

# SOLITARY REFINEMENT

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION GUIDE  
(Single Session)

presented by



A NOTE TO MINISTRY LEADERS: This Follow-Up Discussion Guide is designed to help you debrief with your group or small-group after watching *Solitary Refinement*.

PRINT OPTION: Use booklet option on the printer. This document is formatted to print to a half-page size.

*“Richard. Richard, stand up and speak...  
Richard! They are spitting in the face of Jesus:  
You must wash this shame from the face of Christ.  
Richard, you must stand up!”*

- Sabina Wurmbrand's challenge to her husband

# PREPARING FOR DISCUSSION

## Why:

To facilitate discussion on the realities of persecution and its relevance today, as both individuals and as a church group.

## When:

Scheduled after members have watched *Solitary Refinement*.

## What:

As a facilitator, lead discussions and encourage commitments to become a “voice of the martyrs.” Read the book, *Tortured for Christ*, for additional insights.

## How:

For larger groups, consider dividing into multiple smaller groups consisting of about 8 to 10 participants in each.

## Time:

60 - 90 minutes.

## Handout/Slide:

Pass around the discussion handout or use multimedia projector.

## Where:

Free download at [www.vomcanada.com/touring](http://www.vomcanada.com/touring)

## Invite Social Media Posts:

Encourage members to post promo videos, quotes and talking points from the discussion, etc.

## Use Hashtag:

#SolitaryRefinement

Media link to be shared with members =>

<https://vomcanada.com/Dramas/Drama-Social/>

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# SCHEDULE

Parts marked [\*] may be skipped if time is limited

**INTRODUCTION** 00:00 – 00:10  
Opening prayer  
Icebreaker \*

**GROUP DISCUSSION** 00:10 – 00:25

Question #1  
Discussion time  
Debrief

Question #2 00:25 – 00:40  
Discussion time  
Debrief

Question #3 \* 00:40 – 00:55  
Discussion time  
Debrief

Question #4 00:55 – 01:10  
Discussion time  
Debrief

**GROUP PRAYER** 01:10 – 01:25

**CLOSING PRAYER** 01:25 – 01:30

# ICEBREAKER

## “Count the water drops”

### RESOURCE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TiAPym7ObA>

### OBJECTIVE

- Richard Wurmbrand spent three years in solitary confinement and the only sound he heard was that of water dripping.
- The soldiers wore felt on their soles to avoid making any sound.

### ACTIVITY

- Have the group close their eyes and count in their minds each time they hear a water drop. Start video. Play for 60 seconds.

### ASK

- *“How many water drops did you count?”*
- *“How long did I make you count?”*
- *“How long will it take for you to count 94,608,000 water drops?” (Equals three years of solitary confinement)*

### ENCOURAGE

- Discussion on how they would have handled solitary confinement.

### READ

*“I was thrown into solitary confinement for two days. I became afraid. But it became two weeks, and I became...disoriented. Then it became two months and I came to the edge of my sanity. Hell is not screaming or fire or torture. Hell is silence. Two years in solitary feels like eternity.”* - Richard Wurmbrand, reflecting on his first experience of solitary confinement which lasted three years.

## DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

### READ

*“Communists had taken over Romania and they convened a congress of all Christian bodies. There were four thousand priests, pastors, and ministers of all denominations.... These men of God chose Josef Stalin as honorary president of this congress. One after another, bishops and pastors arose and declared that communism and Christianity are fundamentally the same and could coexist. One minister after another praised communism and assured the new government of the loyalty of the church. My wife and I were present at this congress. Sabina told me, ‘Richard, stand up and wash away this shame from the face of Christ! They are spitting in His face.’ I said to her, ‘If I do so, you lose your husband.’ She replied, ‘I don’t wish to have a coward as a husband.’”*

### ASK

Does silence necessarily mean agreement or even cowardice? Did Richard make a mistake by speaking up? Could it be that the 14 years of imprisonment would have been better utilized by preaching and shepherding God’s people? Was the suffering necessary?

- If you were Richard, how would you respond? And why?

### LEAD DISCUSSION TO LEARN

- The role of a witness: Discerning when to speak and when to remain silent; when to stay and when to flee.
- Provide Biblical examples of those who acted in the face of danger: The Lord Jesus at the temple (John 2:13-17); Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40); Paul in Athens (Acts 17:16-31).
- Teach “Is God glorified in me?” as a good way to evaluate choices and actions.
- Ask for day-to-day examples of similar incidents to make learning relevant.
- Seek commitment to act courageously in similar incidents.

## DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

### READ

*"I was never their prisoner! I was God's prisoner! ...there was one way to combat brainwashing. Heart-washing. When your heart is washed by Christ, you no longer fear what kills the body, you fear what kills the soul!"*

Richard Wurmbrand retells of his time in prison. He endured hours of brainwashing and mind-breaking techniques, including the use of a recorded voice that was repeated days on end: "The state is progressive. Christianity is regressive. Nobody loves you. Nobody loves you. Join us. Join us. Join us."

### ASK

What does "heart-washing" mean to a Christian - not just in one's salvation experience but also in the sanctification process?

- How can Christians rise above the daily negativity that both wearies and disheartens them?

### LEAD DISCUSSION TO LEARN

- Develop a convictional worldview that serving Christ is worth it.
- Provide example of Paul (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; Philemon 1:1,9) who, though a prisoner of Rome, was really the prisoner *of* (not *for*) Jesus Christ.
- Encourage the need to keep short accounts with God through consistent "heart-washing."
- Develop a default reliance on the promises and presence of God in difficult situations.
- Seek mutual encouragement to grow as "*oaks of righteousness*" (Isaiah 61:3).

## DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

### READ

*“What is hard to comprehend in the midst of suffering is not the misfortune itself, or even the pain or injustice of it. The real sting of suffering is the apparent ‘God-forsakenness’ of it. We cry out, yet it appears that God does not seem to care. The silence of heaven haunts us when God seems either unable or unwilling to do anything about our afflictions. What is the solution? What did Bonhoeffer mean when he said, ‘Only the suffering God can help’? Is it possible that part of our solution to the questions of suffering and persecution lies in seeing God as a God who suffers too? ...God suffers because He chooses to love.”*

### ASK

Why does the Almighty God who can destroy evil and wickedness at a moment’s notice choose to “long-suffer”? What are the implications of Saul’s “Damascus road” experience, where the Lord states that Saul was persecuting Him? (Acts 9:4).

- Make a list of implications relating to what it means to have a God who suffers with us.

### LEAD DISCUSSION TO LEARN

- Reaffirm the Christian confidence that we are never alone, even in suffering.
- Affirm the promise that “*all things work together for good to those who love God*” (Romans 8:28).
- Recommit the desire for conformity to Christ at all cost.

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn M. Penner. *In the Shadow of the Cross, A Biblical Theology of Persecution and Discipleship*. Living Sacrifice Books. Bartlesville. Pg. 87.



## DISCUSSION QUESTION #4

### READ

*Hebrews 13:3 asks us to, "Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the body also."*

*The "Solitary Refinement" stage play ends with a challenge from Richard Wurmbrand: "Because I am no longer the voice of the martyrs. The voice of the martyrs is YOU."*

*In other words, you are now invited to be a "voice of the voiceless."*

### ASK

Are you up for the challenge?

Make a list of some of the ways you can be a "voice of the martyrs."

### EXAMPLES

- Share stories of the persecuted with friends and colleagues.
- Write letters to the prisoners and families of those imprisoned for their faith.
- Encourage Sunday school students to make greeting cards for children of the persecuted.
- Be committed to pray, using the VOMC prayer alert.
- Become a volunteer to help at the office and awareness events.
- Join VOMC's Women's Ministry.
- Support ongoing projects.
- Be an ambassador at your church or community for the martyrs.

### RESOURCE LINK

- <https://www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm>

## GROUP PRAYER

### SAY SOMETHING LIKE...

Nothing can be done without prayer.

Prayer acknowledges our weakness, affirms our faith and strengthens our resolve that God will do His mighty work through us.

### PRAY FOR

- The persecutors that they will know Jesus.
- The government and the country leaders so they will lead their people well.
- The persecuted who are imprisoned.
- The families of the persecuted who are lonely, marginalized and suffering.

### DOWNLOAD/SUBSCRIBE

- Weekly prayer list from => <https://vomcanada.com/pnpord.htm>

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

**THE ENTIRE KIT CONSISTS OF:**

**[Use as planned]**

- 1. Sermon Series Planning Guide**
- 2. Sermon Series Media Kit**
- 3. Three-Week Small Group Discussion Guide**
- 4. Follow-Up Discussion Guide (Single Session)**

An immersive live stage experience based on the best-selling books of Richard Wurmbrand, and on persecution around the world today.

*The Voice of the Martyrs Canada makes each performance free to the host church and to audiences in your entire community.*

**Running Time: 75 minutes | For Ages 13+**  
**Free admission | Reception follows**  
**Contributions gratefully accepted**

This fully realized play takes you deep into the underground church, tales of unimaginable suffering -- and unmistakable joy.

In the midst of our deepest darkness,  
comes God's overwhelming light.

The script is written and performed by award-winning international artist Dennis J. Hassell, directed by triple Dora Award nominee Tom Carson (five nationally touring productions), with original music composed by Emmy-winner and renowned recording artist Tom Szczesniak.

To enquire about bringing this challenging, affirming and electrifying performance to your church and community, [contact us](#).

VOMC Headquarters: 1-888-298-6423