of me. Being Pastor Wurmbrand's son, this is a great legacy, a great wealth to have as a parent someone who you admire for keeping to his word."