

## SOVIET-STYLE TAKEOVER OF AN ADVENTIST CHURCH

# Titkov Comes to Spokane

PART ONE OF TWO

**For years, Russian-speaking Adventists suffered under Soviet domination in Eastern Europe and Asia. For two-and-a-half years they suffered under an imported version in a northwestern city in America. And no one seemed to know how to solve the problem.**

**This is the story of a captured church. Many were concerned; but, at a terrible cost to themselves, a few dared to speak up.**

Eastern Europeans are used to domination which they fear to stand up against or overthrow. Lyubov is originally from the Ukraine. Here is her story. I have summarized the documents and arranged the data.

**1948-onward**—Lyubov Diskovsky-Sadko, born in 1948, has been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since childhood. After being united in marriage to Eugene (Evgeniy), together they have been faithful members for the past 35 years. They deeply value our historic beliefs. (Lyubov is pronounced “LU-buh.” Titkov is pronounced “Tit-KOV.”)

According to L.G. Fedoruk, pastor of the Kovel Church, Ukraine (letter dated August 1, 2002), the daughter of Adventist parents, Lyubov had been a member of the Kovel SDA Church (Kovel Church Community ASD) from her childhood in 1948. At the age of 18 she was baptized, took an active part in church life, sang in the choir, and played in the orchestra. Even after she left Kovel, she continued financially helping the church in building programs, evangelistic preaching, a local medical center, and helping poor people.

“She was kind and sympathetic Christian. They were always sacrificial in the tithe and voluntary gifts” (Pastor Fedoruk).

**1989**—Fortunately, Lyubov and Eugene were able to come to America, the land of freedom from religious tyranny.

“For decades, my family and I suffered severities, hardships, job losses, arrests, and persecutions for our religious beliefs. It all happened in USSR—an atheistic country, where belief in God was strongly forbidden.

“In 1989, an opportunity to enter the USA as religious refugees opened for us. In the country of religious freedom, where Adventism, E. White and significant missionaries were born, new opportunities for life and intellectual being opened for us too” (Lyubov).

Lyubov and Eugene settled in eastern Washington State, in the city of Spokane, which, she says, has a large

population of over 35,000 Russian-speaking people.

**Spring 2001**—Early in 2001, the Spokane Central Seventh-day Adventist Church wrote to Russia (probably the West Russian Union Conference), with the request that they send a capable pastor to Spokane to head up a new church company, composed of Russian-speaking Adventists.

Michael Oleinik, of the Russian Union of Seventh-day Adventists, recommended that Pastor Vladimir Titkov, of the Ukraine Union, be sent. So the Spokane church board secured visas for Pastor Titkov, his wife, and two children to come to America. They arrived in March 2001.

**Beginning March 2001**—Lyubov explains what happened next:

“Our happiness was shaded by Pastor Vladimir Titkov’s arrival to Spokane, who was invited by conference on employment visa to preach to Russian speaking Adventists in Spokane. During [the first] several months of his presence, Sabbatical worships in Russian church were completely modernized in secular way. The Sabbath School was abolished. Pastor stopped reading text from the Bible. Instead composite of heathen, secular, and Christian philosophy were presented. Pastor’s wife sang songs, where God’s name wasn’t even mentioned or it was mentioned abstractedly. In our worships, Vladimir Titkov allowed speeches to persons of other denominations. They taught the church that God’s Spirit shouts from inside of the body; and after that, prayers in ecstasy were sounded. Encouraged by Pastor, all women started wearing gold finery. Children and teenagers begged sweets and money from church members; they also practiced acrobatics in the church. Vladimir Titkov assured attendants that new church members are progressive and ready to accept new light. He also told that old church members have complexes, and they are not able to progress. According to this reason, only new church members got into church board, which was organized by pastor’s personal advice (not by *Church Manual*). The electorate committee wasn’t assigned. In 6 months, the worships resembled club meetings. Pastor also got time on TV channel, where he presented the same theological view as in the church” (Lyubov).

Titkov’s initial visa was only for two years. Contrary to the *Church Manual*, he personally selected each member of the board of this Russian SDA Church company; and he filled it with liberals who liked his no-obedience, celebration-style teachings. Because this company is a subsidiary of the Spokane Central Church, it did not have its

own separate church board.

**September-November 2001**—Lyubov continues:

“In September 2001, my husband appealed to Vladimir Titkov, but he was disregarded by Pastor’s harsh shouts and inadequate behavior. Looking for answers to the questions we’ve got, we wrote 14 articles and appealed the SDA Spokane Central Church, where membership of the whole Russian-speaking church belonged to, Pastor Jeff Kinne.

“On November 23, 2001, a pastorate consisting of Ministerial Director Gerald Haeger, Elder Jeff Kinne, Elder Vladimir Titkov, and members of Russian-speaking board, was held. The meeting began without prayer. We [Lyubov and Eugene Sadko] were permitted to read our questions, and then we were asked to leave the room for 10 minutes. We left the room. In couple minutes were invited into the room; and without any discussions, in a rude manner, we were forbidden to attend both Russian and English-speaking churches. The reason for this decision wasn’t clear. Two days later, Vladimir Titkov called and threatened us that he will appeal to law enforcement agencies if we come to church. We embraced [believed] Elder Gerald Haeger’s and Vladimir Titkov’s decision to be mistaken because we didn’t do anything bad.

“After that, we appeal to the president of Upper Columbia Conference, Max Torkelsen. We wrote our 14 questions, but we received neither answer nor explanation about our elimination from the church ever after” (Lyubov).

It is illegal in the United States to forbid anyone to attend a public meeting, as long as they are quiet throughout the time they are there.

**November 26, 2001**—Three days after the meeting, on November 26, Gerald Haeger, the conference ministerial director, wrote the Sadkos and told them it would be best if they attended some other Adventist church. (He obviously did not know that Titkov had threatened them with arrest if they did so.)

In that letter, Haeger hinted that Lyubov was not a good Adventist, since she had earlier absented herself from church for a period of time. (In her letter, partially quoted below, to Elder Torkelsen, Lyubov explained that she was seriously injured in two traffic accidents and had a difficult recovery.)

Up to this point, trusting to the judgment of Haeger who had attended that November 23 meeting at the Spokane Central Church, Max Torkelsen, president of the Upper Columbia Conference, really knew nothing about the issues involved. But he was not to remain in the dark very long; for, soon after, the Sadkos sent him a letter, remarkable for its contents.

**December 17, 2001**—Quoting from that letter, dated December 17, 2001:

“We, as members of the Russian group of SDA Spokane Church, would like firstly to express to you our recognition for giving to us the possibility to keep services in our native language, Russian. We thank you sincerely for our Spokane and conference brothers’ help and donations in promotion of gospel to Russian in-

habitants [of Spokane].

“For our part, we also during years strived to bring people to the church, talking with them, inviting and giving them rides to services, doing what we can for helping them.

“Since his arrival, during 8 months, minister V. Titkov have openly proclaimed to all denominations [in Spokane area via the television broadcasts in Russian], together with well-known SDA doctrines, the new theories never before proclaimed from the pulpit . .

“Minister V. Titkov preaches:

“1. Christ rises from the death on Saturday, not on Sunday, as whole Christian world believes.

“2. When Christ was crucified, the veil had been torn up in the Holy place of the temple, not in the Holy of Holies.

“3. Every person is a Creator and a God (the celebration meeting on October 20, 2001). This is the main doctrine of pagan pantheism.

“4. We have not to be worry [we should not fear] to accept new light that is proposed to us, and have not to [do not need to] stand firm for old Adventist tenets. What is the object of such preaching?

“5. For God is important; we glorify Him from our hearts and it isn’t significant what kind of clothes we are wearing when we are doing this. Minister’s daughter plays the piano in the church being dressed not corresponding for worships . .

“6. Minister V. Titkov is for keeping dwell in booths.

“7. Since his arrival, the first part of the worship—the Sabbath School, was abolished. Thus, we are hearing now in succession two services kept both by him.

“8. Persons of other beliefs than SDA doctrines are encouraged on Saturday’s worship to express and motivate their opinions. There are lack of some corrections or advises from the minister. The audience, missing knowledge, take false instructions as true light. Minister interprets this as freedom of speech.

“9. The members of new Church Board were elected upon the personal recommendations of the minister. The Electoral Commission [nominating committee] wasn’t been elected and wasn’t worked for election of new board.

“10. The new Church Board doesn’t follow either God’s Word or the Bylaws of the Church . . [I can’t speak at church board] because I am a woman. Where they took this rule from? From which part of the Holy Bible? . . Since our childhood, preachers encouraged us to take part into church hearings . .

“We never broke worship’s rules; during the new Sabbath School, we used to speak only after standing up from our seats, raising the hand and receiving the minister’s permission. During the second part of the lesson we were listeners. As the audience didn’t know the difference between the first and second part, they thought we were disturbing the worships.

“11. Minister V. Titkov emphasized frequently during the services and group meetings that General Conference was wrong in the past, when refused to accept

## Titkov Comes to Spokane

new light from the brothers, and similar mistakes may be done nowadays too . . .

“Our minister likes to affirm that every preacher is also a prophet and he himself is given revelations. It is arising the question: what this mean?—a new gospel by V. Titkov? . . .” (*Lyubov*).

Lyubov then mentions a visiting Russian-speaker (Anatoly) who, calling himself an “Adventist,” spoke to the church on November 17, 2001, and presented Pentecostal teachings as a “gift” we should claim. Lyubov suspects that he is a member of a Russian-speaking church in Portland, Oregon. (The group had earlier said it was Seventh-day Adventist, but spoke in tongues during prayers. Later the Oregon Conference finally discovered it was a Pentecostal group.)

With such a barrage of charges brought against Vladimir Titkov, as is contained in the Sadko letter to him, Elder Torkelsen, president of the Upper Columbia Conference, must have known that there surely was some kind of problem at that Spokane Russian church. Far too many specifics had been mentioned by Lyubov.

**November 24, 2001**—In his reply, Elder Torkelsen said he was referring the matter to Gerald Haeger, the conference ministerial director. Unfortunately, Haeger had earlier attended that November 23 meeting at the Spokane Central Church; and he had been influenced by Titkov’s statements that the Russian company was fully orthodox, that the Sadkos and their friends were wrong, and by Titkov’s stacked board members who fully agreed with him. Within a few minutes’ time, Eugene and Lyubov Sadko had been judged to be in the wrong. Torkelsen apparently sided with Haeger, who believed what Titkov and his board members told him.

Once again, as has often happened elsewhere, the leaders decided to back the local pastor, regardless of facts presented by church members.

But another factor was also present: This new church was a “church planting project,” something which the North American Division (NAD) had, for several years, been urging local conferences to take part in.

Those who have read our earlier studies on this, know that “church planting” is a code word for a celebration-type church which is started separate from an established Adventist congregation. Doctrines are de-emphasized; x-generation band music and Pentecostal themes are prominent.

**November 24, 2001**—The Sadkos wrote another letter to President Anatoly Ivanovichi Begas, at the Ukraine Conference of SDA. Their two-page letter was a request for replacement of their current Russian-speaking minister. No reply was sent.

**March 15, 2002**—By the spring of 2002, from what he had been told by others, Jeff Kinne, pastor of the Spokane Central Church had become suspicious. So he sent a letter to Elder Grutske, president of the Ukraine Union Conference of SDA, in Kiev, Ukraine. In this letter, Kinne wrote this:

“Last year, Pastor Michael Oleinik, of the Russian Union of Seventh-day Adventists, recommended that

Pastor Vladimir Titkov, of the Ukraine Union of Seventh-day Adventists, assist us in our efforts to begin a Russian speaking church in Spokane, Washington. We were able to secure visas for pastor Titkov, his wife and two children. They arrived in March 2001.

“Recently, a Russian Adventist family attending the new Russian church in Spokane raised some questions regarding Pastor Titkov’s biblical teaching and also claimed that his former background and experience in the Ukraine was blemished to the extent that it would call his current work as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor into question. I have reason to believe that you have relevant information regarding this situation. Your help would be greatly appreciated. We are not only concerned for the spiritual health of our new Russian congregation, but also for the integrity of the church’s spiritual leadership and for Pastor Titkov personally.

“Please respond via fax, email, or letter. Thank you for any assistance you can give us. Sincerely, Jeff Kinne.”

Although the Ukraine Union would not reply to an individual Adventist, they would reply to a request from a paid church employee.

**May 17, 2002**—Here is the reply, sent by fax on March 17, 2002, from Ivan A. Pilipchuk, secretary of the Southern Ukraine Conference. Notice that it mentions that they apparently had earlier received Sadko’s letter, to which they did not reply.

“Dear brothers! ‘Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.’ We have received your letter in which you expressed your anxiety regarding to the pastor Titkov’s service who had been committing his ministry in the Southern Ukrainian Conference. We are sorry to hear from you and other church members who wrote and testified about dubiousity of brother Titkov’s mission as Adventist preacher.

“During his service in the Southern Ukrainian Conference, we were experiencing constant worry connected with him.

“As the lay-members of his congregation and experienced grey-haired pastors watching his service testified, pastor Titkov did not have the Adventist spirit in his approach to the service and education of members but rather the spirit of half secular modernist.

“Having an outstanding ability, erudition and energy, pastor Titkov didn’t use them in the best way, but very often he did harmfully to the God’s work acting in opposition with Biblical and church principles.

“So the Southern Conference administration went to his church several times because of tense situation which was in his congregation. Pastor Titkov has broken church principles and selected people suitable of him [selected solely by him] in the church board. He also has involved them in financial dishonestly regarding to the Conference. He divided the members on ‘old’ and ‘new,’ ‘conservatives’ and ‘normal’ and acted to the detriment of the church prosperity. All observations of the ‘old’ members were disregarded by him.

“The Southern Conference administration was try-



**SOUTHERN UKRAINE  
CONFERENCE FAX  
GOES HERE**



# Titkov Comes to Spokane

**PART TWO  
OF TWO**

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

ing to relieve conflict situation occurred in his congregation and help him to see his mistakes and correct them, but all this didn't help.

"As a result, in November 20-21, 2000, the Conference Board accepted a decision on its meetings to release pastor Titkov from his work as a pastor and charge him the service as an evangelist. A month later, in December 12-13, 2000, we decided to address to the Ukrainian Union Conference Board to solve the matter of his service. After that, we knew that pastor Titkov would leave for the USA by invitation of American brothers.

"That's very pity that you have not ask to send you this letter recommendation on Pastor Titkov before invitation for the worship in the USA.

"Pilipchuk I. [Ivan A. Pilipchuk], Southern Conference Secretary."

There can be no doubt that this bombshell letter was shared with the conference president, whose office was also located in Spokane.

The reply corroborated; yet the concerns of the Sadkos, as we will learn below, were ignored by the Upper Columbia Conference. Why this is so remains a mystery. Month after month, Russian-speaking souls were being driven away from the Russian Adventist church company. Yet this was allowed to continue.

When, in early 2001, the Upper Columbia Conference sent a request for a Russian-speaking pastor to be sent to Spokane, who was it that decided that Titkov, a known troublemaker—and fired a couple months earlier—was the one to be sent?

The answer is contained in the first paragraph of Pastor Jeff Kinne's March 15, 2002, letter (quoted above) to Elder Grutske, president of the Ukraine Union Conference:

"Last year, Pastor Michael Oleinik of the Russian Union of Seventh-day Adventists recommended that Pastor Vladimir Titkov of the Ukraine Union of Seventh-day Adventists assist us in our efforts to begin a Russian speaking church in Spokane, Washington."

It was an official in the Russian Union! Church leaders in the Ukraine did not want him; so the Russian Union decided to get rid of Titkov—by sending him to America!

In a separate letter to me, Lyubov clarified this:

"In March, 2002, a request on Vladimir Titkov's name was sent to Ukraine SDA Conference. The answer that was sent to Upper Columbia Conference said that Elder Titkov's activities destroyed the church; Titkov presented secular, non-Adventist doctrines; he didn't wish to cooperate with the conference; and, in the year of 2000, he was suspended from the function of Pastor. However, the president of Rostov-Calmitsky Conference (Russia), Michael Oleynik gave him good

recommendation and sent him to the USA" (*Lyubov*).

After receiving that startling message from the Ukraine Union—it seems incredible that nothing was done! Titkov continued on as pastor of the Russian Adventist church in Spokane. This, in spite of the fact that the letter from the Ukraine conference president said he taught insurrection against the church, inculcated new doctrines, and even taught his church officers to use dishonest practices.

**May 14, 2002**—The harassment did not let up. On May 14, two leaders of the Russian church phoned Lyubov and threatened her family with trouble if they ever stepped inside a Russian church again.

"Throughout the year of 2002, my husband and I repeatedly received harassing phone calls from different church leaders and from Russian speaking church board members, who insulted our human dignities, U.S. citizens' rights, and SDA church members' rights. We were isolated from church life and from communication with church members. Our reputations were defamed. We became unwished and unneeded elements in the church. We weren't even given an opportunity to present our opinion in the English speaking church board [at Spokane Central]" (*Lyubov*).

**May 15, 2002**—On this date, the Sadkos sent another letter to a church official. Here is part of this four-page typewritten letter:

"[After being told at the November 23 meeting to no longer come back to church] . . . We sent the complaint addressed to the president of the Upper Columbia Conference. Mr. Max Torkelsen has answered, 'There has been misunderstandings which can be resolved with good communication.' We then addressed with this letter to the pastor of the Central Church of SDA, Jeff Kinne, to the pastor's assistant, Pat Jesseph, to the president of the board, Elvin Childers, having handed to them a copy of it. But during four months nobody has found time or desire to listen us. In the space of 50 years of tenure of the SDA church, we for the first time collide with such phenomenon of indifference and neglect of our person. Our unique right was underlined—to donate money. Do they give today preference to certain nationality to those social classes within the SDA church who give money? Or has the church become a private business of rich persons that have the right to ignore people? . . .

"We address to you also at the request of other members of our group that are confused but don't have the desire to be turned out of the church as we were. V. Titkov has told in divine service, 'Who more doesn't like it here? We could show to you the road out from this place. I have a sharp tongue!' Are such ministers personally familiar with Christ?"

The Sadkos were not alone in their concerns. A number of other Russian-speaking church members shared them, but they feared to speak up lest they be treated the

way Lyubov and Eugene were.

Continuing with Lyubov's letter:

"V. Titkov is an unpredictable person, affording himself to shout at parishioners, to speak in humiliating and offensive tone with opponents, to run in fury to benches of audience, to give false evidences on those members of the church that he doesn't like, and to expel them from the church, to convoke self-styled boards, to humiliate people, and to extort tithes . . .

"At a meeting that took place on November 21, 2001, Titkov told the audience that he has the recommendation from his minister's office, showing appropriate document. But the true 'recommendation' . . . was received from the Ukraine Conference a year later. The following is the address of this conference [which sent that letter of warning]: President Anatoly Begas, South Ukraine Conference, 5th Ingulyskaya No. 19-A, P.O. Box 45, Nikolaev, Ukraine 54024" (*Lyubov*).

After 50 years of living in peace with fellow Adventists, under very harsh conditions in the Soviet Union, they came to the United States and were harassed by their church pastor! A remarkable situation, to say the least.

**June 1, 2002**—June had arrived and it was time for a wedding. But Pastor Titkov decided the wedding of his daughter deserved something special; so he canceled the Sabbath School and church service entirely. On Sabbath morning, he held the wedding, followed by a festive wedding dinner. At his request, many from other denominations were present at the secular event.

**September 4, 2002**—On this date, the Sadkos and two others from their group met with Max Torkelsen, president of the Upper Columbia Conference. At this time, additional evidence of Titkov's previous malfeasance in the Ukraine was presented to Torkelsen.

Unfortunately, the president decided to continue giving his support to Titkov. To do otherwise might indicate that he had previously made a mistake in issuing the call for Titkov to come to America.

**October 19, 2002**—On this date, the Russian company was officially registered as a conference church (instead of just a company of believers). "Register of Russian church in presence of ministerial Education, G. Haeger; Secretary of Conference, C. Pifher; Elders of Central Church, Jeff Hinne, Elder Michle Oleynik (Russia); and members of board at Central Church. Oleynik had been the one who originally recommended and sent Titkov to Spokane. He come personally to support Titkov and in this way cover his own mistakes" (*Lyubov*).

At this meeting the Sadkos once again received an "edict to us [to] leave the church, the second time from Secretary of Conference, C. Pifher" (*Lyubov*).

By this time, the Russian Adventists had become divided into two groups, one of which stood solidly with Lyubov and Eugene Sadko in their concern that Titkov be replaced. No longer did they stand alone in their efforts to having him ejected.

**October 25, 2002**—On this date, a letter written in Russian was sent to Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference. A reply was later received from a secre-

tary, telling the Sadkos to wait.

**December 2, 2002**—By December, the board of the Spokane Central Church felt they had had enough. A "petition from board of SDA Central Church to conference, [with a] request to replace pastor and to fix a problem in Russian church company." No definitive answer was received from the conference office.

**February 8, 2003**—The Russian group submitted a request to the board of the Central Church to meet with it.

"To the Board at Central SDA Church. From Members of SDA Spokane Central Church / Russian Group / T. [telephone] 998-1340, T. 533-1758.

"Dear brothers, we would request a portion of time to discuss our concern in regard to pastor [of] Russian Group, V. Titkov. Hope to see you in Monday evening, 2/10/03" (*Many signatures*).

**February 10, 2003**—The Central Church board met with the Russian group, but nothing definite resulted from it.

**February 15, 2003**—By this time, the two-year contract of the Upper Columbia Conference with Vladimir Titkov was nearing its end. (It would expire in March.) The question in many minds was Will it be renewed or will Titkov be discharged from the conference ministry? This was a golden opportunity for the conference president to ease himself out of a difficult situation, without appearing to have made too much of a mistake.

Concerned about this, the Russian group mailed the following letter:

"To Jeff Kinne, Pastor of Central SDA Church, From Members of SDA Spokane Central Church / Russian Group / T. 998-1340, T. 533-1758.

"Dear Pastor Jeff Kinne, We heard that in beginning of March there will [be a] conference constituency meeting concerning Pastor V. Titkov ministry who was on contract basis.

"We would like to have our representatives to be listen, in order to make a fair decision.

"Ivan Grachev and Eugene Sadko. Thank you.

"(Signed) Eugene Sadko, Ivan Grachev, Lyubov Sadko, Metanet Zakhraeva, Ruslan Babayev, Lidiya Grachev, Yekatenina S. Demyanenko."

**February 17, 2003**—In anticipation of the coming constituency meeting, the Central Church board wrote an official request to President Torkelsen, asking that he replace the Russian pastor, Vladimir Titkov. No written reply was received.

**February 17, 2003**—Whether or not it was by coincidence, this same day, the Russian group also sent a letter to Elder Torkelsen. Copies of the letter were sent to Gerald Haeger at the conference office, the North Pacific Union president (who could do little about the problem), as well as to Elder Kinne, and the Board of the Central Church.

"Dear President Torkelsen,

"In March of 2001, Mr. Titkov was contracted for two years for Pastor's work for our Russian group with the

Central SDA Church. Unfortunately, he proved himself to be a poor organizer and atomizer of the church by splitting it. In two years of his activity as a pastor, Mr. Titkov showed himself as extremely ambitious man, the leader who can only create intrigues and disagreements. Offensive faultfinder critiquing without any mercy, he is using preaching time and the time of God's Service by fighting Adventism and creating a non-denominational Russian society.

"The doors of the church open only to people who are in personal favor of the pastor. He is successfully fighting against Adventists, surrounding himself with 'easy to rule' new converts who are not yet affirmed in genuineness and integrity. Not by church rules, but by his own decision, he created the Church Committee from these people. The conduct of this committee violates the human rights and abuses religious feelings of the believers. The members of the church repeatedly suffer discrimination by forceful discharge from the church. Techniques of isolation and threat of expulsion from the church is used. Spiritual and organizing work in the church is done on very low level. Saturday school was organized with Titkov's arrival, where ideas of "new age" but not Adventist ideas are preached. None of the main doctrines of SDA were highlighted during 2 years of his service such as: Saturday, soul and spirit, clean (permissible) and unclean (unallowable) food, Holy Spirit, repentance and new birth, and the whole tithes.

"Titov's preaching is based on a combination of Gentile, secular, and religious philosophies. (There are video and audio recordings available of his preaching.) He performed wedding ceremony of his daughter with active member of Baptist church on Saturday, skipping worship service to God. Afterward, he made wedding party in the cafeteria.

"Titkov's wife, Svetlana, announced that E. White is not popular, but boring for reading. In addition, during the Service time she was performing folk music instead of Christian musical psalms [hymns]. Visitors from other denominations were surprised that Adventist Church hired eloquent atheist . . .

"Mr. Titkov is preaching on the TV that: Christ rose from the dead on Saturday. Every person is Creator and God. Love is above the truth. Necessity of observ-

ing New Moon and staying in tents. The importance of happiness for victory over one's enemies, so that enemies would die before their time. Non-importance to dress properly.

"Acknowledging his own originality and uniqueness, Mr. Titkov rejects all inheritance of SDA, including, E. White (preaching and using uncertain sources). He proclaims in church that he is having revelations . . . but when members ask him to explain them, he answers that it is not their business . . . Those who attend the church long enough [find they] are unable to understand the new study.

"Mr. Titkov destroyed the SDA church in the city of Simpheropol in Ukraine. There are some references sent to president Max Torkelsen from Mr. V. Krupsky, president of Ukraine Union Conference, and Mr. A. Begas, president of South Ukraine Conference, in regards to this issue. They show that Mr. V. Titkov was disqualified and lost his pastor authorization in December 2000.

"He threatens peoples' freedom and well-being . . . He labels some people 'stupid' and 'crazy'; others he publicly proclaims as 'adulterers.' This persecutor proudly proclaims in the church, 'For those of you who don't like it, we will quickly show the way out of this place' . . . As a result, the church split in half and now we have to listen to the service in a foreign for us language . . . We urgently ask brother preachers not to extend the contract with Mr. V. Titkov for 2003-2004. (Signed) Svetlana Grachev, Eugene Sadko, Lyubov Sadko, Ivan Grachev, Lidiya Grachev, Metanet Zakhrabova, Demyanenko Yekaterina."

Unfortunately, in response to the above letter no written reply was received. It is significant that not one, but two warning letters had been received by Adventist leadership in Spokane. "Mr. V. Krupsky, president of Ukraine Union Conference, and Mr. A. Begas, president of South Ukraine Conference" both had written.

**February 28, 2003**—The Russian group sent a letter about the problem to Artur A. Stele, president of the Euro-Asia Division, but received no reply.

**March 2003**—In March, Vladimir Titkov's contract was extended for another two (possibly three) years, in spite of the earnest requests by the Spokane Central board

#### INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS MENTIONED IN THIS REPORT

##### Lyubov and Eugene Sadko

Phone: 509-533-1758  
P.O. Box 30031  
Spokane, WA 99223

##### Spokane SDA Church

828 West Spoffard Street  
Spokane, WA 99205

##### Upper Columbia Conference

P.O. Box 19039  
Spokane, Washington 99219  
President: Max C. Torkelsen II

##### Euro-Asia Division

Krasnoyarskaya Street, 3,  
107589 Moscow,  
Russian Federation  
President: Artur A. Stele

##### West Russian Union Conference

P.O. Box 51  
142080 Klimovsk,  
Moscow Region  
Russian Federation  
President: Vassili D. Stoliar

##### Ukraine Union Conference

P.O. Box 423/4

04107 Kiev

Ukraine

President: Vladimir A. Krupsky [He wrote a warning letter to leadership in Spokane.]

##### Southern Ukraine Conference

P.O. Box 45  
327024 Nikolaev  
Ukraine

President: Anatoly Begas

Secretary: Ivan A. Pilipchuk [the one who wrote the May 17, 2002 letter about Titkov]

that he be replaced.

**May 31, 2003**—Titkov placed an ad in the *Spokane Review*, which ran in the Saturday edition of that newspaper, announcing a secular concert at his church, organized by Titkov and his family. The concert was held in the Spokane Central Church, at 5 p.m., instead of a service of English-Speaking members.

“Established two years ago, the Russian Music School consists of three practice rooms behind the sanctuary of Central Seventh-day Adventist in north Spokane . . . Each week, the three women [in the Titkov family] spend hours teaching more than 50 students . . . Their dream, however, is to expand the music school into a Russian center for the arts—one that also will train young people in painting, crafts, theater, poetry and literature . . .”

**June 9, 2003**—“The board of the Central Church sent a request to Max Torkelsen to close Titkov’s Music School business at Central Church” (*Lyubov*). Titkov was using the church for a private business operation. According to a later flattering *Gleaner* article (mentioned below), this commercial school in the Adventist church had been in operation since the spring of 2001!

**July 3, 2003**—The request to close the music school was approved. In disgust, Vladimir Titkov took his musical business out of Central Church and began meeting in non-Adventist churches. He kept his family (7 in all), plus 10 of the Russian church members. They started their own separate church, with the same small board he had chosen earlier in 2001.

“For 2.5 years long of Vladimir Titkov’s activity, SDA Church lost 40 church members and attendees. These people had been attracted to our SDA Church because of evangelizations and 3ABN programs (not Titkov’s telecasts) . . . They were starving to learn the Word of God. However . . . because of coldness and indifference of leaders . . . they left to other denominations in order to satisfy their spiritual needs.” (*Lyubov*).

**August 2003**—As a strange anticlimax a month after Titov’s departure, the North Pacific Union *Gleaner* ran an article, extending to a second page, praising Vladimir Titkov, his wife Svetlana, and their private commercial music school in the Spokane Central Adventist Church, with the possibility of making it a theatrical training school! Here are several interesting excerpts:

“Our society is rich in extraordinary individuals, whose energy and outstanding gifts awaken the hearts of people. One of those people is the pastor of the Russian Church in Spokane, Wash., Vladimir Titkov. Two years ago, he came to Spokane at the invitation of the Upper Columbia Conference to establish a Russian church. He was one of the best pastors of Russia, a man of deep biblical knowledge and a very intelligent, educated and talented teacher.”

The article even dared to include the announcement about the totally secular concert, held earlier in the year, as another example of how wonderfully this music school was helping the community!

**“Concert Today:** Students from Spokane’s Russian Music School will perform at 5 p.m. [still Sabbath] today during a concert at Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, 828 W. Spofford. Admission is free. **Saturday May 31, 2003**” (*emphasis theirs!*).

Titkov’s wife and two daughters were teaching 50 students at \$15.00 per hour for lessons. Most students were receiving two piano lessons a week, along with another hour spent learning theory. This easily brought in \$1,000 a week in private income, using church facilities.

In two years, under Titkov’s leadership, the Russian-speaking church had grown only to 20 members. But in one year, his music business had grown to more than 50 students.

**October 15, 2003**—As of this date, Titkov has rented space in two English-speaking Protestant churches, with each rental lasting only one month. His church group consists of his own family, plus four others. The other Russian-speaking believers and interests have forsaken him.

As for the Adventist Russian group, the conference says it is arranging for a new pastor to be sent over from Russia, but they totally refuse to say who it will be. So no one can do any advance checking. Most of those in the Russian Adventist group, when Titkov arrived, are now totally out of the faith and gone.

**Here is more background on this:** As already mentioned, on February 17, 2003, the Spokane Church wrote the conference, asking that Titkov no longer be the Russian pastor. So in March, Titkov wrote the South Ukraine Conference, asking to be hired as a pastor. When they refused, saying he had not been a good pastor, he angrily phoned them that he would start a non-denominational church in the Ukraine—and show them how capable he was.

That same month, he asked a non-Adventist church in Spokane to hire him as a Russian pastor. When their pastor phoned the Spokane Central pastor for references, he was shocked that Titkov, an Adventist-salaried pastor, was trying to get hired by a non-Adventist church. He replied that Titkov had not been a good pastor.

When, in July, Titkov was forced to stop his music business at the Central Church, he also quit preaching there. But he begged the conference president to keep paying him a salary until he gets his green card (so he can stay in America), which could take five years or more. At this time, he and his wife, daughters, and son-in-law are all here on his work visa. So Titkov is now preaching in a non-Adventist church (which considers him their Russian pastor), while receiving a full salary by the Upper Columbia Conference.