

August 25, 1981

Georgi P. Vins

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FIVE YEARS IN LABOR CAMP FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL

(Elkhart, IN)--The trial of Pastor Dmitri Vasilievich MINYAKOV took place from 19-20 August in the city of Tallin, Estonia. Pastor Minyakov is a member of the Council of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches in the USSR.

Minyakov was given a sentence of five years in strict regime labor camp with confiscation of all his personal property (his home, furniture, clothing, etc.).

In addition to this, the atheistic court made a decision to forcibly place Minyakov's 15-year-old son, Zhenya, in a special boarding school where he would be exposed to intense atheistic influence. This means that he would be forbidden to pray and to have a Bible, he would be educated in the spirit of atheism, and could be deprived of written and personal communication with his family.

During the trial, only members of Minyakov's immediate family were allowed into the courtroom, and the request by four noted American Christians to participate in Pastor Minyakov's trial was not granted by Soviet authorities. Lawyer John McLario along with psychiatrist Dr. Basil Jackson, Mr. Bill Gothard and Dr. Robert Jones III had appealed to Soviet President Brezhnev for permission to be present at the trial and act in defense of Pastor Minyakov. Nonetheless due to western concern, Soviet court officials and the KGB were forced to drop charges against Minyakov which falsely stated that he had

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betrayed his country. This charge can carry a sentence of up to 15 years. Minyakov therefore was sentenced for his religious activities and his defense of persecuted Christians only. The atheistic court also held him accountable for raising his own children to become Christians. At the trial Pastor Minyakov conducted himself nobly, and in accordance with Biblical and civil principles by defending the Church's independence from the atheistic state.

Sometime during the three years before his last arrest (this is his third sentence), Minyakov wrote these words in an autobiographical sketch which was printed in the secretly published Russian Baptist magazine, "Herald of Truth" No. 2-3, 1978:

"... I want to always accept with gladness whatever the Lord allows. I pray for strength to remain faithful to Him, and to lay down my life for my brothers and the work which God is doing in our country.

It's easy to verbally stand for truth and then to indifferently pass by those who are really suffering for God's work. To sincerely love the Truth and those near who are suffering and laboring, and to be at one with them in sharing the same difficult fate, is the glory of the church and my goal. I ask God for strength, so that whether by life or by death I can serve and glorify Him. 'Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the work of thine own hands'" (Ps. 138:8).

We ask that you will continue to pray for Pastor Dmitri Minyakov and ask that the Lord will restore his health and grant him an abundance of fresh spiritual strength to continue his ministry for the Lord and lost souls!

Below we have placed the address of Elena Petrova, Pastor Minyakov's

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daughter. Her husband Mikhail Petrov is a preacher and because of persecution from the KGB he has been forced to leave his family and live in hiding in order to carry on his ministry. Your letters and telegrams could be of real encouragement to the Minyakov and Petrov families.

Elena Dmitrievna Petrova
USSR - Estonia
g. Valga
ul. Ykhtu, 4

We pray as the apostles prayed to our Lord: "...Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (Acts 4:24-26, 29).

If you wish to receive fresh information periodically on the situation of believers in the USSR, write: Georgi Vins, P. O. Box 1188, Elkhart, IN 46515.

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INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION FOR THE COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCHES
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August 20, 1981

Georgi P. Vins

112 EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN BAPTISTS ARE BEHIND BARS

(Elkhart, IN)--On 14 August 1981 two ministers of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Church were arrested in Leningrad. The arrest of 50 year old Pastor Fyodor Mikhailovich Makhovitsky, and evangelist Mikhail Vladimirovich Azorov, 44, was preceded by house searches in the homes of five Leningrad believers on August 13. As usual, KGB officials confiscated Bibles, copies of the Gospel, and other religious literature.

Three days after their arrest, Makhovitsky and Azarov were charged under articles 190¹ and 227 of the RSFSR criminal code. In the eyes of Soviet authorities, oral or written defense of persecuted believers is considered slander against the Soviet state (article 190¹) and religious activity is construed as infringement on the personal rights of a citizen (article 227). The two ministers are being held in the Leningrad prison commonly known as "Kresty."

With the arrest of Makhovitsky and Azarov the number of Evangelical Baptists arrested has reached 112. Pastor Makhovitsky has already spent some time in confinement for his faith in God. From 1966-1968 he was held in a labor camp in the Perm Region of the northern Urals.

Alarming news concerning the health of believers arrested for their faith has been coming out of the Soviet Union. No matter where in the country they are being held, Moscow and the KGB keep a close watch on them. The administrators of camps and prisons must consult with the KGB on all questions relating to their confinement, including questions of nutrition, work, and correspondence and meetings with family members. KGB officials, as a rule, create the most difficult circumstances for believers in labor camp and prison with the aim of sapping their health and re-educating them to become atheists. They are beaten, used to do the most difficult physical labor while meagerly nourished, and prohibited to pray and read their Bibles.

If a Bible or copy of the Gospel is found in their possession, they are locked in a small isolated cell and deprived of even what few visits they are allowed with relatives.

Anatoly Maksimovich Levtsenyuk, 42 year old pastor of the ECB Church in Dubno, Ukraine, is suffering from an acute form of arthritis. He was sentenced to three years in labor camp and is being held in the city of Rovno. KGB officials, without regard to his grave state of health, continue to subject him to interrogation after his trial in an attempt to force him to renounce God and cooperate with them. These interrogations are conducted even at night.

Galina Vladimirovna Vilchinskaya, a member of the ECB Church in Brest, Byelorussia, was sentenced to three years in a labor camp for religious education of children. For more than 14 months she has been held in prison in the Ukrainian city of Lvov. The KGB has threatened to let her rot in prison because of her faith and have attempted to force her to work for them. After she flatly refused to have anything to do with the KGB, she was sent away to a special women's labor camp in the Primorsky Area 7500 miles from her parents where she has been given very heavy work. Galina, at 23 years of age after two years of confinement, has almost completely lost her health. Her hair has all fallen out, her gums are swollen and her teeth are falling out as a result of a serious case of scurvy. Her food rations are very meagre but she is forced to work 10 hours a day in the taiga at very hard physical labor; her shoes and clothing are constantly wet and after work she has to return to cold barracks. Her camp address is: Primorsky krai, Mikhailovsky r-n, s. Gornoye, p/ya 267/10.

Yuri Ottovich Seifert, 34 years old, is being held in prison in the city of Makinsk, Kazakhstan. He is seriously ill with a duodenal ulcer.

Vladimir Ulyanovich Rymar, 45, from the Ukrainian city of Khotin, Chernovitsk Region is being used to do heavy physical labor despite the fact that he has tuberculosis of the kidneys. The administration of the camp has refused to put him on the special diet to which he is entitled because of his health.

Pyotr Vasilievich Rumachik, 50 year old pastor of the Dedovsk ECB Church, Moscow Region and vice-president of the Council of ECB Churches was sentenced to 5 years in strict regime labor camp. Having previously spent 10 years in confinement, he suffers acutely from high blood pressure. In camp he is being kept in a state of half-starvation.

The persecution of believers in the USSR has continued for over 50 years. However, faith in Christ has not been destroyed. Thousands of persecuted Christians are saying, "Christ before all else! First place belongs to Christ!", and this is particularly precious when we consider the fact that the older generation of spiritual warriors are being reinforced on the front lines by zealous and courageous Christian young people. 50% of all those who are counted as part of the persecuted Evangelical Christian Baptist Church in the USSR are Christian young people! Christians of the first century said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:35-37).

Our Homeland (the Soviet Union) needs Jesus Christ and we are expecting a great spiritual awakening! The Word of God calls us to be, "in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Philippians 1:28-29).

For more information about Christians in the Soviet Union, contact:
Georgi P. Vins, P. O. Box 1188, Elkhart, IN 46515, U.S.A. PH: 219/522-3486

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NEWS RELEASE

August 18, 1981

Georgi P. Vins

AMERICAN CHRISTIAN LAWYERS ARE PREPARED TO DEFEND
RUSSIAN PASTOR DMITRI MINYAKOV

(Elkhart, IN)--According to information received from the USSR, the trial of Pastor Dmitri Vasilievich Minyakov has been set for 19 August 1981 in Tallin, Estonia.

Pastor Minyakov has been a member of the Council of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches in the USSR since 1965. He has been repeatedly arrested by Soviet authorities for his active ministry amongst God's people.

Yelena Petrova, daughter of Pastor Minyakov, has appealed to the International Representation of the ECB Church in Elkhart, Indiana (USA) with a request to engage a Christian lawyer for the defense of her father. In her appeal, she writes: "I request that you invite a believing (Christian) lawyer to conduct the defense of my father, Dmitri Vasilievich Minyakov, member of the Council of ECB Churches, who was arrested on 21 January 1981." (Her address is: USSR, Estonskaya SSR, g. Valga, ul. Ykhtu, 4)

As a result a group of noted Christians in America, headed by Attorney John McLario, of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, is prepared to go to the Soviet Union to defend Pastor Minyakov. Mr. McLario serves as General Council for Christian Legal Defense and Educational Foundation Inc. and has amongst other things, been involved in the defense of American prisoners in Cuba. He is joined by Dr. Basil Jackson of Milwaukee a psychiatrist and expert in psychological and theological aspects of human rights, Dr. Robert Jones III, President of Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina and Mr. Bill Gothard founder and director of the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts. These four have sent a telegram to L. I. Brezhnev, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the

USSR, requesting permission to enter the Soviet Union to render legal assistance to Pastor Minyakov during his impending trial in Tallin. Below is the text of their telegram sent in the name of John McLario:

Dear President Brezhnev:

I am an attorney practicing law in a small community in the State of Wisconsin in the U.S.A. Christians all over America are deeply concerned about the situation of Baptist pastor, Dmitri Vasilievich Minyakov, being held in prison in Tallin, Estonia. Elena Petrova, who is his daughter, has appointed me as his defense attorney.

President Brezhnev, I appeal to you for permission to allow me to enter the Soviet Union as defense attorney for Pastor Dmitri Vasilievich Minyakov. I would like to represent him at his trial.

This is an emergency because the trial has been scheduled for August 19, 1981, and therefore, I would ask for an adjournment until I can arrive in Tallin, Estonia, to handle this defense. It is not necessary, but I also request to be allowed to bring with me Dr. Basil Jackson, Dr. Robert Jones, and Mr. William Gothard, together with a Russian interpreter. I will come alone if you do not authorize these other men.

We are all responsible Christian gentlemen and we will obey the laws of your nation, and our purpose is only to extend our assistance to Pastor Minyakov. We understand each country has different laws and regulations and we fully intend to obey your laws in all respect.

Please postpone this trial and give this your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Attorney John J. McLario
8/17/81

A telegram of similar content was sent by Attorney McLario to the Republican Procurator of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, K. I. Kimmeli.

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