

Testimonies from Faithful Romanian Brethren

Bro. John and Sr. Florica Petrita, Bro. Lazar and Sr. Anuta Fodor

Beloved Brethren in the Lord Jesus,

Peace be unto you. Romans 8:11.

I received the letter which you've sent dated Dec. 30, January 9, and it filled my heart with joy finding out about you brethren, how you were in Israel with the message of Isaiah 40:1, 2, which we also believe, that there were twins born since 1878. At the Berlin Congress they were given the liberty to establish themselves in their land promised to Abraham with the Zionist faith. Also in 1878 the church was resurrected which had remained in sleep until the 2nd presence of the Lord Jesus, in 1874. But the last members of the feet are still here which bear the good news that Christ now reigns in the midst of his enemies. But when one of the faithful members of the feet finishes his course, at the twinkling of an eye, he no longer sleeps until he will be with all the 144,000 ransomed from the earth.

I understood that there were 75 brethren from America in Israel, and that you visited certain locations. The letter which I received I read at our meeting and all the brethren rejoiced, so I also read it at other meetings.

I understood that when you left Oradea you arrived at your destination but were very much in a hurry. We think that you had a good guardian from the heavenly Father throughout the trip you made.

I understood that you stayed in Israel 14 days. The heavenly Father watched over all the brethren who traveled since you were on a mission with the truth of the heavenly Father.

I received an envelope with pictures of the Lord Jesus and I have distributed them to the brethren, as many as I had, and they rejoiced very much, also for this liberty that we can be in contact with other brethren, because we in Romania didn't know if there were brethren anywhere any longer since we did not have the liberty, during the time of communism. In those times, if we would have received from you brethren a letter it would have cost us years in prison.

But I, John Petrita, am in this faith since 1948. I found it with the brethren who came in 1945, from the war where they were, and we continued with the meetings. But in 1949 I was searched by the police for the studies forbidden by the Romanian state. They confiscated anything they found. We had kept everything hidden all the time and very many studies were damaged very badly because of it.

One day we were called to the military post to testify about this faith, unknown to the authorities of Romania, from where we received it. We said that we received it from the Bible. From there we found God and we believe in God who will establish the kingdom on the earth and all the earth will become a paradise as Eden.

We were at liberty until the year December 13, 1959, when we were arrested. In the morning they came with security vehicles and took 4 brethren from our village of Surduc under guard to Oradea where we stayed under investigation for 4 months. All the time we went to the interrogator who put to us many questions about this kingdom which we proclaim. But we did not falter, no matter what the cost. After 4 months of investigation we were taken to the military tribunal (court) where we were judged by the Tribunal and sentenced to prison because we believe in the dissolution of the communist party and the restoration of the kingdom of God for all the human race. Our sentence was from 10 to 20 years hard labor. I received 15 years severe confinement but in the process were 11 other brothers and 1 sister. She was also with us, though she was older, because with her was found as evidence the chronology chart translated into Romanian from English with the help of an engineer. She received 10 years.

We were taken for hard labor to the Danube, to build dams and roads, draining swamps, and any labor that was the hardest, until I was sick with typhoid fever. So, after 2 years I was sent to the penitentiary at Gherla where we served out the rest of our punishment until an order was issued from the General Prosecutor that an appeal was made and our punishment was reduced from 15 years to 5 years prison.

Our earthly assets and houses had been confiscated. Our wives who remained at home stayed in the houses and paid rent for our own houses, but eventually there came a great decree and we were put at liberty after 4 years and one month. But we were always followed by the security, and they would call us and ask us questions if we still believe as we believed before. We answered them that yes, we still believe that soon the kingdom of God will be established over all the earth. They told us to notice that the laws that condemned us were still the same. We told them that that may be but we believe in God and that through Jesus with his church he will bring all the dead to a resurrection. They looked very hatefully at us and informed us that this was very dangerous for them since we say that a kingdom of righteousness will come which will bless all who submit themselves to the Lord Jesus.

My wife, in my absence from home, had 2 cows so that she could live. They were sold since they had not been confiscated.

After I was liberated, every year, I had to go twice a month to present myself at the military post because I was not allowed to travel away from home without telling them where I was going and what my purpose was.

All my experiences would be too many to put down on paper — how we had to wear blinders on our eyes so we could see nothing, blinders made of sheet metal, and chains on our feet during transfers. All these things were considered to be a part of the sufferings of Christ, because the servant is not greater than the master. Therefore, if he is with me in the confinement of prison it shines like a castle. As long as we are not there for busybodying in the affairs of others or as an evildoer. If we are truly Christians we will be happy wherever we may be. There are very many experiences I could share with you. Perhaps someday we will be able to come to visit you as you have come to visit us. At one time we could only travel from one district to another in Romania with difficulty. But now many think that we can come to visit you in the United States, but this remains to be seen if the Lord wills. But this is our wish from Romania, so that we can be with all brethren in every place over the entire globe until then we remain with faith because the Lord will not be left without His representatives on the earth. There are still 7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

You asked us how this faith came to Romania. I can only tell you as much as I have understood from older brethren, who lived during that time. Here was not Romania but Austro-Hungary up to the Carpathian mountains. A brother from America, Bro. Sabau, presented to Bro. Russell that he wanted to come with this faith to Europe, just to Austro-Hungary, in Ardeal, since there were very many Romanians. But Bro. Russell said that, though he was free to try, he didn't know if he would be well received, since people were very inhospitable in those parts. Bro. Sabau came to Europe and stopped with us in Ardeal. I don't know if he stayed in Cluj or Tirgu Mures since some brethren say one and some say the other. I am interested to know about this more closely and I can give you a more exact answer later.

In 1912 Bro. Sabau came with the chronology chart and hung it on a wall in the street and spoke always alone, showing with a stick how from the fall of Adam until the end of the flood was 1656 years, until the covenant with Abraham was 427 years, until the giving of the law was 430 years, period of the kings was 513 years, period of the desolation was 70 years, until A. D. 1 was 536 years, until the year 1873/1874 came out to 6000 years total. With all these dates Bro. Sabau occupied himself, when he came from America, from Bro. Russell. There were gathered around him many people and he was invited one Sunday to a meeting of the Baptists where they gave him the opportunity to speak. He presented many beautiful and fitting thoughts about God and the Lord Jesus and the kingdom of God. At the end of the meeting the Baptist Preacher put a question to the gathering. "Who here unites himself with this brother of this other belief? raise your hand." Immediately there were found 17 brethren who united themselves with Bro. Sabau. Then the Baptist Preacher said, "from now on, you who have united yourselves with this Brother no longer will walk with us Baptists." I don't know the day or the month this took place but I know it was in 1912, and these began to meet with Bro. Sabau. From then on meetings began in Ardeal, which was Austro-Hungary. I don't know exactly when but some time after 1912 Bro. Sabau was arrested since the authorities found that he said that in 1914 war would begin. But when the war began in 1914 he was released since he was proven right. He stayed until the meetings were well organized. It was still Austro-Hungary until 1918 when the empire fell. Tisa Pista of the Hungarians was shot and the war ended in 1918 and then it became great Romania. Bro. Sabau went back to America and another brother came, Bro. Chis, who formed a society at Cluj, where study books were printed — The Watch Tower, Mannas, Tabernacles, until the year 1933 when there was a great split since many, Watch Towers came from America with the teachings of Rutherford. The brethren who knew the truth well did not receive them. Those who accepted them separated from those who remained close to Bro. Russell.

Since then we have been separated from those that call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses," but they are false witnesses and this is a trial of our faith as Bible Students, but we remain very calm, waiting for the completion of the body of Christ, when the law will go forth from heaven, through Jerusalem, to all the people. Micah 4.

Now I ask you, Beloved brethren Ric and Sr. Ruth, with whom I traveled together until my home, and from there I entrusted you to God, regarding Volume 6 — were you able to print it? And when it will be printed I'd wish to know, but we think that we can have patience, as we've had until now. We ask the heavenly Father to help us to wait until it is printed and we receive it from you brethren. Further, we greet you with Christian love. Psalm 115:15.

Your brethren in the Lord Jesus, Bro. John and Sr. Florica Petrita.
Lamentations 3:22, 23.

January 28, 1993

Our precious brethren:

On the date of January 10, 1993, there was read at our meeting in Surduc your epistle which you sent to Bro. John.

We rejoiced very much finding out about your trip in Israel and the holy work together on Israel's behalf. Sr. Ruth and Bro. Ric, we saw you in Cluj and greeted you with the manna of June 19, I and my husband Lazar.

I understood your wish to find out about our situation during the time of the communist detention. Your gesture causes me to rejoice, which is according to the will of God. Now, in this present time of great liberty we will give you the details of the tests and difficulties which were applied to us during the totalitarian regime. We don't wish for you to praise us, but we wish you to praise the will of God, as the apostle Paul says.

Reminding myself of those days I cried, not from anger but with joy as also says a paragraph from Volume 5 "looking back we praise the way." I felt that His hand was with me in every place and many times miracles happened in natural ways, and he allowed me to escape when I needed it. I felt his warm love, as it is written: I'd never leave you and by no means would I forsake you. Look now at the entire story that happened to me.

In the year 1958, Dec. 13, at 5 a.m. we were searched, books were confiscated, which we had bought together. The securities were amazed that they did not alarm us and we didn't cry. In the evening of Dec. 12 we had a meeting and even spoke about Nehemiah and Ezra, how they built with weapons in hand and it seemed a shame to weep a few hours later.

April 17, 1969, my husband was condemned and our property was confiscated, 2 cows were taken and carried away. On the 2nd day I went to the hospital, both lungs being ill.

There, I learned that a female security officer was in the bed next to mine. She didn't know that I knew. She was informed after 3 weeks from the women in the room, then, seeing my daughters, ages 12 and 9, coming to me 25 km. on foot, asking me how to work the land, and that we are not sustained by capitalists as they were informed. So that, after 3 weeks, late in the evening, when all the other women in the room were asleep, she told me: You have my trust and I'll tell you who I am. I am one of the security police put over you. For three weeks I sleep with a revolver in my belt, and even then she took it out of her belt and put it in her purse. Tomorrow I leave for Bucharest and I will write a good report about you. When your husband was arrested I was on route. From Oradea to Surduc I was placed with 250 security police. (It's a miracle. Well did a brother say: You see sister how powerful we are! That they fear us. Truly our God is great, therefore I rejoice. After a few months I returned home, and the doctor introduced air to my lungs, and so I worked without even thinking about my illness, taking tablets every day.)

I met with the chief of the militia and he told me: I never forgot your daughters. I had an order every month to check on your place nightly. But I always knew who you were and so only once did I make it my duty to check on your place so I would have something to write in my report. So I went with a guard at night to your place. At all the houses, the lamps were out, but at yours they were lit. It was 1 a.m. . I was really surprised that they worked, cleaned potatoes, and kept house. Well, I said, at this hour you are still working? But the older one answered, tomorrow we go to hoe and I cannot work at home since mother is at the hospital, father is in prison, and the

9 year old girl goes to school. The conclusion: therefore, if we suffered they also suffered. The smallest one was 6 years old and my mother brought her to her house. The older son was 14 and he stayed with his grandparents, my in-laws. My father-in-law was arrested and then my mother-in law, immediately after their condemnation, died of a heart attack, and the 14 year old son stayed there to take care of things since that also now was my responsibility.

In this respect help from the brethren was not forthcoming. The brethren from Cluj were very few and under the totalitarian regime were poor. A brother from Sighet was sent to me at the hospital and brought us something. Bro. Miklos came with encouragement and brought the report of Pilate, and the retrial of the Lord, which produced in us a joy. One old and limping brother came to inform himself about us but was driven away by the police from the village. But in all things the hand of the Lord was with me. The 3rd vol. I copied by hand and the Watch Tower, 12 towers. We had no money, except when we worked at the sewing machine. During the day we work in the field, at night we sewed on the machine. My girls were thankful for what I could buy them. I rejoice when I read about the only solution which quiets me, through all my variety of difficulties, as a paragraph from the Watch Towers says, O pity those who have never fought under the flag of the cross. Vol. 5. How can you feel how sweet is the Lord? The Lord helps the one who trusts in Him.

In all this time of 6 years, without a husband, I had this experience of what it means to be without a husband, therefore I cannot overlook a widow or an orphan, as says the verse--Do unto others what you wish him to do to you. Know, beloved, that at this time I had the "Gethsemane" experiences. To be left under a difficult trial and to cry out. Father, why have you forsaken me? or "let this cup pass from me!" But not my will but thine. Yes, my dear, the fire was kindled but was not permitted to burn the precious character of the faithful. But, in exchange, I received rest from the Father. My grace is sufficient for you, my strength is perfected in weakness. In the end came the day when the Lord said, "get out" and my husband returned with a single tooth in his mouth, but glad that he could witness in prison for the Lord of life where many listened to him.

Now we are old. My husband is 73 and I am 69, but happy. The regime gives a pension to my husband because he was imprisoned. He has trouble with his heart, and I with rheumatism. I cannot raise my hands. My lungs were cured and we are happy under the protection of our dear heavenly Father.

I ask you to excuse me that I've written you so much. Receive with love my greetings. Vol. 5, chap. 9--The Witness of the Spirit. Manna, Sept. 18 and hymn 276

With love, Sr. Anuta Fodor.
Jan. 17, 1993. our address:

Fodor Lazar
Of. Postal Oradea 2
Com. Surduc, Jud. Bihor
Cod. 3712

We ask you to write us if you have received this envelope. The God of Peace and Mercy and His son our Lord help you to work continually at this precious fellowship. As it says in vol. 3, chap 9, that the members on this side of the veil work together with the members on the other side of the veil in arranging the events and when a member passes over there, his works follow him, then the work continues, only weariness ceases, but the work continues. How great are these services!! The Lord help us.

January 28, 1993

Distant in body but close in mind and feeling in the Lord. Eph. 1:2-11.

According to what I've learned with regard to the great arrangement of our Lord, on our great planet earth where all his creatures, from the entire Universe will draw a great teaching and lesson in regard to obedience. It is practiced in the human race through bitterness and pain of which every man, coming into the world, has had a part, from birth until death, seen by other creatures, on other planes, practiced on poor mankind which came in the world without their will and goes from the world without their will, and always every individual has his lesson with bitterness and pain, then other creatures which will come into existence, by the great God, through information, will have the lesson in regard to obedience.

However, God permitted evil in the world and will remove it leaving in its place good. The Ransom price for all is the single basis of reconciliation of man with God. 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; John 3:16.

This ransom was fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ on Golgotha for the entire human race; however man was pardoned from Adamic sin and we await the restoration of mankind through Christ.

In the Gospel Age, from the ascension of the Lord into heaven until his 2nd presence, this faith has been persecuted by those which were blinded by Satan. 2 Cor. 4:7-11; John 16:1-4.

However, now we live in the Dawn of the New Day, the Millennial Day of Christ, in which the great sun of righteousness, that is Christ, will illuminate every man coming into the world. John 1:9.

As I have been informed, I understand that you'd like to know further about the brethren who were condemned as well as about their families who remained at home.

I, who am writing these lines, am names Bro. Fodor Lazar, born in the year 1920, Feb. 29, in the community of Surduc, district of Bihor, Post Office Oradea 2, Romania. I now have filled 73 years but my wife, Sr. Anuta, 69 years. I was condemned for the faith to 20 years of hard labor and 10 years loss of all civil rights, and confiscation of all assets, in the year 1959, April 17. I was pardoned in 1964, the month of June. At the time of my arrest I was 38 years of age, and at the time of my liberation I was 44. In the meantime, when I was arrested, my Father, who also was a faithful brother, was condemned to 12 years confinement in prison (with confinement of movement, possibly in chains, but not quite as bad as hard labor) and confiscation of all assets.

I had four minor children, they confiscated our animals and land but as for the house, my wife and mother needed it. They had to make a request to the good will of the state to get permission to live in a part of it, one room for rent! In my house they put a Health clinic but in my Father's house they put a school. The authorities came and raised the animals. My mother fell down in the yard and died and my wife, Sr. Anuta, became ill with tuberculosis. Because of her lungs she was admitted to the Hospital in Oradea. The four little children remained at home with the help from the Lord, patience and endurance. The people of the Lord do not complain of their fate. He has a good fate as after the storm the Lord sends good weather. Blessed be the good Lord for all that he has given us. Amen.

I came to this faith in the year 1940, that is, the true faith which represents God as he is; Justice, Love, Wisdom and Power. Without the harmony of these any teaching is in error.

However, I came in this period of time in which the night time of sin of the earth will end with a morning of joy.

All the powers of the earth which have oppressed mankind under their law of selfishness can not last under this great judgment day, already arrived. However they must dissolve as systems of errors and selfishness, whatever name they would have, and be replaced by the Lord Christ, on whose shoulders the heavenly Father has put all power in heaven and on earth, to accomplish the fulfillment of His great plan of redemption of his entire people, and of the entire human race. Isaiah 52:7-10.

The extent of the persecutions in communist Romania, the painful, heavy phases of the oppression, called the Memorial of all the pain through which our brethren of the Bible Students passed from the People's Republic of Romania, district of Bihor, Oradea, Surduc and surroundings.

I, Fodor Lazar, from the community of Surduc, district of Bihor, of. p. Oradea 2, Romania. In the night of Dec. 13, 1958, many armed men came in my house, they beat on the door hard and shouted loudly to open the door. I was in bed with my wife and with my 4 little children. I got up and opened the door, they yelled loudly, do you have here any strangers? I said no. Do you have any weapons? I don't have arms. They asked if I had books. I said, yes, I have books, with Bible characters.

They told me I was under arrest, to turn with my face against the wall, and put my hands behind my back. Then the children were frightened and they began to cry and to scream. I and my wife did not cry, but it was not easy to suppress.

The house was surrounded by the security and militia. Then they began to search the whole house and the farm. They found nothing for accusation, except for the Bible and Studies in the Scriptures in which is the good news of the Great Golden Epoch, of God's love toward mankind, and His raising from the curse of death to life and perfection, mental, moral and physical, in the great school which will be introduced by Christ the Lord, introduced together with his followers in the future, very near, of the New Covenant. Matt. 12:18-21; John 12:32; John 1:9.

They took all our books and other things associated with the Holy Scriptures. Then they told me to dress well, that I was going with them and they didn't know when I'd return. At the same time there were other security police at my father's house, Pavel Fodor, elderly, at 58 years of age, a faithful brother, and they arrested him and left my mother at home crying. My mother had a bad heart disease and I was her only son.

They also arrested Bro. Vese Nicolae and Bro. Ioan Petrita, therefore 4 brothers from our village of Surduc, and 9 from other parts, 13 in all which I will mention by name in another paragraph.

Our village of Surduc was in great alarm. The dogs in the entire village were barking. By this time day had arrived in the village. A pack of wolves had entered into the Lord's flock among the sheep of the gentle shepherd, who told others, Father forgive them for they know not what they do. But my Father, before he left, asked to read the manna of Dec. 13, the day of our arrest. Luke 21:12-19; Matt. 10:16-20.

Therefore, our departure from the village was at about 9 o'clock. We waited for a van like a whale with an open mouth to swallow us. We were four brothers from Surduc in front of the cultural center. We climbed into the van and then went toward Oradea, toward the Hotel "Faradelegi" (sarcastically called the "Hotel of Lawlessness" where people under arrest were beaten and often killed) where had been massacred the sons of the men and among them also the sons of God.

But the mothers, wives, and children remained at home with broken hearts and eyes filled with tears.

The van was full, there were four of us, and a platoon of over 20 armed men with automatic rifles. On the road they ordered us to sing and we obeyed. We sang the song "Great are you God, and great is your power."

When we were near Oradea they blindfolded us so we would no longer know where we were. In this way we arrived in the security cell.

The other 3 brothers were taken from the van but I, Fodor Lazar, remained the only one. When it was my turn to get out I could not see. They shouted loudly for me to get out but I told them I couldn't see. He began to swear, I stepped toward them, stepping into air. (not realizing where the step out was) 4 security police seized me and brought me in the reception hall and threw me on the floor with a great force to frighten me and ordered me to undress quickly, which I could only do with great difficulty, then I was naked.

Then I was in the hands of the executioner. He gave me a blow to the neck, the head, and the eyes, not with his hand but with some thick rubber so that he threw me in the air a few meters. I fell down faint. I couldn't see what he wanted me to sign, so he took the inquiry and signed it with my hand. The trouble was that when he beat me he broke my teeth, without which I could not eat, but could only struggle.

Already the torture began. He put me in the cell. The cell was completely of concrete, 2 beds, made of concrete, each bed for one man, you were allowed to sit on it, but you were not allowed to relax yourself leaning against anything, even on your elbow, nor to sleep during the day. Therefore, from 5 a.m. until 10 p.m., you could only sit straight on the cement "bed", 17 hours of torment. 1 Peter 4:12- 19.

The food was 100 grams of bread a day, and some cornmeal mush. In the morning a small can of black coffee (dirty water!), at noon a tin cabbage broth, in the evening, a tin of bean or potato broth.

Therefore the food of starvation, without the right to speak, without the right to write a letter, no packages. The cold entered the body and the bones. Therefore, there were 3 factors for extermination—the cold, hunger, and exhaustion.

I did not see the sun from Dec. 13, 1958, until April 17, 1959.

They began the investigation which they did only at night when the guard would enter in the cell. You had to rise on your feet, and to turn with your face to the wall, and put your hands behind your back. He came behind you and gave you blinders, made of metal, to put them on your eyes, through which you could see nothing and you were lead to the interrogation room. I arrived in a room, but it was not the interrogation room, and there was an officer. He said to me, You know that God has abandoned you and He has given you into the hand of the devil. I am the devil, so don't laugh. You can laugh if you ever escape from here.

The guard took me back to my cell, took my blinders and left. When he left I threw myself down on the concrete floor and began to shout, I'm dying, I'm dying. The guard took me to the Doctor. The medic asked me what the problem was. I said I couldn't stand up. The Doctor said I should stay in bed for 3 days. I stayed in bed about 1 hour and the guard of the day shift came and asked what was the matter with me. I told him I had been excused because of illness. Then the guard left and returned and said the chief interrogator did not approve my illness and he had authority over the doctor. So I had to get up and the turmoil continued.

I was brought in front of the interrogator who was a lieutenant Major. He asked me how I came to this faith and through whom. I responded to him that I had an accident at the age of 20, and I told him about the accident, so that my nervous system was weakened and I could not soothe my nerves except for reading books and then I chose the Bible and Studies in the Scriptures as a comfort for this spiritual grief.

Then the interrogator told me that there was found during a search in my house a Bible and 7 Studies in the Scriptures, and a notebook where I had noted that I read the Bible and the 7 Studies in the Scriptures every year.

From this you have proven that you've read them. Now, to night we have 3 hours for you to tell me about the past, present and future, if you've read them, from 1940 until 1958, 18 years of study.

I started to tell him and to say all that God determined to carry out for the good of the human race, beginning from the creation, the fall of man, the promises to natural Israel, the shadows of the law, the call and selection of the little flock, the ransom price, the Lord's 2nd presence, the reestablishment of Israel, the restitution of the human race in the Millennial age, which has already begun.

I asked him what evil I had spoken. He told me I hadn't spoken anything evil. Then he told me further, if all these things will come to pass give me your word of honor, putting his hand on his chest, that I (the officer) will be among the subjects of those greater times about which you spoke. I asked him, will I be condemned? He said you will be condemned because you are not approved by the communist party. I asked him if personally he will do anything bad to me to add to my difficulties. He told me that he would not add anything bad to me, himself, but he was just doing his duty.

When the discussion was over the chief Major of the investigation entered the room. He said, how is it with Lazar. The interrogator said, he enlightened me about everything, I'm only lacking baptism.

Lazar says that he has a headache. The Major came over to me and hit my head with my notebook, and said that the wonder is that I haven't cracked my head, noting in my notebook that in the past 18 years I'd read 95,000 pages. My professors have not read so much, he said.

The process of the judgment approached. In the morning of the 17th day of April, 1959, after 4 months of days and nights full of grief, hunger, cold and exhaustion, we were taken with the van to the Tribunal for judgment by the Military Tribunal in Timisoara which came Oradea. In front stood 13 faithful brethren, which have already been mentioned, who were, and remained, faithful to the faith once delivered to the saints.

The public, gathered in the judgment hall, were very many; the families of all, brethren from all parts, relatives, armed guards, lawyers, as are the rules among men in the courts.

The 12 brethren and one sister were brought in the middle of this great multitude, in front of which were the Tribunal formed from the Superior Officer with a president and a public prosecutor which was the basic prosecutor of the brethren.

The prosecutor put this question to Bro. Fodor Lazar, "what do you understand by the present Evil World and the Golden Epoch of the future?" Lazar responded, "Mister President and honored court, Being that I am assigned to respond in front of you, in front of the court, for the faith in a Supreme and Intelligent Creator; this earth was not created in vain but to be inhabited, and that it will soon become a paradise; and that of course I had gatherings with the character of the Bible. We teach that we didn't come by our own power on this earth but we were created by a God, all powerful, Just, Loving and Wise, after his image, and similitude. That man was created perfect, mentally, morally and physically, with free will, therefore a lord of the earth."

"Since I was asked of the prosecutor about the present evil world, this text was written in the Bible by the Apostle Paul, now almost 2000 years ago. I do not refer to the leader of the labor class of workers of the Romanian People's Republic, but the Holy Scriptures speak about the fall of man in sin and through sin, death. And death passed over all, for that all have sinned. Such is the word about the Ransom of the human race through the sacrifice of Christ, therefore the sin which predominated in the human race through inheritance will be removed through Christ.

"Therefore, the evil world of today (Gal.1:4) based on pride and lawlessness, doesn't mean that there is nothing good in the masses of (people). The systems of men, oppressive and exploitative, will be replaced and in their place good and peace will be established purely.

"The value of Divine love through Christ will be made available to every man condemned through Adam and pardoned through Christ for the entire human race.

"Then will be in force the New Covenant of which all the ransomed will have a part and all will need to learn, in a single mind, the laws of Divine righteousness, power, love and wisdom. It will be spread throughout the world that the sin of the father is pardoned by Christ.

"They will abolish all the borders.
"They will learn a single language.
"They will abolish all armaments.

"The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the bottom of the sea is covered by its waters.

"Then the will of God will be done on earth as in heaven.

“But the wilful opposers, after they will be enlightened, will be destroyed from the midst of the people. Acts 3:20, 23.

“It’s true that we met to learn good and useful things for our own use and for the use of all, pertaining to the establishment of the Kingdom of God over the entire world.” The Sentence of Condemnation of the brethren of the Bible Students read to the public of the People’s Republic of Romania:

01. Fodor Lazar	20 years hard labor	10 years loss of civil rights
02. Cabau Ioan	16 years hard labor	08 years loss of civil rights
03. Moneneu An	16 years hard labor	08 years loss of civil rights
04. Listes Stefan	15 years prison*	07 years loss of civil rights
05. Petrita Ioan	15 years prison*	07 years loss of civil rights
06. Fodor Pavel	12 years prison*	06 years loss of civil rights
07. Codrean Teodor	12 years prison*	06 years loss of civil rights
08. Codrean Dumitru	12 years prison*	06 years loss of civil rights
09. Vese Nicolae	10 years prison*	05 years loss of civil rights
10. Lazau Teodor	10 years prison*	05 years loss of civil rights
11. Moghis Dumitru	10 years prison*	05 years loss of civil rights
12. Farcane Irmie	10 years prison*	05 years loss of civil rights
13. Goldea Irina	12 years prison*	06 years loss of civil rights

170 years total

*Actually prison having the thought of “severe confinement” explained later in this letter.

And the confiscation of all their assets.

After April 17, 1959, I was brought in the cell at the penitentiary of Oradea, 8 people to a cell, with four beds, 2 people per bed, made of iron, without any pillow at the head, heads shaved, dressed in striped and torn clothes. 100 grams of bread each day and a piece of cornmush, in the morning a can of coffee (dirty water), at lunch a tin of cabbage broth, sour as vinegar. By that time of day we had no cornmush left since we could not help but eat it, we were so hungry. In the evening, bean broth, which we drank.

The detention was counted as “severe confinement” (the condition of our sentence) from 5 in the morning until 10 in the evening. For 17 hours you could stand or sit on the “bed” without relaxing or even leaning on your elbow, and when you were tired you could rise on your feet. The only container for waste being at the corner near the door.

Without the right of speaking with your family, without receiving packages, without letters, but our companions were hunger, cold and exhaustion.

Romans 8:28-39. These all were given to the faithful by the powers of this world, 10 or 20 years hard labor and confinement. In the month of September, 1959, part of the brethren were taken to Dobrogea on the banks of the Danube for hard labor, but the rest were transferred to Gherla in December, 1959.

In Gherla I was taken with chains on my feet, seriously ill in the stomach, lungs, and with rheumatism.

Bro. Listes Stefan died at Gherla with stomach trouble and rheumatism.
Bro. Lazau Teodor, with a liver illness, died at Gherla.
Bro. Cabau Ioan was sick.

Bro. Fodor Pavel was also sick. When they wanted to search the cell, every 3 or 4 days, they put everyone outside, completely naked, in the winter, at night, and held them there guarded until they caught a bad cold.

I, Fodor Lazar, from Gherla, was brought to Aiud to the penitentiary with a very severe cell.

The strictness in the cell was the same, you didn't have the right to lean over or even to lean on your elbow, only to sit all day, straight. The food was the same. Cold, hunger and exhaustion.

In Aiud I was so exhausted that when I sat down I could not rise again, unless I could pull myself up by grabbing onto something.

Inside the penitentiary was a hospital, and I had an operation on my stomach and was admitted for pulmonary tuberculosis. I didn't have one tooth left in my mouth, not even in the back.

In this way I passed 4 years in that cell with its difficulties.

At the end of the year 1962 I went to the swamp at the Danube worse than all else. We sat at work, 5 prisoners holding onto each other. Through mud up to our knees, we had to dig with a wheelbarrow, exhausting work, and to unload the ships, loaded with heavy cargo.

The days passed to months, and then to years, and God put in our hand, through his pity, a pardon, and we were on the way home to all who escaped with their lives.

We thank the heavenly Father through His Son for all that He has given us. Psalm 30. Amen.

The Military Tribunal of Timisoara

File no. 150/1959

Resolution

From D.310/16.06.1964 of the council of the State, the conviction of FODOR LAZAR, was pardoned of the rest of the punishment.

Sentence. Nr. 172

April 17, 1959, the Military Tribune of Timisoara met in public session for the judgment on:

1. FODOR LAZAR—born Feb. 29, 1920, in the community of Surduc, the department and region of Oradea, the Son of Paul and Barbara, farmer, married, with 4 children, military service satisfied, 1943 at the military station of Vinatoria, scholastic preparation: 5 primary classes, and 2 middle school classes. Parents are farmers and own 9.5 hectares property, first offense in the community of Surduc, nr. 158, the department and region of Oradea, arrested at present, accused for the crime of plotting against the social order. (p.p. of art. 209, pct. 1, C.P.)

In fact, the illegal "Millennial" group is a faction of another illegal group called "the Jehovah's Witnesses," which came into existence in 1948. The members of this illegal group, under the mask of mysticism and religion, spread a counterrevolutionary activity against the established order in R. P. R. holding illegal gatherings in the homes of some members, with which opportunity they anticipated the disappearance of the Democratic Popular regime and the establishment of the "period of the Millennium".

1. FODOR LAZAR, held the position of a preacher as part of the illegal "Millennial" group, from the village of Surduc, dept. Oradea. From the year 1948, when, together with his accomplice Flortu Vesa Nicolae, organized this group in the village of Surduc. As preacher he organized meetings at his home, or at the homes of different members of the group, at which occasions he held discourses of an obviously counter revolutionary character, urging his members not to integrate themselves in any public or political organization and to take a passive attitude and one of waiting in connection with the measures taken in view of the socialist changes of the farmers. Also he preached that not one member of this group should bear arms, in case they would be called into the army.

The organ of the state, having the knowledge of the illegal activity of this defendant, Nov. 27, 1957, called him to the People's conference of the commune Copacel, dept. Oradea, showing him that the activity of the illegal group in which he takes part is forbidden and to cease this activity, at which the named defendant categorically declared that he would remain active and further, giving a written declaration in which he showed that he would continue more intense activity as part of this illegal group of "Millennialists." And after this date, the defendant continued his activity, participating at certain meetings which were held at the homes of the accomplices, John Petrita, Fodor Pavel, and Florut Vesa Nicolae, with which occasions were held discourses with a counter revolutionary character.

Also, this defendant had ties with other members of this illegal group, found in other regions of the country, participating at still more illegal meetings which took place in the communities of Manastur, Manastireni and Bica, in the region of Cluj, where were held discourses with a counter revolutionary character, and propagating the idea of the actual disappearance of the regime and the establishment of the period so called "The Millennium."

The Tribune, in the name of the people, determined:

With a unanimous vote, making application of art. 209, pct. 1 C. P., the condemnation of the defendant:

FODOR LAZAR, to 20 years hard labor and 10 years loss of all civil rights, for the crime of plotting against the social order.

On the basis of art. 25, pct. 6 al. II C. P. it is ordered the confiscation of all personal belongings of the defendant.

In agreement with art. 304, al. I C. J. M. each defendant is obliged to pay for the use of the state 500 lei for the expenses of the trial.

In agreement with art. 463 C. J. M. the detention is commuted wholly precedent for all defendants from the date of Dec. 15, 1958.

Given and read in public session, April 17, 1959.

From the Archives of the Minister of National Defense.

From the 2nd document, all identical except for the following paragraph:

FODOR PAVEL, wealthy landowner, was the mayor of the village Surduc, in the bourgeois-landlord regime, in the year 1948 integrated himself in the illegal group of the "Millennialists," being cooperated with by the co-conspirator Irina Goldea. He put his dwelling at the disposal of this illegal group, with a view to the illegal meetings at which he also regularly participated. As part of these meetings the defendant, Fodor Pavel, also confirmed the ideas stipulated by the preachers in regard to the change and disappearance of the Democratic regime of our country. This defendant adopted a passive position toward the measures taken by the local organs of the power of the state, for the socialist transformation of agriculture. He housed in repeatedly different members of the illegal group, "Millennialists".

Bro. Fodor Lazar, born Feb. 29, 1920, in Surduc, Bihor district, Post Office Oradea, Romania.

Sentenced to 20 years hard labor and 10 years loss of all civil rights, and confiscation of all assets for the scriptural activity of the Bible Students, in the year 1959 by the People's Republic of Romania.

1. Fodor Lazar—sentenced to 20 years hard labor.
2. Fodor Pavel—sentenced to 12 years severe confinement.
3. Vese Nicolae—sentenced to 10 years severe confinement.

And the confiscation of all assets for the scriptural activity of the Bible Students, in the year 1959, in the People's Republic of Romania.

