

# Zaitsev, Vladimir Stepanovich (1929–2017)

---

## EUGENE ZAITSEV

Eugene Zaitsev is director of the Biblical Research Institute and the Institute for Bible Translation at the Euro-Asian Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

---

Vladimir Stepanovich Zaitsev was a veteran pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Soviet Era from 1953 to the 1980s.

## Early Life

Vladimir Stepanovich Zaitsev was born July 15, 1929, to a large Adventist family living in Novosibirsk region, Russia.<sup>1</sup> He had an elder sister and five younger brothers. His father, Stepan Isaakovich Zaitsev, was an ordained minister of the Adventist Church. In 1937, at the height of the Stalinist purges, the family was left without a father. Stepan Isaakovich Zaitsev was arrested and sentenced, under Article 58 of the Criminal Code, to ten years of imprisonment as an enemy of the Soviet government. Isaak Evdokimovich, Vladimir's grandfather, was also a Seventh-day Adventist. He was arrested along with his son and sentenced under the same article. On February 11, 1938, he was executed by shooting in the prison of Kansk city, Krasnoyarsk region, Siberia.

The eight-year-old Vladimir was forced to grow up overnight. In the difficult years of World War II, he had to help his mother and elder sister raise his younger brothers, without stopping to attend school, and carrying the stigma as the son of a "public enemy."

## Conversion and Ministry

After serving in the Red Army, when the war ended Vladimir decided to devote himself to God's service. In 1953 he married Klara Filippovna Isupova.<sup>2</sup> That same year he was assigned by the All-Union Council of the SDA Church to a small town of Tarasovka in Rostov region, where he began his church ministry.

The anti-religious campaign under Khrushchev at the end of the 1950s resulted in the Tarasovka church being closed and the house of worship confiscated. Eventually the family of Vladimir and Klara Zaitsev had to move to the town of Gorky to live with Klara's parents. They had to sleep with their three children in one room with only a stove for heat and no conveniences.

Vladimir Zaitsev had to work at a factory as a turner, constantly facing the problem of getting Sabbaths off. For many years he had been constantly changing his place of work. To have enough time for church ministry he had to work at positions without a tough work schedule, such as floor waxer, janitor, photographer, etc.

## Contribution

While carrying out his pastoral ministry in Gorky, Lipetsk, Voronezh, Tula, Ryazan, and other cities of the Soviet Union, Zaitsev paid much attention to youth and social ministry. His sermons always addressed practical problems. In spite of the restrictions of religious legislation in the Soviet Union and the constant threat of being arrested for religious propaganda, Vladimir Zaitsev actively shared the gospel message with the people and baptized them. Starting 1978, Pastor Zaitsev took part in reunion of the Adventist church which had been split for more than two decades by the interference of state authorities in the church's internal affairs. He admonished both pastors and lay



Vladimir Stepanovich Zaitsev  
Photo courtesy of Eugene Zaitsev.

members to keep peace and unity.

When the era of publicity and perestroika began, and the Adventist Church gained unprecedented opportunities for evangelism and outreach, Zaitsev, who was serving in Ryazan at the time, founded the Volunteer Charitable Society. As part of the project, a Christian school and a Rehabilitation Center for children with cerebral palsy were set up. In addition, he wrote some articles on social issues. The articles were published both by the church and secular press.

Zaitsev was a facilitator of public relations. He was always ready to open communication channels with government officials and intellectuals. He was in constant dialogue with representatives of other denominations. During the difficult times for the Adventist Church due to atheism and constant violations of believers' rights, he was not afraid to publicly speak out in defense of persecuted Christians who were not members of his own church. Thus, in September 1970, Zaitsev wrote a long letter to the judicial division of the Gorky Regional Court, in which he showed the injustice of the accusations against an unregistered group of Baptists.

Vladimir Zaitsev died June 22, 2017<sup>3</sup> in the city of Ryazan, after a long illness due to a stroke. Vladimir's wife, Klara, for decades was his faithful helper in the ministry. In those churches where he ministered, she served as a head deaconess.

## Annotated Bibliography of Vladimir Zaitsev

Vladimir S. Zaitsev, "Where do we go to?" *ARH* (Russian version), March 1994, 32-34. In this article the author is trying to depict the dead-end character of human civilization and shows that the only way of solving human problems is Christ and His soon coming.

Vladimir Zaitsev, "Who will forbid the madness of the prophets" *Vechernyaya Ryazan*, March 14, 1991, 4. This article published in the stated newspaper is dealing with social problems due to secularization and evolutionism.

Vladimir Zaitsev, "Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us," *ARH* (Russian version), February 2004, 13-18. This article is a record of the conversation that took place in Gorky's regional office of the Communist Party on June 4, 1968, between Vladimir Zaitsev and representative of the Communist Party and the House of Atheistic Propaganda.

Source

Euro-Asia Division. "Soviet-era Survivor Pastor Passes at 88." *ARH*, June 27, 2017. Accessed March 1, 2019. <https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story5221-soviet-era-survivor-pastor-passes-at-eighty-eight>

---

### NOTES

1. Euro-Asia Division, "Soviet-era Survivor Pastor Passes at 88," *ARH*, June 27, 2017, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story5221-soviet-era-survivor-pastor-passes-at-eighty-eight?>
2. Ibid.?
3. Ibid.?

---

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000