

# The Source of Life Publishing House

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The *Source of Life Publishing House* (SOLPH) was established in 1991<sup>1</sup> and became the first Protestant publishing house in the territory of the former USSR with its own printing facilities. Thus, the dream that Adventists in the Soviet Union had been cherishing for decades came true. In the atheistic state, that dream could not be turned into reality, but from the beginning of *Perestroika*, when the authorities laid a course for liberalization of law, including state-religious relations, the situation changed.

The first meaningful discussions about starting a publishing house were held as far back as 1986, when the chair of the USSR Council for Religious Affairs, K. M. Kharchev, visited the *Review and Herald* Publishing Association in the United States. Impressed by what he had seen, K. M. Kharchev advanced the idea of establishing the very same publishing center in the Soviet Union. After four years of negotiations and discussions, on May 2, 1990, the construction began in the village of Zaoksky, Tula Region, and in 1991, the establishment of a publishing house was officially announced at the meeting of the board of the Euro-Asia Division. In collaboration with the unions' publishing ministries directors, the Publishing Ministries Charter was developed and adopted, and the ESD Publishing Board, consisted of 16 members (chaired by M.P. Kulakov), was appointed. Other committees, such as Advisory Committee and Reading Committee, were also set up. The General Conference vice president for Church Affairs in the USSR, Harold Otis, recalls that K. M. Kharchev highly appreciated the importance of this project at that time and even asked him: "Promise that while your heart beats, you will do everything possible so that Soviet Adventist Christians have their own publishing house!"<sup>2</sup>

Geopolitical upheavals affected the church life, as well. The construction of the publishing house began in one country and ended virtually in another one after the Soviet Union ceased to exist in December 1991, with fifteen new states appearing in its place. The possibilities for distributing literature in each of these states were certainly different. The construction was completed on April 26, 1992. Thanks to donations, it was possible to purchase printing presses, bookbinding equipment, sewing machines, paper cutting machines, etc. The first employees of the new publishing house were Alexander Rebein, Dmitriy Khamidullin, Alexander Chernykh, Sergey Sergeev, Peter Rybachok, and Zoya Gorda. The first SOLPH general manager and chief editor were appointed as Roy Terretta and Rostislav Nikolayevich Volkoslavskiy respectively.

During the first four years of its existence, the publishing house prepared and printed 180 titles with a total circulation of 15 million copies. The interest in spiritual literature was so great that thousands of copies were

distributed within a matter of weeks practically without any advertising. People came for books from throughout the former Soviet Union.

In 1997 Howard Skoggins superseded Roy Terretta as SOLPH general manager. The new chief editor appointed was Vladimir Bokov.

From 1998 to 2002, Edgar Castillo headed the publishing house. In the late 1990s to early 2000s, the printing equipment was updated, the annual Missionary Book of the Year project was launched, and the total circulation of published books exceeded ten million copies.

In 1999 the publishing house was granted a new two-color roll-to-roll press and machines for cutting and folding printed paper sections.

From the report published in the "Izdatelskoye sluzheniye" magazine (No. 3, 2002), it can be seen that 2,367 literature evangelists were working and a total of 2,191,217 books were sold in ESD in 2001 alone. In 2002, 250 students took on door-to-door distribution of Adventist literature and sold 87,297 books.

The formation and development of literary evangelism were greatly contributed by the ESD Publishing Ministries Department that was headed, at different periods of its history, by Jan Knopper, Alexander Parashchuk, Howard Skoggins, Wilmar Hirle, Samvel Grigoryan, and Andrey Arfanidi. At present, the ESD Publishing Ministries director is Pavel Liberanskiy.

From 2002 to 2005, the office of SOLPH general manager was held by Alexander Wagner. In the same period, Vladimir Bokov was replaced by a new chief editor, Viktor Katsal. Subsequently the latter was, in his turn, superseded by Alexey Lysakov.

The economic crisis of 2005 affected the publishing house, as well. This was a difficult period, and things came to such a pitch that in the last quarter of 2005 the publishing house, by decision of a special commission of the General Conference, suspended its work, and a little later the supervision of SOLPH was transferred to Zaoksky Adventist University (ZAU). ZAU president Vladimir Tkachuk was also assigned functions of SOLPH as general manager.

God helped find a way out of economic difficulties. There came new orders and new buyers. By the end of 2006, the publishing house had fully paid off its debts and was provided with orders for the next year. The front of SOLPH building was repaired and brought into harmony with ZAU buildings. They also repaired the inside of SOLPH building and the driveway connecting the central road with the publishing house.

In 2007 Lev Bondarchuk superseded Vladimir Tkachuk as SOLPH general manager. The 2007–2012 period was no less interesting for the publishing house. During those five years, numerous international projects were implemented in cooperation with Adventist publishing houses in Austria, Germany, the United States, and Switzerland. SOLPH entered into close cooperation with the *Safeliz* Adventist Publishing House (Spain). From 2010 to 2012, the SOLPH acting chief editor was Alexander Yevgrafov.

The assortment of books sold by the *Source of Life* Publishing House already includes more than five hundred book titles, and more than 100 titles are being prepared for publication. SOLPH publishes books not only in Russian, but also in the languages of other peoples of Russia and CIS–Tartar, Mari, Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian, Uzbek, Moldavian, Altai, Kabardian, Abkhaz, and Avar.

From November 2012 to March 2013, SOLPH was headed by Pavel Liberanskiy who was then replaced by Daniel Lovska. Anton Petrishchev was the SOLPH chief editor at that time, and from 2013 until now Leontiy Gunko has been working in this position. The production department was headed at different times by Harold Curtis, Alexander Rebein, Sergey Ryaguzov, and Tatyana Chernykh.

In 2015 the publishing house, with God’s help, was able to fulfill its long-nurtured dream—to purchase a four-color printing press, which made it possible to cut the cost of the books and reduce the time for their production. Today the SOLPH printed publications are distributed, not only through Adventist book centers but also through an online store, a publishing house’s hotline, social media, and large bookstore networks.

The publishing house offers a wide range of books: biblical theological literature; books on healthy lifestyle; books for children and young adults; books on psychology, family relations, and parenting; and manuals on church ministry and missionary work.

The Bible study guides for adults, young people, preschool and school-aged children, and teenagers are quarterly published. The list of published books has already exceeded one thousand titles, including colorfully decorated gift sets, series of books, and many other titles.

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## SOURCES

Demidov, V. “My ne imeem prava somnevatsia.” *Blagaya Vest*, no. 5 (May 1992).

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2022). <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=10041>.

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## NOTES

1. “The Source of Life Publishing House,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2022), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=10041>.
2. V. Demidov, “My ne imeem prava somnevatsia,” *Blagaya Vest*, no. 5 (May 1992).

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