

ON THE EDGE OF SPACE AND TIME: EVANGELICAL MISSIONARIES IN THE POST-SOVIET ARCTIC

LAUR VALLIKIVI
PhD, Researcher
Department of Ethnology
Institute for Cultural Research and Fine Arts
University of Tartu
Ülikooli 18, 50090 Tartu, Estonia
e-mail: laur.vallikivi@ut.ee

ABSTRACT*

Evangelical missionaries have missionised pretty much throughout Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Among their favourite targets are the small-numbered indigenous groups in the Russian Arctic, where the numbers of converts are steadily growing. One particular denomination, known as the Unregistered Baptists, are among the leading agents of religious change in the North today. They are driven by the promise of the return of Christ after the gospel is preached “at the ends of the earth”. I suggest that the Baptists’ agenda is shaped, on the one hand, by the literal reading of the Bible, which allows them to be the divine instruments at the end times and, on the other hand, by the idea of Russia’s special role in God’s salvation plan. I shall analyse the Baptists’ ideas and practices, using among others Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope in order to demonstrate how powerful narratives are created and lived.

KEYWORDS: Christian missionaries • eschatology • literalism • chronotope • Nenets

Pavel, a Russian-Ukrainian Baptist missionary, has colourfully described his journey to Nenets reindeer herders in August 1997. A rented tank-like vehicle took Pavel from the nearest settlement to a reindeer herding camp in the tundra not far from the Arctic Ocean. He travelled with a young Nenets man called Ivan. Baptised three years earlier, Ivan was the first convert among the Nenets and served as a guide and interpreter for Pavel on his mission trips in the tundra. After reaching his home tent, Ivan and his pagan father asked the driver to help them transport firewood from the seashore to the camp, which was set up a few kilometres inland. In this vehicle, they went to the shore where, next to large piles of driftwood, there was a small hut temporarily occupied by a Russian family who spent their holiday fishing. Pavel depicts the encounter like this in his mission report:¹

* This research was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence, CECT) and the Estonian Science Foundation (grant no. 8335). The names of my interlocutors have been changed to protect their anonymity. Translations of mission reports are mine. The quotations of the Bible are from the King James Version (1611).

These people were starving for the true Bread. I told them about the plan of salvation that '[the gospel] shall be preached to the ends of the earth and then shall the end come...' These were historical days when all-powerful God fulfilled his Word. The ends of the earth were only ten metres from us! God miraculously spoke to their hearts and they prayed. I persuaded them to read the Word and pray.

Years later, Pavel stressed in a conversation that he had then literally reached the ends of the earth and that this was the sign that very little time was left before Christ would return.

Since the early 1990s, similar scenes of evangelisation have become frequent throughout the post-atheist country where multiple domestic and foreign Protestant mission organisations have spread rapidly. The Russian Arctic seems to have received disproportionately more attention in the post-Soviet period than many other regions, especially bearing in mind how few people live there and how difficult is to reach them. However, missionaries have met considerable success in some areas. I ask why they have made significant efforts to convert people in this part of the world. By exploring the activities, ideologies and rhetoric of the missionaries, I shall suggest that the heightened attention to the North is not random but has its cosmological reasons embedded in the missionaries' specific concepts of space and time. Central to my overall argument is that remoteness and the conquest of it is an especially attractive idea for those Christians whose identity is based on the literal reading of the Bible and the imitative suffering of Jesus and his disciples. I shall focus on a particular Russian evangelical group called the Unregistered Baptists who have invested more time, energy and resources in spreading the Gospel among indigenous groups in the Russian Arctic than most other religious groups.

Within the framework of the 'anthropology of Christianity' many have discussed how Christianity has travelled and taken root throughout the globalising world, especially in Latin America, Melanesia, Africa, where various forms of it have spread remarkably quickly (for example, Robbins 2003; Hann 2007; Bialecki et al. 2008; Anderson et al. 2010). In these 'remote' parts of the world a traditional eye-to-eye mission encounter is the most usual pattern, even if there are other ways in which Christianity spreads today, be this via televangelism or other mass media means. In other words, Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists and others still dispatch their missionaries to distant communities throughout the world. Evidently, there is a great variety of styles in missionary practices and (in)sensitivities towards the local cultural contexts, even if Christian missionisation in general demonstrates "a certain consistency, constancy, and persistence" (Burridge 1991: ix).

However, we do not find too many detailed ethnographic analyses of missionary activities, as the focus is usually on the local reception of Christianity. When analysing mission encounters, for a long time anthropologists were interested in the missionaries' impact on the non-Christians and much less in the missionaries themselves who were converting these people (Beidelman 1974: 235). The reason for this systematic neglect was partly to do with anthropology being a discipline of non-modern societies in which only 'traditional' elements were investigated, and partly to do with the ambiguous and complicated relationship between anthropologists and missionaries (Stipe 1980; van der Geest 1990; van der Geest, Kirby 1992), which together created a significant silence. In the 1970s and 1980s, a more methodical study of missionaries began to emerge – although

it was never to become a prominent topic (Miller 1970; 1981; Beidelman 1974; 1982; Burridge 1978; Shapiro 1981; Schneider, Lindenbaum 1987; Huber 1988; James and Johnson 1988).² The large part of this recent anthropological work on missionaries has been based on archival or published sources, concentrating on the specific personalities of missionaries, institutions, ideologies and narratives from the past (for example, Clifford 1982; Comaroff, Comaroff 1991; 1997; Fienup-Riordan 1991; Peel 1995; Kan 1999; Meyer 1999; Znamenski 1999; Douglas 2001; Kipp 2004; Keane 2007; Toulouze 2009). The missionaries' practices and concepts in today's mission encounters have received much less attention (but see, for example, Orta 2004; Hovland 2009; Bielo 2011; Elisha 2011).³

My aim here is to depict missionaries' ideas and actions as I have learned these during my recent field trips to the nomadic Nenets who have recently been evangelised. I have lived with reindeer herding families for shorter and longer periods in and around the Polar Urals, as well as frequented the prayer house in the city of Vorkuta.⁴ This is the area where the Russian Unregistered Baptists have been particularly successful, having baptised around two hundred adults from the nearby Nenets communities. Today, the new Christians constitute approximately half of the local Nenets population.⁵ This success story resonates in the missionaries' sermons as well as in the official church literature, which attribute particular importance to the fact that all this is taking place 'at the world's edge'.

THE LITERAL END

The trope of the world's edge populated with pagans has guided missionaries' activities, if not since Paul's times, then at least since Patrick, who Christianised the Irish in the 5th century. According to Richard Fletcher, Patrick "was the first person in Christian history to take the scriptural injunctions literally; to grasp that teaching all nations meant teaching even barbarians who lived beyond the frontiers of the Roman empire" (1999: 86). Like Ireland, the Russian Arctic is a perfect match for the ends of the earth where 'barbarians' live. Although Patrick's agenda was driven by Jesus' command to spread the Gospel to all nations, it was only in the late 18th century and early 19th century that the ideal of the total evangelisation (also known as "the great commission") became more deeply rooted in the Protestants' agenda. Until then the majority of Protestants took Jesus' command as a project that had been finished by the end of the apostolic age and was thus not part of the continuing task for current generations (McGrath 2007: 177).⁶

The increasing interest in worldwide missionisation coincided with the emergence of a new language ideology based on the literal reading of the Bible. Despite the occasional appearance of literalism since the Reformation, or even earlier, the idea of Biblical inerrancy can be characterised as essentially "a modern preoccupation" (Armstrong 2001: 11). Karen Armstrong has stated, "Before the modern period, Jews, Christians, and Muslims all relished highly allegorical, symbolic, and esoteric interpretations of their sacred texts" (ibid.). Only by the early 20th century had interpreting the Bible literally become a core practice for Christians. They came to be known as fundamentalists. The Russian Unregistered Baptist missionaries belong to this tradition. However, analysing literalism poses certain challenges. Anthropologist Simon Coleman has argued

that when addressing the literalist world of conservative Christians, anthropologists are themselves too literalist (2006: 58; see also Bielo 2009). Joel Robbins endorses Coleman's criticism by saying that anthropologists "have not thought it possible to produce the kind of nuanced account of Christian literalist practice they would want to have of most other kinds of practice in the world [...] or at least they have not been interested in providing one" (2006: 220). In this paper, I try to provide a detailed analysis of Christian literalist practices by looking at how literalist ideology inspires, justifies and creates space for missionaries' actions.

In his compelling book *Serving the Word*, Vincent Crapanzano has argued that American fundamentalists' literalism is largely non-creative, as they "read Scripture as though it were an instruction manual, verse by verse, passage by passage, story by story, always in a very narrow manner, with little regard for context" (2000: 146). While agreeing with parts of this, nevertheless, I would like to argue that in otherwise restricted ideological settings and ritualised use of authoritative language, literalism as practice is not necessarily "narrow" but enables considerable creativity, and depends on the context in which an interpretive tradition is continuously negotiated. One could agree with the position that there is an inevitable tension between the literalists' language ideology and the literalists' practices (Keane 2007: 101). Susan Harding has demonstrated this discrepancy in the case of the American fundamentalist evangelicals led by Jerry Falwell:

The interpretive tradition is literalist in the sense that it presumes the Bible to be true and literally God's Word, but the interpretive practices themselves are not simply literalist. The biblical text is considered fixed and inerrant, and it means what God intended it to mean, but discerning that meaning is not simple or sure or constant. The Bible is read within a complex, multidimensional, shifting field of fundamental Baptist (becoming evangelical) folk-narrative practices, and so are the lives of preachers and their peoples. (Harding 2000: 28)

The Russian Baptists I know read the Bible every day: they certainly use it as a manual, as Crapanzano has argued, alongside other texts published and circulated by their own church, believing that these texts are highly pertinent to their lives. They interpret their everyday experiences in the scriptural mode, being "driven by a search for relevance" (Malley 2004: 117). This careful process of recasting one's thoughts and self-expression is not idiosyncratic but is in dialogue with the patterns of interpretations, which are shaped by authoritative members like local pastors or church leaders. Even the use of the Bible citations that each Baptist knows by heart and considers his or her favourite depends on the dominating currents in the church and wider society.

PAVEL

Let me return to the opening scene in which the Baptist missionary Pavel expresses himself in biblical language. In his first act of evangelisation on the shore of the Arctic Ocean, Pavel juxtaposes the Bible verses that guide his and his fellow missionaries' actions in the field: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the

ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8; cf. also Acts 13:47), and "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). While at the coast, Pavel's literalist stance set him not only at the nexus between the present and the future but also between human and divine agency. He represents himself both as a sign and instrument of the end times embodying God's will and power. The awakened and praying Russian family and a Nenets convert nearby was for him a convincing proof of how God's plan was being fulfilled.

What is significant in his rhetoric is that time became visible in this liminal space: the vectors of space and time were about to meet in a straight line and thus the imagined future was to become present. On the one end of the temporal scale, there was a scriptural promise, which originated almost two thousand years ago when Jesus pledged to come back. On the other end, there were signs of the end times that were visible in the morally degrading world, indicating that Jesus's return was imminent. As a missionary on the margins, Pavel used every opportunity to use these literalist motifs to map out the apocalyptic geography.

Missionaries are expected to be heroic individuals. Pavel's individual agency has been behind the majority of conversions to Baptism among the western Nenets. He is of Ukrainian origin, as are many other Baptist missionaries in Russia (Wanner 2007). He found his way to Vorkuta by being conscripted into the army in Vorkuta in 1979. After being released from the army, Pavel took his wife and son to Vorkuta and started working in a coal mine, attracted by a high salary and other "northern privileges". He soon joined the local Baptist congregation, founded by released Gulag prisoners in 1947 (*Podrazhayte* 2001: 72–74) and became its presbyter in 1990. Pavel made his first mission trip to the tundra in the mid-1990s. A few years later he retired from work and since then he has dedicated most of his time to travelling and evangelising in the tundra.

In our conversations, Pavel stressed that his task was to take God's Word to the ends of the earth. His main tool was witnessing (*свидетельство*), talking of God, which included conversations, singing, and handing out devotional literature. At the beginning, one of the biggest challenges was transport. In the 1990s, Pavel relied on rented transport as well as motor sledges bought with donations. Since 2000, he has moved across the tundra on a *Trekol*, a capable all-terrain vehicle with large wheels, which has given him access to the remotest reindeer herding camps that outsiders rarely visit. This vehicle and Pavel's repair ability have given the local Baptists the edge over other missionaries (for example, local Pentecostals) who have less reliable means of transportation.

Today, evangelical missionaries are often the only ones (apart from a few others like anthropologists) who are motivated to visit indigenous people in the sparsely populated areas with the challenging climate and landscape. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and its heavily subsidised transport system, in general there has recently been much less movement across the vast expanses of the North. The once frequent sight of all-terrain vehicles or helicopters transporting goods, meat, fish, and people has become a rarity in most regions in the post-Soviet period because of its high cost.⁷ In addition, almost all the so-called cultural-educative projects that the state initiated in the Soviet period among the tundra and taiga dwellers have been stopped.⁸ Since the early 1990s, due to the lack of resources and motivation, only a few outsiders have managed to move across the tundra and taiga.

Pavel is probably one of the most successful missionaries in the International Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian-Baptists (IUCECB).⁹ The Union was the largest illegal religious organisation during the Soviet era. In the early post-Soviet period, when the state stopped persecuting evangelicals and missionary work became unhindered once again, the Unregistered Baptists began to evangelise widely, annoying the state privileged Russian Orthodox Church as well as indigenous activists who usually prefer traditionalist forms of religion.

Throughout their earlier history, the Russian Baptists evangelised in very constrained circumstances.¹⁰ Although the public image of the Baptists is one of a new Christian “sect” in Russia, the presence of Baptists dates back to the 1860s (Coleman 2005). The branch of the Unregistered Baptists was born in 1961 in a “spiritual awakening” (*духовное пробуждение*) when many split off from the mainstream Baptist movement, blaming its leaders for cooperating with the atheist state. The main accusation was that the Registered Baptists submitted to the authorities, who ordered that anti-evangelical instructions (for example, “to end unhealthy missionary tendencies”) be sent out to the local congregations. Although all religious groups were harassed in the post-Stalinist Soviet period, among stubborn Unregistered Baptists the number of the repressed was particularly high. Hundreds of believers were imprisoned; in some cases their houses were confiscated and children forcibly taken away and placed in state orphanages (Kryuchkov 2008; see also Wanner 2007). Today, the Unregistered Baptists emphasise their heritage of martyrdom and use it actively for the reproduction of their identity as God’s chosen people.

Although the UCECB opened its Department of Evangelism already in 1965, a large-scale missionising could only begin when the political situation changed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today with its almost seventy thousand church members and 2900 churches or groups (*50 let* 2011), it is still thought to be one of the most conservative and anti-worldly Protestant denominations in post-atheist Russia (Bourdeaux, Filatov 2003: 185–194).¹¹ The Union’s policies were worked out largely by one man, Genadiy Kryuchkov (1926–2007), a long-time leader who lived for around twenty years in hiding (1969–1989). He was and is still appreciated as a “hero of faith”, a God-chosen leader for the true church, and his views are seen as God-inspired and inerrant by the members of the Union, as one can read in the IUCECB’s journal *Herald of Truth* (*Vestnik* 2007[4–5]: 64; 2007[6]: 31).¹²

According to Kryuchkov, the collapse of the Soviet Union took place because God decided to give an opportunity to His chosen people to evangelise, to continue the work of the early apostolic church. He writes in *Brotherly Leaflet*, “If the early apostolic church had lasted, the circumstances would have developed differently. It would have conquered the whole world and possibly already then evangelised ‘unto the uttermost part of the earth’ (Acts 1:8)” (*Tserkov* 2008: 183). Kryuchkov essentially argued that as the apostolic church of the first centuries had stopped short before the work was finished, the task of finishing the job fell on the shoulders of a small community of saved people in the Soviet Union. The atheist Soviet Union was claimed to be the land where the Antichrist had recently hit the hardest and God had a special plan for it, making Russia a pivotal place in world historical events.¹³ In 1965, Kryuchkov prophesied about

their Union's special role: "Brothers, I have a proof that God has given our brotherhood a special place not only in our country but also in world Christianity. Some years will pass and we shall see it..." (*Vestnik* 1990[3]: 26)¹⁴ The collapse of the Soviet Union and new freedom caused contradictory feelings. A text, probably also authored by Kryuchkov, explains how God directed these world historical events:

Today the Lord has heard His servants' prayers, thirsty to save this world and thirsty to preach the message of salvation. And this is why He changes the circumstances and gives us a chance to distribute the literature and speak openly about the Saviour. All this is done by the Lord! He chose us not so that we could spend our lives quietly, feeling comfortable in payer house chairs, but so we would go out to the world and fearlessly preached His Word to the uttermost ends of the earth! The most important thing is that the Holy Spirit would help us, for we do God's work saintly. Then we can celebrate the success and Our Lord makes us glad of the days wherein we have seen evil.¹⁵ (*Vestnik* 1991[2]: 4)

The Unregistered Baptists are convinced that God let widespread repressions to take place in order to separate the true believers from the false ones and then gave the freedom of evangelism because of the true believers' loyalty and unending prayers. Kryuchkov claimed that this freedom would last as long as God's people would be able "to receive God's strength and God's miracles" (2008: 252). At the same time, he repeatedly warned against the church becoming tempted by "liberalism, modernism, ecumenism" (*ibid.*: 315–316). In his words, all these vices characterise those Christians who do not follow "the narrow path". This path does not contain any social work, politics or other "worldly" activities that in the Baptists' words would corrupt God's true church on the earth. As they declare, their main principle "outside" the church is calling on individuals to repent while "inside" the church the aim is to be continuously sanctified. (*Ibid.*: 268)

There have been many difficult dilemmas on this narrow path. One has been foreign aid. In the early 1990s, Russia saw an unprecedented high number of foreign missions entering the country. Many of them wanted to co-operate and offered material help to the local churches. Kryuchkov hesitated. He pointed out that some ministers in the Union, with material gain on their minds, "opened the doors for all kinds of Western missions and 'teachers', who often propagated anti-evangelical and even heretic views" (*ibid.*: 318, see also p. 326). At the same time, the Union received substantial material help for its missionary work from foreign organisations. Lots of aid came, especially from an organisation called *Friedenstimme*, which was formed in 1978 by Baptists who were ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union and who managed to emigrate to Germany, the Netherlands and some other Western countries in the 1970s (*Vestnik* 2011[4]: 38).¹⁶ These foreigners admire those who are engaged in missionary activity "at the ends of the earth", especially in the North. A representative from *Friedenstimme* recently declared in *Herald of Truth* that the mission field opening up in the Russian North has special importance for them: "It is delightful that God's Word spreads further and further to the North. This is why Jesus Christ's command on preaching the Gospel remains the most important task of the mission today." (*Vestnik* 2011[4]: 39) Foreign donors are sometimes taken to indigenous converts in order to show where their funds have been spent.¹⁷

NATIONS AS UNITS OF SALVATION

Relying on the classifications authored by the administrators and ethnographers, Baptists have turned the small nations into collectibles. Among others, Pavel has become an enthusiastic collector of unevangelised indigenous peoples. I heard Pavel talking of the need of saving the Nenets people, the Khanty people, the Komi people. He told me in a conversation:

In fact, what is going on here, is not our influence but the influence of the Holy Spirit. This has to be understood. Only the people who do not understand this process may claim that this is our influence. [...] The Bible says, in front of God people from all nations, tribes and languages will stand. This means the Nenets, the Khanty, the Komi [...].

From the pulpit, Baptists often expressed their joy that in their brotherhood there were over fifty nationalities from all over the ex-Soviet Union, which allowed them to call their union proudly a “multinational family” or “multinational brotherhood” (*Vestnik* 1997[1–2]: 21; 50 let... 2011). They were perfectly aware that they would be able to save but individual souls here and there, and yet converting even one member from any ethnic group added a new ‘nation’ to the list. In the IUCECB, there is a special category of evangelists (*благовестники*) surveyed by the Department of Evangelism.¹⁸ Young families are sent to particular locations with the aim of converting local people. Nikolai Antonyuk, Kryuchkov’s successor as the leader of the Union, has described the recent successes in the mission field as follows:

In the current period more than 450 families of our brotherhood work in the mission field. If one put stars on the map for all the towns and villages where our missionaries live, an interesting picture would appear – there are workers like stars in the sky. Leaving cosy flats, houses with all conveniences, they preach the Gospel in difficult conditions. Our task is to have more evangelists and to print more literature. (*Vestnik* 2009[6]: 9)

The Union runs a department of statistics, which counts all the church members, ministers, baptisms, locations of churches, tons of papers used for printing devotional literature, kilometres on mission journeys and so on. At each congress new numbers are made public, reflecting the expansion of the brotherhood. As the Union leaders explain, there are two ways in which God’s people (*Божий народ*) multiply. The first is giving birth to more children and the other is winning new converts. By referring to the prohibition of birth control, Antonyuk announced at a congress that more children had been born in recent years as a result of “spiritual education of the parents who had been enlightened on the matter of family planning” (*Vestnik* 2009[6]: 8). The second is evangelisation. The Union has set as its aim the task of evangelising all nations, referring to passages from the New Testament (Matthew 24:14; 28:19; Mark 13:10, Luke 24:47; see also *Vestnik* 2000[1]: 4). The idea that the Christian message is universal and should be shared with everyone and each nation leads to a concept of total coverage. In reality, evangelisation is largely limited to the ex-Soviet Union.¹⁹ As in the Roman times, “all nations” seem to live in “the known world”. In other words, evangelising all ethnic groups living in the ex-Soviet Union alone, and especially on its margins, is likely to shift the balance and remove the last obstacles to the great final events.

Saint Paul offers an important example for the Russian missionaries (Pavel included, as we shall see further below). French philosopher Alain Badiou has described the apostle Paul as the first true universalist who dreamed of accomplishing his mission at the extreme edge of the empire:

If his vision of things fervently embraces the dimension of the world and extends to the extreme limits of the empire (his dearest wish is to go to Spain, as if he, the Oriental, could only accomplish his mission at the extreme edge of the Occident), it is because urban cosmopolitanism and lengthy voyages have shaped its amplitude. (Badiou 2003: 21)

A similar logic can be seen in Antonyuk's speech at the Union's Congress in 2009, where he gave a special importance to the missionary work "at the ends of the earth":

It has always been a spiritual concern for the brotherhood to bring the news about Christ even to the ends of the earth. Many small peoples of our country did not have the Gospel in their own language; some of them did not have any idea who was Jesus Christ. During a meeting of the Council of the Churches [the governing body of the Union], brothers from Siberia gave a list of the peoples living in the North and the brotherhood prayed for their awakening. (*Vestnik* 2009[6]: 9)

With the arrival of the freedom of evangelism, the question of who exactly were the peoples they should bring the good news to emerged. As a Union member from the Tyumen region writes:

Twenty years ago, ministers in Siberia, awakened by God, zealously evangelised among the Northern peoples, who had not yet heard of Christ. First they learned the number of the small peoples (*народностей*) living at the ends of the earth. There turned out to be thirty-one of them. They instructed every church in our [Siberian] association to pray with concentration for one particular nation (*национальности*). (*Vestnik* 2010[3]: 27)

This number, "31", has been repeated here and there years later (*Vestnik* 2009[6]: 26; 2011[6]: 59). By the end of the Soviet period, there were officially 26 "small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East" enjoying certain legal privileges. This number of ethnic groups has since increased to forty in the 2000s. An anthropological truism is that these categories are never unambiguous. For instance, if one takes the 'Nenets', they are grouped together as 'a nation' without delving into the problem of blurred borders between various ethnolinguistic groups like the Tundra Nenets, the Forest Nenets, and the Komi-speaking Nenets. For the Baptists, who have a duty to evangelise "to all nations" (*всем народам*), the Nenets are as natural, unquestioned and objective a category as Jews or Philistines. Unwittingly, the Baptists have relied on the Russian ethnographic practice of delineating what an ethnic group is. The nation is thus as literal a unit as the kilometre or the number of copies of the Bible handed out.

This ideology is materialised in a recent calendar produced by the Union, under the title "Gospel to the ends of the earth" (*Евангелие до края земли*), there is a list that includes place names like Chukotka, Naryan-Mar, Magadan, Kamchatka, the Yamal Peninsula, and the Taimyr Peninsula (*50 let* 2011). Each region or settlement has a number of churches and groups next to it. On the same page, the names of the ethnic groups

who live “at the ends of the earth” and among whom church members exist are listed: the Nenets, Khanty, Komi, Zyryan,²⁰ Selkup, Yazidi,²¹ Chukchi, Eskimo, Koryak, Aleut, Kamchadal, Yukaghir, Evenk, Enets, Nganasan, Dolgan. There are ordained pastors among some of these peoples, like the Chukchi, Khanty, and Nenets (see also *Vestnik* 2004[4]: 12; 2011[6]: 4). In addition, some indigenous church members work with Russian evangelists or have begun evangelising on their own. As a result, the outlook of congregations has considerably changed, compared to the Soviet period when believers of Slavic origin dominated. This is, for example, so in Pavel’s home church in Vorkuta, where sometimes more Nenets members attend a service than Russians, Ukrainians or other non-indigenous individuals.²²

THE CONQUEST OF THE ENDS

I would argue that the Baptist missionaries’ trajectories of movement follow the logic of the conquest of the ends. In his all-terrain vehicle, Pavel made trips to the shore of the Arctic Ocean, Vaigach Island, to the northern parts of the Yamal and Gydan Peninsulas. Instead of preaching door-to-door in the cities or going southwards, he and other missionaries from Nadym, Seyakha, and Novyi Port seemed to prefer travelling as far north as possible. In other regions, the same logic seems to work. Missionaries to Chukotka who visited a coastal village said emotionally: “For the first time we saw this amazing area – the ends of the earth!” (*Vestnik* 1998[1]: 35) Or, as a Baptist author has put it eloquently, once again stressing the eschatological consequences of their work on the margins:

On the pages of our journal there is more often news about the expansion of God’s Kingdom in the distant places of the North and Far East. One’s soul rejoices that God’s salvation is audaciously preached “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Is not this phase of blessed work of evangelisation coming to an end? Today our evangelists carry out baptisms in the cold waters of the Barents and Okhotsk Seas. The inspired faces of those who have placed their faith in Christ are illuminated by astoundingly beautiful northern lights in Chukotka. In faraway Kamchatka, one can hear a holy oath of loyalty to God above the waves of the majestic Pacific Ocean. All this is proof that we are close to the hour when Christ’s true word will be fulfilled, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come”, Matthew 24:14. (*Vestnik* 1997[3]: 26)

It is noteworthy that on their trips to the periphery some evangelists preferred evangelising to members of indigenous communities rather than to newcomers (*Vestnik* 1998[1]: 34). One of the reasons for cherry-picking the indigenous individuals for evangelisation is given by an evangelist in Chukotka when answering a local official’s question about whom they preach the Gospel to: “Mainly to the Chukchi who, exhausted of sinning, listen to us. The Russians consider themselves Orthodox and think they do not need reminding about God.” (*Vestnik* 1999[3]: 41)

Pavel’s Nenets guide and interpreter Ivan, who is well rehearsed in the new apocalyptic geography as well as in the new sense of time, told me that “at the edge of the

world" there would be at least one family everywhere witnessing in the end times. In order to stress the dimension of imminence, he said that there was *already* one "believing" nomadic family whose summer pastures were at the very end of the Yamal Peninsula, "which is the ends of the earth". In Nenets, Yamal (*ya mal*) means 'land's end'. It was as if God had made his imprint in non-Christians' language to prepare them for his eschatological plans. For the regional Baptists, Yamal has become a rhetorical favourite in their writings and sermons (*Vestnik* 1998[1]: 30). For instance, a Russian Baptist evangelist who is based in the village called Seyakha in Yamal demonstrates the significance of his mission area by playing with the notions of the beginning and the end:

Yamal means in Nenets 'the ends of the earth' (*край земли*). Those who live here usually say that this area (*край*) is forgotten by God and people. However from which side to look? The North may turn out to be not the end of the earth but its beginning... If one may be wrong about it, then in the regard to those who are saved, to whom the Gospel has been preached, God's Word says clearly: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Matthew 19:30). The prophet Jeremiah mentions that "the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (16:19). (*Vestnik* 2008[1]: 18)

When visiting the Yamal peninsula for the first time, Pavel was overwhelmed by the expanses and the number of reindeer herding Nenets families who "have not been evangelised". He complained that "brothers" on two motor sledges had managed to do little in these vast areas. Assisted by the modern cartographic visualisation of the world's edges as well as by a global positioning system gadget, Pavel expresses readiness to take on the whole area:

After that we shall pray "Thy kingdom come!"²³ or "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"²⁴ But what have we done to bring closer the fulfilment of Christ's words "shall be preached to the ends of the earth and to all nations", Matthew 24:14.²⁵ Obviously, God expects our participation in this work and not only in Yamal. This trip in spring opened our eyes about the geography of evangelism among the Northern peoples. God holds the doors of preaching open, and the city of Vorkuta and the local church serve as an excellent base for this work.

This kind of zeal possibly creates troubling feelings among some, as one meets two different tonalities around the notion of eschatological imminence among the Baptists. Most often the harangue addressed to the non-believers is that the apocalypse is a threat, a cause for concern for the unsaved. This is why more missionaries have to be sent out in order to save as many souls as possible before God decides to put an end to the current form of human existence. At the same time, this imminence is rhetorically anticipated and desired. The argument seems to follow the logic that when the evangelisation work is fulfilled, then Jesus will make a decision and come to punish the sinners and save the saints. By praying for the coming Kingdom, Pavel sees himself as speeding up the whole process, hastening the Second Coming of Christ.

Zolotukhin, a senior Baptist, discusses the same topic in *Herald of Truth*. Like his fellow literalists, he takes out chunks of text from the original context and uses them selectively. Zolotukhin writes:

How to protect the holy unity, while spreading Christ's tents of love with blessings to the ends of the earth, thus bringing closer the glorious day of meeting with the Lord who loves us? The prophet Isaiah, who announces in God's name about the coming events, said: "And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth..." (5:26). Put in the context with other verses, Isaiah's words concern Israel [...]. But at the same time, for God's children of the New Testament in this separate verse has a deep meaning. Did not the Lord today open a beautiful (and the last?) opportunity to lift up an ensign not of Doom but of mercy and forgiveness in Jesus Christ for the nations from far, who live at the ends of the earth, for the abandoned, drinking and lost nations? We know that God opened doors for preaching the Gospel in this immense territory, where we happen to live because of the prayers of the saints who, having a little strength, kept the word of patience and did not deny the name of Jesus Christ in difficult times (Revelation 3:8, 10). This is why those, who have maintained faithfulness, must evangelise and convince the converts to cleave unto the Lord with sincere hearts. (*Vestnik* 1999[3]: 8)

Zolotukhin implies that the church cannot be passive but needs to do whatever it can to speed up the whole process because the church members are God's militants.²⁶ The motif of hastening exists in other texts as well. For instance, during the schism in 1963, Kryuchkov and Shalashov expressed the idea that God would finish the work of purification inside the church, adding that "we can hasten this victory with the unity of our actions [...]" (Kryuchkov 2008: 96). The similar idea of speeding up the flow of time with the purpose of moving closer to the final destination in time and space can be found in Pavel's mission reports.

This haste has a sociological reality. Whenever I met missionaries in the tundra, they seemed to be always in a rush, usually not staying longer than a half a day in one tent in order to talk and not so much to listen. Pavel's own accounts of mission trips also reveal the quality of hurrying across the tundra, overcoming constant obstacles on the way. Often they are less accounts of witnessing and conversion (which tend to be short and standardised), and instead are long descriptions of perilous situations on the road, including mechanical problems with their all-terrain vehicle, and threats from administrators and border guards.²⁷

THE ENEMY ON THE EDGE

In the perceptions of the Russian Baptist missionaries (as well as of Russian Pentecostals, see Vallikivi 2011), the margins are challenging, not only because they are difficult to access, but also because these are full of evil forces and devil worshippers. The world's edge is a battlefield between the Enemy (*spaz*) and God. A common motif I heard was that Satan and the world with him were trying to hinder those who were fulfilling Jesus' command of mission.

During a conversation at his home kitchen table in 2007, Pavel gave me an example of how evil forces tried to hold the true church back from doing their "saving work".²⁸ He said that recently the authorities had restricted missionaries' access to the border zone in a cunning way, which was by enlarging it from five to twenty kilometres. Pavel

claimed that this was done with the purpose of stopping God's children doing their work. Most Nenets summer camps remained in the enlarged border zone. Anyway, it was difficult to get permission to enter the restricted area with the motive of spreading the Gospel. Despite this, they continued the evangelisation trips to the shore, ignoring the danger of being caught by the border guards.²⁹

It turned out to be not only a bureaucratic matter, but a part of the decisive cosmological fight, as the devil was making obstacles for the preachers to reach the literal end of the earth. As Pavel told me in 2007, the state made every effort to complicate their mission work:

In these days, many have become interested in the Nenets as God's people. This is not without reason. We are currently heading towards the times we have had earlier – persecutions. The interest is abnormally large. Last year there were attempts to write down all the Nenets. All believers. Have you heard of that? This was done because they wanted to control God's new people. Where were they before [conversion]? Earlier nobody was interested in them. They lived without passports, without being registered. But now they are being registered.

Although the census Pavel referred to was an economic survey, according to him this was a mere smokescreen, as every kind of registration was just another cunning way of the world, i.e. Satan, to attempt to control God's children. In Pavel's and others reports, one learns that the devil is particularly active on the margins.

There is another reason why Siberia, the North and the Far East are symbolically important: specifically, because many older members of the "persecuted church" (*гонимая церковь*) were prisoners of faith in these distant places. Vorkuta, where Pavel's church is located, has a notorious Gulag history and has thus a special place in the imagination of the Unregistered Baptists. Still today many consider this a symbol of the suffering of God's people. One of the songs I heard frequently sung both by Russian and Nenets congregants was a hymn called *Infertile land, uninhabited expanses* composed in the Soviet period around the motif of prisoners of faith in Vorkuta.³⁰ The lyrics portray the area rather counter-intuitively to the indigenous sensibilities as "Harsh region you, the North [...] Your harsh polar elements, and the dead tundra, wild taiga. Let the whole country, vast Russia, hear the news from Christ's witnesses" (*Pesn'* 2004). In this song, Vorkuta is the place where "holy seeds" start growing and where "the soldiers of Christ" become free and "take the banner of the truth to the nations". The journal of the Union refers to the prophetic hymn: "Today with joy we can witness these words come true. The indigenous inhabitants of the Far North turn to God." (*Vestnik* 1995[3–4]: 30)³¹

Without doubt, the North occupies an important site of imagination in Russian Baptist cosmology-in-the-making. During fieldwork, I was able to observe how this cosmology was made and remade. I heard about various signs of the end here and there. Some of them, I was told, were visible and recognisable for the chosen but not for outsiders. I shall give one example. While staying in a reindeer herding camp, on a darkening afternoon in December, I admired a vista of the sky with an intense patch of light above the cloudy horizon, and even took a photo of it. The next day Pavel arrived on the church vehicle from Vorkuta. A young Russian missionary called Zhenya from Karelia accompanied him. They had seen the same vista while on their way to the herders' camp, but their interpretation, unlike mine, was not aesthetic but eschatological.

Immediately after arriving, Zhenya asked my host, a recent Nenets convert, whether he had seen the unusual light in the sky the day before. The Nenets, who must have been used to similar polar vistas, confirmed – although not too eagerly – that he had seen “something unusual”. Zhenya explained that this was a sign of the approaching Second Coming. He argued that the North was an especially good place to witness it, referring to Job (37:22): “Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.” Not only did the Bible require literal reading but geographic features and atmospheric phenomena could also be read word by word, without doubt, requiring lots of creativity.

The missionary Zhenya then moved from this reference to a related topic saying that other signs existed, like Satan marking people through various forms of registration, using his number 666 and gathering them through the Internet. He said: “As it is written, before the end Satan gathers people together. This has happened via the Internet.” In the imagination of the Unregistered Baptists, the world is like a huge litmus paper. It suffices to look around and see that the world as well as the majority of self-proclaimed Christians have reached a level of moral degradation characteristic of the end times (*Vestnik* 2004[5]: 8–11). The Baptist ‘history of the future’ is based on reading the Book of Revelations, which, as everyone admits, is difficult reading. The more knowledgeable ones, like Kryuchkov, presented the present time as “the period of the Laodicean church”, being the last among seven periods and known for its wealth and corruption (*Tserkov* 2008: 57, 166; see also Bourdeaux 1968: 34). Like other “everyday millenarians”, as Joel Robbins characterises this kind of Christian (2001), the signs of the end are seen everywhere, even if people have different ideas about the imminence of the arrival of Christ. At the same time, for those who evangelise in the North, the area is a source of great excitement.

THE END CHRONOTOPE

The Baptists’ way of writing and speaking of the end invites a dialogue with Mikhail Bakhtin’s well-known concept of chronotope in his analysis of literature. With chronotope (literally ‘time-space’) Bakhtin marks the inseparability of space and time when he writes:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. (Bakhtin 1981: 84)

Chronotope functions “as the primary means for materialising time in space” and “as a force giving body to the entire novel” (*ibid.*: 250).

Bakhtin has given detailed accounts of three novelistic chronotopes: (1) the Greek romance, (2) Apuleius and Petronius, or adventure novel of everyday life, and (3) ancient biography and autobiography (1981: 86–146). In the first type, “things occur simultaneously by chance” and a human being “is deprived of any initiative” (*ibid.*: 105, 152). The second type centres around “the motifs of *transformation* and *identity*” which shows “*how an individual becomes other than what he was*” (*ibid.*: 112, 115).³² The third type depicts someone’s whole life, for instance, a life of a seeker.³³

In Russian Baptists' writings we can meet elements from all of these three types. In their conversion stories the elements of the "adventure novel of everyday life" can be found with a stress on crisis and rebirth. In addition, in Baptists' published biographies the third type is present (for example, Boyko 2006; *Podrazhayte* 2001). In the mission reports that are under focus here, Greek romance offers the closest parallels. Bakhtin describes how in the latter "'Fate' runs the game" and the human being "endures the game fate plays" while his identity remains "unchanged" (1981: 105). Like a hero from a Greek romance, Pavel himself remains unchanged in his reports. For a saved person any radical change would be of catastrophic consequence. Pavel's reports contain a sequence of changes in spatial locations, which can be described as human movement that is full of ordeals. He is moved around by God, as it appears in his reports:

People from other tents came; there were questions and answers. We understood clearly that we were taken here by God, to fulfil His Word [...].

or

[...] we were ready for the departure but the snow storm gets stronger and we have to stay and not in vain: God knows what He does and with what purpose. We spend a whole day in one tent having an evangelical conversation, praying, and the souls open up one by one to God.

Ultimately, God decides the pace of evangelisation as well as what happens to the missionaries and whether their work is fruitful or not. This 'adventure-time' is filled with clear-cut events, often challenging ordeals and surprising encounters. Pavel endures moments of hardship and joy as well as other unexpected moments. Many of these happen on the road, which is one of the most dynamic chronotopes of all (on the road chronotope see Bakhtin 1981: 98, 243–5).

Let me give an example of a Baptist road chronotope. Depicting a mission trip on the all-terrain vehicle, in April 2003, to the Ural Mountains, Pavel gives a long and dramatic description of a near-fatal car accident in a snow storm when driving back towards Vor-kuta through treacherous ravines. A Nenets guide, his head out of the vehicle's hatch, suddenly shouts to stop. The itinerants find themselves at the edge of a deep precipice, one wheel of the vehicle in the air beyond the snow cornice. Pavel writes: "Brother Viktor sat pushing against the break and clutch, and waited. We waited for God's participation and acted internally, praying." A detailed description follows of how they attached a rope for six people to hold the car back and how Pavel managed to put the car into reverse. "We began praying: 'Jesus' – my body shivered and tears began to choke – 'help us' [...] The car started moving away from the horrible boundary. This means that we shall still live and work for Him." After a while they stopped, prayed ardently, thanking God. Pavel then points out that this is a miracle: "How could the cracking snow cornice hold a three ton all-terrain vehicle and not break off? His hand is not so shortened that it cannot save."³⁴ There are plentiful emotional descriptions in Pavel's and others' reports in which events that are sudden and miracles happen, not unlike the way in which divine interventions take place in Greek romances (Bakhtin 1981: 93).

While the Greek romance portrays (in Bakhtin's view) its heroes as people who lack initiative and to whom things happen, the Russian Baptists' concept of human and divine agency is more complex. A background assumption is that people make

their own choices, exercising their free will, while, at the same time, God guides all the actions of a believing person and creates conditions for these actions. This old problem of human free will and God's omnipotence is never resolved in the Baptists' texts but is presented as two-fold. The usual sequence in a narrative is that somebody had achieved something, which is then followed by praise to God who is deemed to be the true author of the achievement. All this gives the missionaries' texts a specific triumphalist tone.

Characteristically, the border between human and divine agency keeps shifting in the Baptists' texts. Although the mission reports invoke images of commitment and toughness, Pavel and others never forget to attribute the true source of efficient agency to God. The description of Pavel's heroic deeds are very often interwoven with phrases that displace his own agency. Pavel knows that his own actions take on power only then when he prays to God: "At every stop we thank God and pray". Pavel also sees his own success as depending on church members' prayers to warrant the presence of the deity during his trips, or, as he declares, without these prayers his mission trips cannot be successful. The mission reports are thus not mere descriptions of events but performatives addressed both to humans and to the divine.

I would suggest that evangelising among pagans at the edge of the world is individually and collectively empowering for all the church members, and in particular the missionaries. The missionaries imagine themselves to be the church on earth with a "high mission" duty to fulfil Jesus's command of evangelisation in the end times (*Vestnik* 2000[1]: 22); they feel that they have to act "in defence and confirmation of the true evangelisation (*истинное благовествование*), as in his own time the Apostle Paul did (Philippians 1:7)" (*Vestnik* 1996[1]: 31). Pavel presents his entire life as part of a grand narrative that defines his fate as well as that of the humanity. Referring immodestly to his fearlessness in his conquest of faraway places full of evil forces and possessed people, Pavel implicitly frames himself as an apostle working at the end of time. For instance, he considers the Apostle Paul as the most important example for his own missionary activity. In one of his reports, he writes: "While on the move, I am thinking about Paul's service and his missionary trips". Undoubtedly, Pavel considers the Apostle Paul as the most important example for his own missionary activity.

The obvious meeting point of human and divine agency is through the Holy Spirit who indwells a born-again person. As a Baptist commentator has described it: "Without the Holy Spirit, any testimony is fruitless and all the efforts are in vain. When God acts in us, He gives necessary words and teaches what to say and how to speak." (*Vestnik* 1991[2]: 3) Pavel explained to me that he saw evangelical work as similar to Jesus' and the apostles' work, which is to sow the field with good seeds (words) and wait for what will happen. He explained: "It is not us who put pressure on a person. We wait for what God does inside the person's heart. Our job is to sow the field with seeds. But how they grow, we do not know. We only know that they grow as potatoes or wheat grow." Because of his success, Pavel is seen in the Union as a chosen person who is full of the Holy Spirit.

Only those missionaries who are filled with the Holy Spirit are able to convert people, as Kryuchkov stresses in his sermon on evangelisation from 1993. Not all of them are, writes Kryuchkov (2008: 315). He explains how the Holy Spirit works in a situation of evangelism with saints and sinners:

But when God acts through us, our speech is empowered and is confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who hear. This is why all those working in spreading evangelical news have to pray for those whom their words are addressed to, for the Holy Spirit could soften their hearts and make them receptive to God's truth. And then our witnessing of Christ does not remain fruitless, but bears lots of fruit to glorify God who has redeemed us. (*Vestnik* 1991[2]: 3)

In a similar vein, Zolotukhin invites the evangelists in *Herald of Truth* to purify themselves:

Many evangelists of our brotherhood have witnessed that before preaching God's truth to the lost sinners, they submitted themselves to God by freeing themselves from any hindering sin and only after full sanctification God used them for this glorious and great service even to the ends of the earth. (*Vestnik* 1995[1]: 41)

In his written and oral texts, Pavel presents himself as a tool who is fully aware of his own instrumentality making history on the edge of space and time with and for God. He has chosen to be at the ends of the earth, which also means that his choice was actually God's choice. This entwined concept of agency and instrumentality is a key quality in the Baptists' narratives, which, in a sense, creates productive tension through discursive oscillation: there is a constant moving back and forth between the sources of agency and authority.

Although reaching any part of the ends of the earth would be significant in missionary discourse, it is even more so in parts where Jesus is not yet known and where the missionaries can feel themselves to be pioneers in uncharted lands.³⁵ Pavel follows a geography of the apocalypse, which entails not only space but also time: only after the Gospel reaches the margins of the world will the second coming of the messiah be made possible. Thus, in the evangelical logic, space and time become at times interchangeable, as is presented in Pavel's phrase "ten metres" (as quoted at the beginning), entailing a reference to the imminent end of the world. One could say that metres here are not units of length but units of time. His narrative follows the concept of time, which is linear moving from the beginning to the end times, and the concept of space, which is totalising.

There are different stimuli for the missionaries to go on demanding trips in the Arctic ignoring threats by border guards, administrators, aggressive locals and the Arctic elements. This can be a sense of calling, adventure, exoticism, heroism or the ability to master technology. However, unlike for other travellers (for example, anthropologists), these elements are submitted to the end chronotope. By using Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, we can better conceptualise the evangelicals' motivation to travel to remote places in the imagined premillennial times and thus be part of a powerful narrative. Being convinced that they should not wait too long for the Second Coming of Christ, the missionaries act with the conviction that evangelist zeal at the periphery will guarantee their own and locals' salvation, at the same time speeding up the arrival of the apocalypse, which is expected with a certain trepidation.

CONCLUSION

Recently, there has been some discussions about how much the logic of Christianity and how much missionaries' own cultural setting is at play in the mission encounter and conversion (for example, Robbins 2007). The Russian Unregistered Baptists present a conservative kind of evangelism in which the biblical teachings of Christianity and their literalist interpretations are pivotal. At the same time, one could argue that these Russian Baptists hold and develop a particular interpretation tradition, which is unavoidably parochial. Furthermore, it is shaped by the historical experience of living in the Soviet Union under considerable pressure.

I have suggested above that Russian Baptists' literalism has taken them to remote places. At the same time, they have taken their literalist practices with them, indoctrinating local indigenous people in this very mode. Literalism might have important consequences for a community of Christians that desires to remain unified. The unity seems to require some kind of institutional control, for instance, through supervisions, visitations, and ordinations. In remote places, with somewhat weaker control from the outside, literalism might be a solution, or as Webb Keane has put it: "Literalism could become one way of controlling biblical interpretation in the absence of other institutional controls" (Keane 2007: 63).

Control through texts has not been important only for Protestants but also for non-religious groups in Russia. In the rest of the paper, I would like to draw out briefly a few parallels between two ideological projects aimed at the conquest of the extremes that have taken place during the last hundred years in the Russian Arctic. Despite considerable differences in the techniques and contents of the teachings as well as in the use of repressive force, it is possible to find various similarities between evangelical Christian and Soviet Communist ideologies and narratives. Both share the idea of conquering the world through societal and individual revolutions, entailing an implicit attempt at the mastery of time in its linear logic. Similarly to the evangelical missionaries, so the socialist state wished to conquer untapped areas and transform people living there into believers in their ideology. As these projects aim at totality, the conquest of the edge has a crucial role.³⁶

The Soviet modernist project hoped to create a unified speech and textual community. And even those who lived on the margins had to become part of it. With this objective in mind, the early Soviets invested a great deal in the basic and ideological education of the northern natives, including the famous Liquidation of Illiteracy (*ликбез*) programme. The Soviet state's priority in the Arctic was thus not only to give a boost to the economic and military development of the Arctic, but also to Sovietise the northern indigenous groups (Slezkine 1994; McCannon 2007: 395). On the one hand, explorers sent to discover uncharted territories in the Arctic was a frequent topic in Stalinist propaganda.³⁷ On the other hand, 'cultural workers', or as Vladimir Bogoraz (1925: 48) christened them, "the missionaries of the new culture and of Soviet statehood" were sent to indigenous communities to 'enlighten' them (see also Leete, Vallikivi 2011a; 2011b). After Stalin's death, many ordinary people went to the North voluntarily in search of "the romance of the frontier" (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003: 20) and to earn a good salary in industrial hubs. Some of them had contact with the indigenous population, for instance, working as party agitators and moving between state reindeer herding units in order

to spread communist teachings. Over the years, the Soviet project of the mastery of the Arctic was above all economic, although to certain extent also moral, as it had to serve the overall aim of speeding up the arrival of Communism.³⁸

Both the Communists and Unregistered Baptists share utopianistic concerns by preaching a bright future to its adherents, modelled through the concept of the rupture on the axis of the past and future. They read the present through the utopian future and operate on an assumption of speeding up the pace of cosmic promises, being involved in conquering space to its ends. Nevertheless, there is an internal paradox between change and non-change. When analysing the socialist temporality of the Stalinist period, Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov (2006: 359), referring to Boris Groys and some others, has argued that socialist acceleration of time and frantic rushing on the surface actually froze time. A similar tension, although somewhat inverted, can be found among the evangelicals. The Russian Baptists preach a complete change to outsiders while claiming that true Christians are not entangled with the changing world. Pavel argued that their church would always remain the same, “early apostolic” by its nature. At the same time, in the post-Soviet period they have visibly struggled to maintain their identity, which is based primarily on martyrdom experience from the Soviet period. Heroic and self-denying missionisation in the North seems to give an opportunity to uphold a sustainable particularist identity.

The indigenous peoples in the North have seen different kinds of ideologist come and go (Russian Orthodox, Communist, Evangelical), driven by various agendas, some of them violent, others not. What is significant though, on an ideological plane, is that they have been similar in their search for productive edges, constructing ‘remote’ time-spaces, all these being woven into a major narrative in which the past and present are heroic and the future will be joyful.

NOTES

1 Mission reports are written for circulation in the church as well as for foreign donors.

2 Forty years ago, Thomas Beidelman observed that “Missionary studies are among the most neglected of a wide area of potential colonial research” (1974: 248). Or, as Judith Shapiro has noted, “Often, when anthropologists discussed missionaries at all, they treated them as part of the setting, much like rainfall and elevation: matters one felt obliged to mention, but peripheral to the real object of social anthropological description and analysis” (1981: 130). Among those who raised the topic of missionaries in anthropology were many committed Christians. Some of them have explicitly sided with the Christian evangelist agenda (for example, Burrige 1991; see also Tonkinson 2007).

3 The topic of missionaries and conversion in Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union has recently gained some attention, especially because of the influx of foreign missionaries in the 1990s (for example, Wanner 2004; 2007; Rogers 2005; Pelkmans 2007; 2009; Wiget, Balalaeva 2007; Steinberg, Wanner 2008; Vaté 2009; Leete, Koosa 2012; Plattet et al. forthcoming).

4 I have carried out a year-long fieldwork trip in 2006 and 2007 as well as made five shorter fieldwork visits to the Nenets tundra between 1999 and 2012.

5 I have analysed elsewhere some of the reasons why these Nenets nomads have chosen to become evangelical Christians and also touched upon communicative aspects of mission encounter (Vallikivi 2009; 2011). In this paper, I am not focussing on the Nenets’ ideas and practices

related to the evangelisation process. Nor do I discuss missionary representations of the indigenous peoples. These are the topics I hope to develop elsewhere.

6 Before the 19th century, only a few Protestants took interest in systematic evangelisation in faraway places. If we look at the Arctic in the 18th century, for instance, the Moravian Pietists engaged with evangelism among the Inuit in Greenland; in addition, Lutheran missionaries evangelised among the Saami in Lapland at that time. Non-Protestants were active as well, although their methods were less concerned with indoctrination and more with the re-identification of the local population as Christian. The Russian Orthodox Church carried out mass baptisms in the early 18th century across Siberia by command of Peter I. To the east of the Urals, most of the Nenets remained pagans, while the Orthodox Church managed to baptise the majority of the Nenets living west of the Urals in the 1820s (Vallikivi 2003).

7 Depending on the area, local indigenous people meet non-indigenous people working in the extraction industry (for example, oil and gas). Sometimes Russian traders (*коммерсанты*), who barter necessities for reindeer velvet antlers, travel to faraway camps, as this business is lucrative enough to cover high transportation costs.

8 Nomadism has always been a challenge for the administrators in the North. Between the 1930s and the 1960s, there were mobile units of culture workers (so-called 'red tents', *красные чумы*) whose task was to educate nomads in politics, culture, welfare and hygiene according to the Soviet ideological norms (Slezkine 1994; Toulouze 2011). In the post-Soviet period, there have been a few similar projects. Among those Nenets of whom the first families converted to Baptism, every summer from 1997 until 2007, for a month or two, four Nenets teachers from Naryan-Mar taught adults and children in the tundra. The Baptist missionaries had ambivalent feelings towards the project: on the one hand, literacy was regarded as useful, as this allowed people to read the scriptures; on the other hand, the Baptists denounced the Nenets teachers who tried to convince reindeer herders that the Christian missionaries were destroying their 'culture'.

9 This is the official name for the Unregistered Baptists, also known as Initiativniki or Reformed Baptists. In 2001 'International' was added in front of the name of the Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian-Baptists (IUCECB). The acronym UCECB refers to the pre-2001 period in the text.

10 Before the 1990s, there has been only a short period of relative freedom for evangelisation in the early 1920s (Coleman 2005).

11 According to the Union's official statistics, there has been a considerable growth in adult church members – 40 473 in 1991 compared to 68 670 in 2009, (*Vestnik* 2009[6]: 7; *50 let* 2011). This number also includes members not only in Russia but also in other countries of the ex-Soviet Union as well as the members of around forty churches in the US and Canada (*Vestnik* 2009 [6]: 7). The latter are mainly made up of the Russian-speaking diaspora. In addition to the adult members, there are around forty thousand children in the Baptists' families.

12 Within the reference, the number in square brackets refers to the number of the issue of *Vestnik Istiny* (*Herald of Truth*).

13 Russia's special role in world Christianity has been propagated by the Russian Orthodox Church as well. It states that, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Moscow (or Russia) became the "Third Rome" and thus the centre of true Christianity.

14 Like many in Russia, the elite of the Union, in some of their announcements, seems to have difficulties accepting the political reality of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which created new borders. Still recently they called areas of the ex-Soviet Union "our country" (*Vestnik* 1997[1]: 21; *Vestnik* 2009[6]: 26).

15 The last sentence is a paraphrase from Psalm 90:15 (or 89:15): "Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil."

16 There are several other foreign mission organisations that support missionary work among the Northern indigenous groups in Russia, for example, Missionswerk Friedensbote (<http://>

www.verlag-friedensbote.de/) and Hoffnungsträger Ost (<http://www.hoffnungstrager-ost.de/>). In addition, the Registered Baptists are involved in the missionisation of the North. For instance, in 2011, they organised a mission campaign called “Gospel to the Northern peoples” (<http://baptist.org.ru/>, accessed May 16, 2014).

17 In Pavel’s reports, one can find detailed information on the cost of fuel, spare parts and similar. In a report from the year 2000, apparently addressed to German donors, he writes: “The cost of refuelling is 50 Deutschmarks”.

18 In 2009, there were 1883 ordained ministers, including 841 presbyters, 321 evangelists, 8 teachers, 713 deacons (*Vestnik* 2009[6]: 8).

19 I have not heard or read of any plans for missionising outside the areas where they have regional associations (America, Belarus, Caucasus, Central Asia, Kharkiv, Kiev, Kursk-Ryazan, Moldova, Moscow-Volga, the North, Odessa, Rostov-Donetsk, Siberia, Ural, Western Ukraine). The American association (the only one outside the ex-Soviet Union) consisting of the émigré churches runs The Russian Evangelical Mission (based in San-Diego, California). There is only limited interest in what is going on among other Christians elsewhere in the world. Nevertheless, there have been rare calls for prayers for “God’s children” in China and elsewhere who are persecuted. The fact that some Christians are persecuted seems to prove their rightfulness (*Vestnik* 1997[4]: 37; 2009 [4–5]: 17, 65).

20 This an old name for the Komi.

21 This is not a Northern minority but a Kurdish subgroup.

22 When, in 2004, a Nenets was ordained as the first presbyter in the tundra, the label “Nenets church” was sometimes used (*Vestnik* 2005[5]: 20), even if Pavel assured me that no church was ethnic (Vallikivi forthcoming). The fact that there is a church among the Nenets is rhetorically used as proof of the end times: “God continues today with the miracles that began in the times of the apostles but this time already at the ends of the earth” (*Vestnik* 2007[2]: 14).

23 From Matthew 6:10 or Luke 11:2.

24 From Revelation 22:20.

25 Pavel is not always accurate with his quotations. Despite the strict standards of literalism, Baptists create new texts by moving chunks of discourse as in any process of folklorisation. The Bible itself contains systematic variations like any other folklore text, as Alan Dundes has demonstrated (1999).

26 The idea of speeding up Jesus’ return has popped up here and there in the history of the Christian mission (for example, Weaver, Brakke 2009: 166).

27 Indeed, there were a few ‘less qualified’ Russians who stayed for weeks with reindeer herders with the purpose of teaching Nenets converts to read and sing. Most of them were young women who were not allowed to carry out services because of their gender.

28 During the same conversation, Pavel pointed out that the previous year (2006) the Ministry of Justice had proposed to considerably restrict missionaries’ rights to preach the Gospel (see Dokument 2006). He said that God had stopped this development for the time being.

29 Some other missionaries have also reported their confrontations with border guards and local officials in the restricted border zones (for example, *Vestnik* 2002[4]: 28). Interestingly, a Nenets convert told me in 2012 that border guards had recently told them to report any suspicious movement in the area.

30 The author of the lyrics is Viktor Belykh, a Christian who was in a Gulag camp in Vorkuta. The song was already known in the 1960s. I have heard a shorter and longer version of this song.

31 Already in the first years of the schism, the Church in Vorkuta was described as proof that “the light of the Gospel spreads to the ends of the earth” (*Vestnik* 1965[2]: 3).

32 Here and below all Bakhtin’s emphases in italics are original (as translated by Emerson and Holquist).

33 The Bible entails texts written at the same time as some of the texts analysed by Bakhtin. I am not focussing here on possible genetic links between these but use Bakhtin's account as a heuristic tool that helps to demonstrate the role of different genres in the missionaries' texts.

34 The last sentence comes from Isaiah 59:1: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

35 Baptist missionaries argue that the Nenets are evangelised for the first time in history. When I asked what they would make of the Orthodox missions from the 18th to the early 20th century among the Nenets, Pavel was not aware of this and refuted this as not a true mission. The Russian Baptists regard the Russian Orthodox as not saved Christians and their missionary work thus as inefficient.

36 In the literature of the Stalin period, one can find depictions of how the Northern natives had reached paradise on earth lighted by the Party: "The poor Khanty understood everything and learned about everything. Many warm rays came to our taiga from Stalin-sun. And we all said to him: 'Dear Stalin, you were born by a kind mother, and you gave us happy days on the edge of a faraway land, in the virgin taiga.'" (Slezkine 1994: 298–299)

37 Georgiy Metelskiy (1959) has written a popular book titled *Yamal – kray zemli (Yamal – The Ends of the Earth)* where among other things he gives a survey of the conquest of the Yamal peninsula.

38 Literalist reading of the Marxist theory on developmental stages offers an interpretation that a 'primitive' Northerner in the Soviet Arctic bypassed entire developmental eras or stages like feudalism and capitalism and entered straight into socialism (Slezkine 1994: 319–323).

REFERENCES

- 50 let 2011 = 50 лет духовного пробуждения церкви ЕХБ, 1961–2011. [Москва: Издательство "Христианин" МСЦ ЕХБ], 2011.
- Anderson, Allan; Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, Cornelis van der Laan (eds.) 2010. *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Armstrong, Karen 2001. *The Battle for God. A History of Fundamentalism*. New York: Random House.
- Badiou, Alain 2003. *Saint Paul: The Foundation of the Universalism*. (Transl. by Ray Brassier.) Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Michael Holquist (ed.), Caryl Emerson, Michael Holquist (transl.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Barker, John 2007. Comment on Robbins. – *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 48, No. 1: 18–18.
- Beidelman, Thomas O. 1974. Social Theory and the Study of Christian Missions in Africa. – *Africa*. Vol. 44, No. 3: 235–249.
- Beidelman, Thomas O. 1982. *Colonial Evangelism. A Socio-Historical Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bialecki, Jon; Naomi Haynes, Joel Robbins 2008. The Anthropology of Christianity. – *Religion Compass*. Vol. 2, No. 6: 1139–1158.
- Bielo, James S. 2009. *Words upon the Word: An Ethnography of Evangelical Group Bible Study*. New York: New York University Press.
- Bielo, James S. 2011. Purity, Danger, and Redemption: Notes on Urban Missional Evangelicals. – *American Ethnologist*. Vol. 38, No. 2: 267–280.
- Bogoraz-Tan 1925 = Богораз-Тан, Владимир Германович. Подготовительные меры к организации малых народностей. – *Северная Азия*. 1925. № 3: 40–50.
- Bourdeaux, Michael 1968. *Religious Ferment in Russia: Protestant Opposition to Soviet Religious Policy*. London: Macmillan.

- Bourdeaux, Filatov 2003 = Бурдо, Майкл; Сергей Борисович Филатов (отв. ред.). *Современная религиозная жизнь России. Опыт систематического описания. Том II*. Москва: Логос, 2003.
- Boyko 2006 = Бойко, Николай Ерофеевич. *Верю в бессмертие. Автобиография*. Portland: Voice of Peace Christian Mission, 2006.
- Burridge, Kenelm O. L. 1978. Introduction: Missionary Occasions. – James A. Boutilier, Daniel T. Hughes, Sharon W. Tiffany (eds.). *Mission, Church and Sect in Oceania*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1–30.
- Burridge, Kenelm O. L. 1991. *In the Way: A Study of Christian Missionary Endeavours*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Clifford, James 1982. *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Coleman, Heather J. 2005. *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905–1929*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Coleman, Simon 2006. When Silence isn't Golden: Charismatic Speech and the Limits of Literalism. – Matthew Engelke, Matt Tomlinson (eds.). *The Limits of Meaning: Case Studies in the Anthropology of Christianity*. Oxford: Berghahn, 39–61.
- Comaroff, John; Jean Comaroff 1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Comaroff, Jean; John Comaroff 1997. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Crapanzano, Vincent 2000. *Serving the Word: Literalism in America from the Pulpit to the Bench*. New York: The New Press.
- Dokument 2006 = Документ. Проект Федерального Закона “О внесении изменений в некоторые федеральные законы в целях противодействия незаконной миссионерской деятельности”, 2006. http://www.sclj.ru/news/detail.php?SECTION_ID=143&ELEMENT_ID=1469 (accessed May 16, 2014).
- Douglas, Bronwen 2001. Encounters with the Enemy? Academic Readings of Missionary Narratives on Melanesians. – *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 43, No. 1: 37–64.
- Dundes, Alan 1999. *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Elisha, Omri 2011. *Moral Ambition: Mobilization and Social Outreach in Evangelical Megachurches*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fienup-Riordan, Ann 1991. *The Real People and the Children of Thunder: The Yup'ik Eskimo Encounter with Moravian Missionaries John and Edith Kilbuck*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Fletcher, Richard 1999. *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hann, Chris 2007. The Anthropology of Christianity *per se*. – *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*. Vol. 48, No. 3: 383–410.
- Harding, Susan F. 2000. *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hovland, Inge 2009. Follow the Missionary: Connected and Disconnected Flows of Meaning in the Norwegian Mission Society. – Mark-Anthony Falzon (ed.). *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Social Research*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 135–147.
- Huber, Mary Taylor 1988. *The Bishop's Progress: A Historical Ethnography of Catholic Missionary Experience on the Sepik Frontier*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- James, Wendy; Douglas H. Johnson (eds.) 1988. *Vernacular Christianity. Essays in the Social Anthropology of Religion Presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*. Oxford: JASO.
- Kan, Sergei 1999. *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity through Two Centuries*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

- Keane, Webb 2007. *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kipp, Rita Smith 2004. Two Views of the Minahasa; or, Whatever Happened to the Poor, Heathen Bushnatives? – *The Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol. 63, No. 3: 597–624.
- Крючков 2008 = Крючков, Геннадий Константинович. *Великое пробуждение XX века. 1961–2006*. (Москва): Издательство “Христианин” МСЦ ЕХБ, 2008.
- Leete, Art; Piret Koosa 2012. The Churches were Opened and Lots of Missionaries Arrived: Dialogue between Komi Identity and Faith. – *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*. Vol. 51: 171–190.
- Leete, Art; Laur Vallikivi 2011a. Imitating Enemies or Friends: Comparative Notes on Christianity in the Indigenous Russian Arctic during the Early Soviet Period. – *Asian Ethnology*. Vol. 70, No. 1: 81–104.
- Leete, Art; Laur Vallikivi 2011b. Adapting Christianity on the Siberian Edge during the Early Soviet Period. – *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*. Vol. 49: 131–146.
- Malley, Brian 2004. *How the Bible Works: An Anthropological Study of Evangelical Biblicism*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- McCannon, John 2007. The Commissariat of Ice: The Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route (GUSMP) and Stalinist Exploitation of the Arctic, 1932–1939. – *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. Vol. 20, No. 3: 393–419.
- McGrath, Alister E. 2007. *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution – A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Metelskiy 1959 = Метельский, Георгий Васильевич. *Ямал – Край земли*. Москва: Советская Россия, 1959.
- Meyer, Birgit 1999. *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Miller, Elmer S. 1970. The Christian Missionary: Agent of Secularization. – *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 43, No. 1: 14–22.
- Miller, Elmer S. 1981. Great was the Company of the Preachers: The Word of Missionaries and the Word of Anthropologists. – *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 54, No. 3: 125–133.
- Orta, Andrew 2004. *Catechizing Culture: Missionaries, Aymara, and the “New Evangelization”*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Peel, John David Yeadon 1995. For who hath Despised the Day of Small Things? Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology. – *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 37, No. 3: 581–607.
- Pelkmans, Mathijs 2007. Culture as a Tool and an Obstacle: Missionary Encounters in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. – *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)*. Vol. 13, No. 4: 881–899.
- Pelkmans, Mathijs (ed.) 2009. *Conversion after Socialism: Disruptions, Modernisms and Technologies of Faith in the Former Soviet Union*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Pesn’ 2004 = Песнь Возрождения. *Сборник духовных песен евангельских христиан-баптистов, 2. издание*. Москва: Издательство “Христианин” МСЦ ЕХБ, 2004.
- Plattet, Patrick; Virginie Vaté, Patty A. Gray (eds.) forthcoming. *Doing Religion in the Russian North: Uses of Religiosity after Socialism*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Podrazhayte 2001 = Подражайте вере их. *40 лет пробужденному братству*. Москва: Издательство “Христианин” СЦ ЕХБ, 2001.
- Robbins, Joel 2001. Secrecy and the Sense of an Ending: Narrative, Time, and Everyday Millenarianism in Papua New Guinea and in Christian Fundamentalism. – *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 43, No. 3: 525–551.
- Robbins, Joel 2003. On the Paradoxes of Global Pentecostalism and the Perils of Continuity Thinking. – *Religion*. Vol. 33, No. 3: 221–231.

- Robbins, Joel 2006. Afterword: On Limits, Ruptures, Meaning, and Meaninglessness. – Matthew Engelke, Matt Tomlinson (eds.). *The Limits of Meaning: Case Studies in the Anthropology of Christianity*. Oxford: Berghahn, 211–223.
- Robbins, Joel 2007. Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture. – *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 48, No. 1: 5–38.
- Rogers, Douglas (ed.) 2005. *Religion, State and Society*. Vol. 33, No. 1. (Special Issue.)
- Schneider, Jane; Shirley Lindenbaum (eds.) 1987. Introduction: Frontiers of Christian Evangelism: Essays in Honor of Joyce Riegelhaupt. – *American Ethnologist*. Vol. 14, No. 1: 1–8.
- Shapiro, Judith 1981. Ideologies of Catholic Missionary Practice in a Post-Colonial Era. – *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 23, No. 1: 130–149.
- Slezkine, Yuri 1994. *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Ssorin-Chaikov, Nikolai 2003. *The Social Life of the State in Subarctic Siberia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ssorin-Chaikov, Nikolai 2006. On Heterochrony: Birthday Gifts to Stalin, 1949. – *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)*. Vol. 12, No. 2: 355–375.
- Steinberg, Mark D.; Catherine Wanner (eds.) 2008. *Religion, Morality, and Community in Post-Soviet Societies*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Stipe, Claude E. 1980. Anthropologists versus Missionaries: The Influence of Presuppositions. – *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 21, No. 2: 165–179.
- Tonkinson, Robert 2007. *Homo Anthropologicus* in Aboriginal Australia: “Secular Missionaries,” Christians and Morality in the Field. – John Barker (ed.). *The Anthropology of Morality in Melanesia and Beyond*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 171–189.
- Toulouse, Eva 2009. Deux missionnaires dans la toundra et dans la taïga au XIXe siècle: de l’acte à la parole. – *Cahiers d’études hongroises*. Vol. 14: 131–147.
- Toulouse, Eva 2011. Movement and Enlightenment in the Russian North. – *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*. Vol. 49: 97–112.
- Tserkov 2008 = Церковь должна оставаться Церковью. Необратимые десятилетия 1917–1937 годы в истории евангельского и баптистского движений. (Москва): Историко-аналитический отдел МСЦ ЕХБ, 2008.
- Vallikivi, Laur 2003. Minority and Mission: Christianisation of the European Nenets. – *Multiethnic Communities in the Past and Present. Pro Ethnologia. Publications of Estonian National Museum*. Vol. 15: 109–130.
- Vallikivi, Laur 2009. Christianization of Words and Selves: Nenets Reindeer Herders Joining the State through Conversion. – Mathijs Pelkmans (ed.). *Conversion after Socialism: Disruptions, Modernities and the Technologies of Faith*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 59–83.
- Vallikivi, Laur 2011. What does Matter? Idols and Icons in the Nenets Tundra. – *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*. Vol. 5, No. 1: 75–95.
- Vallikivi, Laur forthcoming. Becoming Christian and Russian: Mission Encounters and Identity Practices among the Nenets Reindeer Herders. – Patrick Plattet, Virginie Vaté, Patty A. Gray (eds.). *Doing Religion in the Russian North: Uses of Religiosity after Socialism*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- van der Geest, Sjaak 1990. Anthropologists and Missionaries: Brothers under the Skin. – *Man*. Vol. 25, No. 4: 190–207.
- van der Geest, Sjaak; Jon P. Kirby 1992. The Absence of the Missionary in African Ethnography, 1930–65. – *African Studies Review*. Vol. 35, No. 3: 59–103.
- Vaté, Virginie 2009. Redefining Chukchi Practices in Contexts of Conversion to Pentecostalism. – Mathijs Pelkmans (ed.). *Conversion after Socialism: Disruptions, Modernities and the Technologies of Faith*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 39–57.

- Vestnik* = *Вестник Истины* [*Herald of Truth*; the official journal of the IUCECB; from 1963–1975 published as *Вестник Спасения*].
- Wanner, Catherine 2004. Missionaries of Faith and Culture: Evangelical Encounters in Ukraine. – *Slavic Review*. Vol. 63, No. 4: 732–755.
- Wanner, Catherine 2007. *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Weaver, Mary Jo; David Brakke 2009. *Introduction to Christianity. Fourth Edition*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Wiget, Andrew; Olga Balalaeva 2007. Crisis, Conversion, and Conflict: Evangelical Christianity, Rapid Change, and the Eastern Khanty. – *Sibirica*. Vol. 6, No. 1: 1–29.
- Znamenski, Andrei A. 1999. *Shamanism and Christianity: Native Encounters with Russian Orthodox Missions in Siberia and Alaska, 1820–1917*. Westport: Greenwood Press.