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## Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and Tsarist Russia, 1886–1917\*

DAVID S. FOGLESONG

In March 1917 Rev. George A. Simons, an American Methodist who had lived in the capital of Russia for almost ten years, witnessed what he considered 'one of the greatest wonders in the history of the world'. Describing the overthrow of the ancient Romanov autocracy to Methodist mission leaders in New York, Simons exulted, 'The dear, long-suffering Russian people and also patient Finland have finally become free!' Anticipating that the miraculous removal of the obstructive tsarist government would clear the way for ambitious missionary work, Simons predicted, 'Surely Christ's Kingdom can and will now begin a new and bright era in Russia and Finland.'

Over the following year and a half Simons' faith in the 'glorious future' of 'this second largest Christian democracy in the world'<sup>2</sup> was sorely tested by the increasing radicalism of revolutionary forces. Already in July 1917, after 'a nerve-racking reign of terror' prevailed in Petrograd for a few days, Simons had 'a rather serious nervous breakdown'. Although he recovered and persevered in Russia, following the Bolshevik seizure of power he grew more and more exasperated by the way the majority of Russians, who 'believe in *a government of, by and for the people*', apathetically waited for the time when 'the hoi poloi [sic] would waken out of this terrible nightmare!'<sup>3</sup> Finally, in August 1918, as American and Allied troops moved to intervene at Arkhangel'sk and Vladivostok, Simons cabled the Methodist missionary board:

POOR BLEEDING RUSSIA HAS ALREADY SUFFERED ENOUGH  
UNTOLD AGONY UNDER TERRORISM OF RABID SOCIALISM.  
MAY FUTURE REUNITED RUSSIA BE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY  
LIKE AMERICA ... ASSURE WASHINGTON OUR OPINION HEART  
OF RUSSIAN NATION BEATS WARMLY FOR AMERICA.<sup>4</sup>

How did an American missionary come to be in a position to hail the collapse of autocracy and endure the turmoil of revolution in Russia? Out of all the possible mission fields in the world, why did Simons and other Americans attach great importance to evangelistic campaigns in Russia, especially given the intense opposition from Orthodox priests and persecution by tsarist police? How did American mission-

\* Research for this article was greatly facilitated by archivists at the United Methodist Church Archives and the Seventh-Day Adventist Archives, especially L. Dale Patterson and Bert Haloviak.

aries think about the relationship between their evangelism and the political and economic transformation of Russia? Was Simons' hope that Russia would become a 'Christian democracy like America' unusual or typical of American religious leaders in the last decades of tsarist rule?

In addressing those questions, this essay seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of American missions to tsarist Russia, which previous scholars have treated primarily as episodes in the histories of specific denominations.<sup>5</sup> Drawing particularly on the archival and printed records of three of the most active groups – the Adventists, Baptists and Methodists – this article focuses less on telling the stories of those denominations' activities than on illuminating their missionaries' basic assumptions about Russia and their views of her future. While discussing the missionaries' dreams and disappointments in the pre-Soviet era, this essay also seeks to build a foundation for comparisons with the post-Soviet era, when many more evangelists have flocked to Russia and Western observers have once again been concerned with whether Russia can become a Christian democracy.<sup>6</sup>

### **Early American Missions to Russia (1886–1905)**

In the summer of 1886 – the year the journalist George Kennan completed his epochal investigation of the Siberian exile system<sup>7</sup> – Ludwig Richard Conradi, a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) missionary from the Great Plains region, made his first visit to Russia and soon found himself in prison, gloomily facing the prospect of being 'sent to Siberia' and 'committed to a lifetime of slavery in the mines'. In an account published after his release Conradi admitted that he had deceptively described himself as a printer in order to enter Russia and that he had spoken in southern Russia 'on the Sabbath question', which immediately 'excited opposition' and provoked someone to smash the windows of the room where he preached his next sermon.<sup>8</sup> However, in appealing for rescue from his prison cell Conradi protested his innocence, claiming that he had not sought to convert any adherents of the Orthodox faith, insisting that he 'never spoke a word against any church or attacked any doctrine', and pointing to the charge of 'teaching the Jewish heresy' as evidence of a misunderstanding of Adventist views.<sup>9</sup> Although the American consul at Odessa scolded Conradi for bringing himself 'in conflict with the Russian authorities on a question of religion', about which they were 'very sensitive', the American minister at St Petersburg intervened on Conradi's behalf, in part by explaining that he was a Christian, not a Jew. After 40 days in prison that showed Conradi how far he was 'as yet from what the Apostles were or the early Christians', he was freed in September.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the ordeal that made 'the experience of Peter and Paul seem so real' to him, Conradi did not immediately return to the United States. Instead, he decided to 'visit some of the German colonies in Eastern Russia' in order to preach to relatives of the immigrants among whom he had laboured in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and the Dakotas. Although Lutheran ministers in the Volga region opposed and stopped the Adventist meetings they did not diminish Conradi's enthusiasm and determination. 'The Russian Mission has been opened', Conradi triumphantly announced upon the completion of his journey. 'Dangers and difficulties are still in the way', he continued. 'Imprisonment and persecution threaten the labourer. The preacher is not at liberty to present the message. But as it is God's cause, who can hinder? As little as men could prevent the spread of the gospel in its earlier stages, or stay the progress of the Reformation, so little can this truth be held.'<sup>11</sup>

Conradi was not the first American missionary to work in Russia: as early as the 1860s Methodist F. W. Flocken had ministered to Russians in the Danube delta before opposition and persecution forced him to flee.<sup>12</sup> However, Conradi appears to have been the first to make a long-term commitment to evangelism in Russia, and his dedicated efforts contributed significantly to the growth of Adventism in Russia between 1886 and 1905, years when converting members of the Orthodox faith remained illegal. It is therefore appropriate to begin discussion of the origins of American missionary interest in Russia with an examination of Conradi's experiences and views.

As Conradi's visit to German colonists in southeastern Russia suggests, the migration of German-speaking farmers from Russia to the Great Plains was a crucial precipitant of Adventist missionary work in the Russian Empire. After learning about Adventism in America some of the immigrants sent SDA publications to their relatives while others returned to Russia and began spreading the Adventist message there. As a result, Conradi recalled, 'Soon the Macedonian cry was raised, "Come over and help us"'. It was in answer to this call that I decided to visit Russia.'<sup>13</sup>

For Conradi, as for many subsequent evangelists, Russia's enormous territory and population were crucial inducements. 'The Russian empire is the largest in the world', Conradi pointedly observed at the outset of his account of his first visit. 'As the last message of warning is to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, we would certainly expect it to be proclaimed among the millions of inhabitants of this great empire.'<sup>14</sup> The sheer size of 'this immense field' created a sort of economy of scale. 'I know no field where I might have accomplished the same amount of good in the same time', Conradi explained in 1890, pleased that in four years the Adventist flock had grown so that 'now instead of forty we have over four hundred Sabbath-keepers ...'<sup>15</sup>

Emphasis on the tremendous scope of missionary opportunities in Russia would remain a hallmark of religious perspectives in the following decades. In 1908, for example, the secretary of the SDA European Division declared that Russia was 'our largest field in the world', while a leader of the Foreign Mission Board of North America spotlighted the fact that the Russian Empire contained 'one-eleventh of the world's population'. The next year an article in *The Missionary Review of the World*, a key interdenominational monthly, stressed that Siberia was 'an enormous field for Christian activity ripe for harvest'. And in 1910 a Baptist leader who visited Russia reported that it was 'one of the greatest mission fields of the world', while Conradi clarified that 'not only the vastness of the territory appeals to us, but also the immense population, of over 150,000,000, which increases faster by natural growth than the United States by all its immigration.'<sup>16</sup>

Beyond the staggering number of Russians and their rate of reproduction, at least five additional features of Russia attracted special interest. First, Americans tended to think that since most Russians had been superficially Christianised they were already partially prepared to receive the Gospel, while at the same time many were alienated from the Orthodox Church, whose regular services were held in allegedly incomprehensible Slavonic.<sup>17</sup> Second, the vast expanse of the tsar's domain, combined with the limits of Orthodox missionary work, signalled to American evangelists that much Russian territory was 'virgin soil', where few, if any, had ever heard a Gospel sermon.<sup>18</sup> Third, for some missionary leaders, such as the Baptist firebrand William (Wilhelm) Fetler, race greatly enhanced the significance of the quantity of Russians. 'Russia is bound to become the first nation in Europe for Baptist work', the Russian-born, British-educated Fetler declared at a conference in the United States in 1911,

'because there has never been a nation of white people of such a population, of such numbers, in such a wide area, as the Russian nation.'<sup>19</sup> Fourth, biblical prophecies sharply intensified the fascination of Russia, particularly for Adventists. Citing Ezekiel 38–39 and Daniel 11, prominent Adventists argued that God had proclaimed his opposition to the tsar ('Gog') and that Russia was destined to 'play an important part in the closing work of this world's history', specifically by expelling Turkey from Europe.<sup>20</sup> Finally, many others were convinced of Russia's future importance by geopolitical considerations. Thus John R. Mott, a leader of the Student Volunteer Movement and Young Men's Christian Association, agreed with former president Theodore Roosevelt that no country held the fate of the coming years more than Russia, since it was 'located in the belt of power' and on the frontier between East and West.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Doors Open: American Missions to Russia from the 1905 Revolution to the Great War**

While some denominations showed substantial interest in Russia even in decades when proselytising the Orthodox faithful was prohibited, a dramatic increase in missionary activity was triggered by the tsarist government's movement after 1903 toward allowing greater religious freedom<sup>22</sup> and by the revolution of 1905. Together, those developments suggested to many American religious leaders that the Orthodox Church was losing its stranglehold upon millions of Russians and that the gates to the great empire were swinging open. As the Presbyterian editor of *The Missionary Review of the World* commented, the *ukaz* of 1903 'aroused considerable interest in the religious make-up of that nation', and the promises of freedom in 1905, including the edict on religious toleration in April, seemed 'great with possibilities for the progress of civilization and Christian truth in Russia'.<sup>23</sup> After journeying through Russia in the autumn of 1905 Conradi glowingly reportedly that 'we never enjoyed greater liberty' and that 'the field is opening before us as never before'. Thanks to the tsar's decrees the Adventists finally felt it safe openly to extend their efforts beyond German colonies and to organise 'the native Russian work' better.<sup>24</sup> Two years later N. J. Rosen, superintendent of the Methodist mission in Vyborg, enthusiastically described how the 'national awakening' in Finland had 'opened the doors' and facilitated Methodism's eastward march. 'The great masses begin to shake off the fetters of the state church and to ask for spiritual life and freedom. For the Methodist Episcopal Church this is of very great importance.'<sup>25</sup>

Soon after Nicholas II issued the edict on religious toleration Bishop William Burt, director of Methodist missions in Europe, arranged an additional allocation of funds for Russia and encouraged Dr George A. Simons (1874–1952) to take charge of that formerly languishing field. Simons, who briefly worked as a bank clerk before following his father into the ministry, hesitated to go to turbulent Russia. However, upon arriving in St Petersburg in autumn 1907 he was exhilarated by 'the wonderful opportunity our Church has in this great territory'.<sup>26</sup> Within a year Simons confidently concluded that 'The old Russia is practically a thing of the past' and that 'The Greek Orthodox Church has lost her grip upon the people.' As he explained to the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions, 'The Russo Greek Church does not preach. Hers is a religion of male singing, ritual and image-worship. Like other branches of paganized Christianity, she offers a stone to those who are hungering for the Bread of Life.' In the wake of the edict on religious toleration, Simons continued, 'large numbers are drifting away from this pagan institution into agnosticism and licen-

tiousness. Now is the time to go to them with a gospel of life, light, liberty and truth.’<sup>27</sup> Simons remained fervent through the following years. In 1909 a Russian magazine he launched reported ‘many conversions’ to Methodism and announced: ‘Many Europeans have the conviction that the next great religious awakening is to come about in Russia.’<sup>28</sup> In 1911, when Simons grandiloquently claimed to be ‘the only missionary from America in the whole Empire of Russia’, he boasted that ‘our growth and development have been remarkable’ and demanded more aggressive investment by the Methodist missionary board.<sup>29</sup>

Like Simons, missionaries from other denominations bubbled with enthusiasm and optimism in the years between the Revolution of 1905 and the First World War. Noting increases in the membership of Baptist churches, *The Missionary Review of the World* concluded in 1910 that ‘The Baptist situation in Russia ... must be pronounced most hopeful and encouraging.’ While Baptist leaders were delighted by the great ‘movement throughout the Russian Empire toward evangelical Christianity’ they were especially excited by reports that ‘in some parts of the south’ the Free Baptists had ‘swept the country’.<sup>30</sup> In the same spirit, Adventist pastor J. T. Boettcher assured SDA leaders that he and his wife were glad to be in Riga ‘where such great opportunities offer themselves to the cause of God’ that the cause forged ahead even though the country was under martial law.<sup>31</sup> Adventist membership jumped from just over 2000 in 1905 to nearly 5000 in 1912, when Conradi expressed satisfaction with the increase and asserted that ‘the prospects for future growth were never brighter ...’<sup>32</sup> Although *The Missionary Review of the World* ignored the Adventists (focusing instead on Baptist and Methodist work in Russia), it agreed that ‘no nation in Europe ... presents greater opportunity for Christian development ...’<sup>33</sup>

### **Missionary Views of Globalisation and the Modernisation of Russia**

While missionaries often trumpeted their victories in the competition to convert Russians, that frantic contest did not prevent them from observing how missions were part of the broader phenomenon of globalisation and reflecting upon connections between the spiritual liberation, political emancipation and economic development of Russia. Adventists, for example, remarked how the evangelisation of Russia wonderfully benefitted from the way the peoples of the world were being connected more and more closely. Massive immigration to the United States was one part of the process. ‘God drew the races of the Earth to one country’, an Adventist writer commented, ‘in order to reach them with the last glorious message’, which some would then take ‘back to their fellow countrymen’.<sup>34</sup> A second divine method for accelerating the evangelisation of the globe, SDA secretary W. A. Spicer declared, was the amazing revolution in transport, with the sudden invention of ‘the steamship, the railway, the application of steam and electricity to locomotion, production, and communication’.<sup>35</sup>

God’s hand could be seen not only behind the waves of immigration and technological innovation but also over the thrones of monarchs. Much as in 1898 the stunning American defeat of decadent Spain had shown ‘how God deals with a cruel and despotic power’, the ‘lawlessness and terror’ in Russia following her defeat by Japan demonstrated ‘how God’s judgments are visited upon the nation that overrides and subverts the principles of religious and civil freedom’.<sup>36</sup> Although Adventists passed resolutions of thanks to the tsar for the degree of freedom he granted in 1905, they tended to believe that their evangelism would contribute to the political liberation of his realm, much as the extension of the Protestant Reformation to the Baltic region in

the sixteenth century had 'brought with it freedom, enlightenment, and education ...'.<sup>37</sup> Commenting on the seemingly foreordained 'Doom of Despotism' *The Missionary Review of the World* editorialised in 1908 that 'Reforms in Russia, Turkey and Persia practically bring all the nations under modern methods of government' (though because of backsliding since 1905 'the least success is in Russia').<sup>38</sup>

If religious writers sometimes doubted Russia's progress toward democracy and feared that Russia's ignorant peasants were 'utterly unfit for universal suffrage'<sup>39</sup> they tended to be more confident about the reciprocal relationship between spiritual and economic advances. A leading missionary in Korea enunciated the conventional wisdom when he asserted in 1904 that religion was 'the first great essential to progress' and 'the mummery of the Greek Church forms a bar to true progress'.<sup>40</sup> Five years later Baron Woldemar Üxküll, a Baptist convert from Estonia, declared in a widely noted article that Russia presented 'great possibilities and opportunities in religious as well as in business regard. For the development of Russia the influence of the Gospel is the most necessary blessing and the most needed thing.'<sup>41</sup> The conviction that spiritual enlightenment and economic modernisation proceeded hand in hand was sometimes reflected in startling juxtapositions, as when the Adventist F. I. Richardson called Peter the Great Russia's 'material Moses'.<sup>42</sup> In a more mundane way, religious leaders frequently showed their awareness of the relationship between the wealth of tithing church members and the growth of their denominations. Thus during the great surge in Russian migration across the Urals Adventist missionary J. T. Boettcher urgently sought 'to have some of our older Sabbath-keepers settle in Siberia', which he predicted 'will soon be a well-organized and self-supporting field', thanks to the relative prosperity of farmers in Siberia.<sup>43</sup> While evangelists attracted many poor peasants, workers and students to their meetings they frequently showed a keen desire to reach the higher or 'better' classes of Russians.<sup>44</sup> Soon after assuming leadership of the largely poor and elderly Methodist congregation in St Petersburg, for example, George Simons noted that 'there is a vast wealth here in Russia' and predicted that 'When once our Church gets hold of the well-to-do Russians, as she certainly will, then we will have large sums coming in, for the wealthy Russians are very generous and philanthropic.'<sup>45</sup>

Although the Adventist board sternly disapproved of its agents 'entering into any outside enterprise', missionaries like L. R. Conradi habitually used the language of business, predicting that specific publishing ventures 'would pay', promising 'ample returns for our outlay', and reporting 'a very profitable time in Russia'.<sup>46</sup> Adventists did not have a monopoly on such vocabulary. In requesting a special grant for a printing press to compete with the Baptists, for example, George Simons assured the Methodist leadership that 'from a business point of view this thing will not be a fizzle' and guaranteed 'wonderful returns within the next two years'.<sup>47</sup> More than a linguistic quirk, the frequent employment of business terminology marked how the missionary quest for rapid and numerous conversions resembled and overlapped with the capitalist drive to tap the most profitable markets and fields for investment. Like sales representatives, missionaries often quantified their results, especially the numbers baptised, and like corporations churches produced quarterly and annual reports that tabulated not only membership growth but also tithe receipts, average offerings per member and the retail value of book and periodical sales.<sup>49</sup>

### **Closing Doors: Political Reaction and Orthodox Backlash (1911–1916)**

Despite the ebullience of evangelists in Russia, many religious leaders in the United

States remained cautious about missionary ventures. Responding to Simons' insistent requests for funds, Rev. Homer Stuntz explained that he was 'anxious' to 'build up a church there that will be native in the truest sense, adjusted to the life and giving ability of our Russian converts'. Instead of putting 'the enterprise under glass and turn[ing] in steam heat', Stuntz vastly preferred 'a slower growth in order that we may get hardier plants'.<sup>49</sup> Like Stuntz, others were wary that hothouse-cultivated churches would not be able to withstand a change in the unpredictable Russian climate.<sup>50</sup> A committee appointed by the Foreign Mission Boards of North America reported in 1907 that the time was 'not ripe' for a direct missionary 'advance upon Russia', recommended that denominations strive instead 'to raise up in Russia itself a large force of well-educated preachers and evangelists', and reiterated that 'the leaders of all of this advance should be Russians'.<sup>51</sup>

Such concern that aggressive foreign missionary campaigns could provoke a backlash proved prescient.<sup>52</sup> Towards the end of 1910 Adventist leaders began complaining about stricter censorship and new regulations against proselytising. By 1912 a much colder climate seemed to be returning as the tsarist government ordered the Adventists to close their publishing house in Riga and refused to grant land in Siberia to 'sectarians'.<sup>53</sup> Disillusioned, the editor of *The Missionary Review of the World* bitterly complained that there was 'no such thing' as religious freedom in Russia.<sup>54</sup> As Simons explained in early 1914, the preceding years brought 'a strong political reaction and religious repression, under which practically all Free Church bodies have had to suffer more or less'.<sup>55</sup> Following the outbreak of the First World War the government cracked down more severely. In August 1914 a new law prohibited sectarian ministers from preaching at any place except their approved home church, and in subsequent months police officials investigated, arrested and jailed many preachers, particularly in denominations that had close ties to German colonists and Germany, such as the Adventists and Baptists.<sup>56</sup> While Simons continued to enjoy 'a certain amount of liberty' in Petrograd that he attributed 'to a quiet, tactful mode of activity and our having American connections', the more aggressive Baptist leader Fetler was banished, many other preachers were suspected of being spies, and even Simons felt it 'best to "lie low" and bide our time'.<sup>57</sup>

### **A New Birth of Freedom: Missionary Responses to the Revolutions of 1917**

Having endured harassment, prosecution and incarceration in the last years of Romanov rule, American evangelists joyfully hailed the overthrow of the tsarist government in March 1917. From Saratov, where he had been exiled and under virtual house arrest, Adventist pastor O. E. Reinke proclaimed that 'The Great God of Heaven and Earth has at last visited in great mercy this people to deliver them from the bondage which held them for so long a time. ... The Gospel minister has now an open field to let the light of heaven shine ...'.<sup>58</sup> In Petrograd, George Simons declared that 'the most thrilling thing' he had witnessed in his ten-year sojourn in Russia was 'the truly miraculous resurrection of this great Slavic nation, almost two hundred million strong, rising in power and majesty from the gloomy tomb of despotic tyranny and mediaeval terrorism into the joyous light and life of freedom and democracy'.<sup>59</sup>

Although Simons had been dismayed by the Methodist board's unwillingness to increase appropriations for Russia a few years earlier,<sup>60</sup> leaders in New York showed much greater eagerness in 1917. As Frank Mason North explained in July, he sought 'to develop a stronger program' because he believed 'that Russia is opening wonder-



fully to the message of the Gospel' and he was 'convinced of the deep religious nature of the Russian people'.<sup>61</sup> Such enthusiasm extended well beyond denominational mission boards. En route to Scandinavia and (he hoped) Russia in May 1917 Sherwood Eddy of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations glowingly predicted that the YMCA would 'have an opportunity in the period of reconstruction in Russia that is incalculable'.<sup>62</sup> Similarly excited by 'the thousand-fold enlarged Gospel possibilities in Russia' after its simultaneous 'political and religious emancipation' the editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*, Delavan Pierson, dreamed that 'The time may even come when a congress of evangelical Christians may gather in the winter palace of Petrograd to discuss the needs and opportunities for aggressive missionary work in Russia.'<sup>63</sup>

Americans tended to assume that they had special opportunities and responsibilities in Russia not only because they were progressive Christians but also because they represented a wealthy modern country that Russians admired. Attempting to convince Russian workmen of the need to work, like their American comrades, 'in a most energetic and intensive manner', George Simons felt compelled to debunk the Russian myth that nearly every American was a millionaire and to stress that America's 'greatest wealth' was 'in its moral consciousness'.<sup>64</sup> Disturbed by deteriorating economic and political conditions in the autumn of 1917 Simons invoked not a generic Christianity but a specific Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethic as the cure for Russia's ills. 'Only vital, practical Christianity, sane evangelism and Christian education with Anglo-American ideals and spirit', he advised *The Christian Advocate*, 'can purge Russia's benighted millions of semi-pagan superstitions, evil practices, mario-latry, saint and ikon worship.'<sup>65</sup> The Bolshevik seizure of power did not shake the conviction that American evangelism could reshape Russian politics. Declaring that Russians needed 'enlightenment as to the real meaning of life, liberty, and religion', Pierson announced in March 1918: 'It is time to prepare for entering Russia with the pure Gospel of Christ, unhampered by formalism and superstition; a time to plan for Christian education for the future leaders of Russia.'<sup>66</sup> Even as the Civil War intensified missionaries continued to buttress faith in the americanisation of Russia. Thus, urging Pentecostals to go to Russia, Andrew Urshan asserted in late 1918 that 'over one hundred and eighty million souls in Russia are eagerly looking toward America for political, commercial and religious help'.<sup>67</sup>

While the Red victory against White armies and foreign troops in the Civil War offered little opportunity for American political influence, missionary leaders tended to disregard the lack of democracy and to focus instead on opportunities created by blows to the Orthodox Church.<sup>68</sup> Even as he derided the 'terrorism of rabid socialism' in 1918 Simons noted that the Soviet authorities were 'extremely kind to American Methodism' and predicted that the radicals' antipathy to the Orthodox Church would lead Russian Christianity to 'become purified' (a view shared by John R. Mott and others).<sup>69</sup> Three years later Simons reported that the victorious Bolshevik officials were still friendly and underlined that 'the doors are open for Methodism in Russia'.<sup>70</sup> Bishop John L. Nuelsen, who succeeded Bishop Burt as supervisor of Methodist work in Europe, was even more enthusiastic than Simons about the tremendous 'mission opportunity' in Soviet Russia, where he sought to collaborate with the 'Living Church' faction of Orthodoxy.<sup>71</sup> Although Adventists suffered grievously during the Civil War and the post-war famine they welcomed the way 'the great revolution ... brought about the much-desired separation of the church from the state and the school from the church'. Like Methodists, Adventist leaders found the Bolshevik authorities 'very kind and helpful', praised the greater religious freedom

than in tsarist times, and hailed their rapid growth to 14,000 members by the late 1920s. Only after 1929 would Adventists lament a new round of religious persecution in Russia.<sup>72</sup>

### Conclusions

If American missions to Russia from the 1880s to 1917 involved only a handful of evangelists from the United States and resulted in fewer than 20,000 converts, what historical significance and contemporary relevance can be seen in those missions? Although the actual number of Russian citizens baptised did not match the grandiose dreams of American religious leaders, many Orthodox priests viewed the foreign missionaries as significant threats. American evangelists frequently complained that Orthodox priests disrupted their services, instigated police action to halt their preaching and prompted government curbs on their work. In 1909, for example, Adventist J. T. Boettcher reported that ‘the priests come and make disturbance in most every meeting’ and described how after one meeting ‘we were surrounded by about 100 men, called “The Black Hundred”, who had been sent by priests with the instruction to flog me.’<sup>73</sup> Orthodox leaders’ fears and antipathies were most vividly illustrated in the antimissionary pamphlet *Stoite v vere!* (*Stand in the Faith!*) that was published in Kiev in 1911 with the approval of Archimandrite Amvrosi and was widely circulated on the eve of the Great War. The pamphlet featured a cartoon depicting rival faiths as agents of the devil attempting to steal lambs from Christ’s flock, and it identified Adventists and Baptists as two of the most aggressive and dangerous menaces.<sup>74</sup>

The conflicts between American missionaries and Orthodox priests in tsarist Russia thus prefigured the more extensive clashes in post-Soviet Russia, where the weakened Orthodox Church has felt even more seriously threatened. As in the last decades of tsarism, American missionaries have been attracted in part by the sheer size of Russia’s population, and in their drive for rapid and numerous conversions some have been guilty of what has been called ‘hit-and-run’ evangelism.<sup>75</sup> In both eras aggressive, confrontational and contemptuous approaches by American missionaries have exacerbated the friction inherent in the Protestant–Orthodox competition. On the other hand, missionaries like George Simons who have worked in a more patient and tactful way (even though they have shown little more respect for Orthodoxy or awareness of divisions within the Orthodox Church) have provoked much less hostility and retaliation. Thus, while Baptists and Adventists were being arrested and exiled in 1914, Simons was able to comment with some amusement concerning the *Stoite v vere!* cartoon that ‘the Methodists have not yet found a place in the Russian Orthodox Rogue’s Gallery’.<sup>76</sup>

A second area where one might find substantial historical significance and some connection with contemporary experience is in the overlap between the missionary campaigns, political crusades and economic drives to remake Russia. As we have seen, Simons and his counterparts in other denominations believed they were not only spearheading the spiritual enlightenment of Russia but also preparing the way for her economic advance and political transformation. In the same era businessmen imagined that American trade and technology would contribute not only to the economic development but also to the ‘awakening’ and ‘regeneration’ of Russia.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile activists in the Anglo-American movement for a ‘free Russia’ denounced not only political oppression by the tsarist government but also religious persecution inspired by the Orthodox Church. Thus George Kennan, the great crusader against

the Siberian exile system, declared that Russian intolerance was so extreme that 'if the Saviour himself should appear ... he would not be at liberty twenty-four hours' and compared Russian revolutionaries' admiration of America to Mary Magdalene's anointing the feet of her Lord.<sup>78</sup> Underlying the religious, economic and political aspirations to transform Russia was a common Protestant culture shared by both the editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*, who asserted in 1908 that 'large numbers in Russia ... are already evangelical Christians at heart', and by President Woodrow Wilson, who proclaimed in 1917 that 'Russia was ... always in fact democratic at heart'.<sup>79</sup> Despite the secularisation of American culture in this century millenarian currents have continued to foster unrealistic visions of an overnight transformation of Russia into a democracy, exaggerated hopes for profits from American–Russian commerce and delusive dreams of millions of converts to Protestant faiths. While the wild exuberance and bitter frustrations of the early twentieth century should serve to caution against extreme euphoric or despondent responses to post-Soviet developments, awareness of the connections between the religious, economic and political drives to reshape tsarist Russia should encourage analyses of the interplay between those dimensions in American efforts to reform the former Soviet Union. Missiologists, historians of American–Russian relations and experts on the postcommunist transition have tended to focus narrowly on separate dimensions, but, as this essay has sought to suggest, missions, economic development and democratisation need to be examined as part of a broader process of international interaction and cultural transformation.<sup>80</sup>

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Simons to Frank Mason North, 16/29 March 1917, Simons file 1185-1-3:19, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, New Jersey.
- <sup>2</sup> Dr George A. Simons, *Russia's Resurrection*, May 1917, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives. Published in *The Christian Advocate*, 12 July 1917.
- <sup>3</sup> Simons to Dr S. Earl Taylor, 1 August 1917, and Simons to North, 22 February 1918, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>4</sup> Simons to Board of Foreign Missions, New York, 26 August 1918, United Methodist Church Archives. Part of Simon's telegram was printed in altered form in *The Missionary Review of the World (TMRW)*, October 1918, p. 723.
- <sup>5</sup> Donald Carl Malone, 'A Methodist venture in Bolshevik Russia', *Methodist History*, vol. 18, July 1980, pp. 239–61; John Dunstan, 'George A. Simons and the Khristianski pobornik: a neglected source on St Petersburg Methodism', *Methodist History*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1980, pp. 21–40; Kahlile Mehr, 'The 1903 dedication of Russia for missionary work', *Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 13, 1987, pp. 111–21; Dana L. Robert, 'The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, mission to Russians in Manchuria, 1920–1927', *Methodist History*, vol. 26, no. 2, January 1988, pp. 67–83.
- <sup>6</sup> Michael Hughes, 'Can there be a Russian Christian Democracy?', *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1995, pp. 159–77.
- <sup>7</sup> See Frederick F. Travis, *George Kennan and the American–Russian Relationship, 1865–1924* (Athens, Ohio, 1990), and David S. Foglesong, 'Remaking Russia: the origins and implications of the first American crusades for Russian freedom, 1881–1905' (forthcoming).
- <sup>8</sup> L. R. Conradi, 'A visit to Russia', in *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basel, 1886), pp. 250–71, quoted at pp. 260–61 and 256. For a biographical study of Conradi's work see Gerhard Padderatz, *Conradi und Hamburg: Die Anfänge der deutschen Adventgemeinde (1889–1914) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung*

- der organisatorischen, finanziellen und sozialen Aspekte* (Hamburg, 1978). D. A. Delafield, *Ellen G. White in Europe 1885–1887* (Washington, DC, 1975), contains a chapter on Conradi and his tense relationship with Mrs White. Stories of Russian – especially Siberian – prisons were central to American religious as well as secular images of Russia. See, for example, ‘Beacon lights in mission history: Dr Baedeker and the descent into the prison hell’, *TMRW*, January 1908, pp. 23–28, esp. p. 26.
- <sup>9</sup> Conradi to Brother [B.L.] Whitney, 1 August 1886, Incoming Correspondence, Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Church World Headquarters, Silver Spring, Maryland.
- <sup>10</sup> Conradi, ‘A visit to Russia’, pp. 262–63; Conradi to Whitney, 1 August 1886, E. G. White Estate.
- <sup>11</sup> Conradi to Whitney, 1 August 1886, E. G. White Estate; Conradi, ‘A visit to Russia’, pp. 266, 271.
- <sup>12</sup> Malone, ‘A Methodist venture ...’, p. 239; obituary of Flocken in *East German Conference Journal*, 1893, pp. 63–64. In the late 1880s the Swedish–American Methodist Bengt August Carlson preached in the Russian capital, but Carlson was able to make only monthly visits from his base in Finland and the St Petersburg mission did not flourish until after 1905. Dunstan, ‘George A. Simons and the Khristianski pobornik ...’, pp. 223–24.
- <sup>13</sup> ‘Union of Soviet Socialist Republics’, in Don F. Neufelt (ed.), *Seventh-Day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, 1976), pp. 1517–36, esp. pp. 1520–22; Conradi, ‘A visit to Russia’, p. 250. For a later example of missionary interest in immigrants as keys to the evangelisation of Russia see William Fetler, ‘Russians in the United States: the opportunities presented to the Christian Church’, *TMRW*, December 1915, pp. 923–28.
- <sup>14</sup> Conradi, ‘A visit to Russia’, p. 250.
- <sup>15</sup> Conradi to Elder W. C. White from Odessa, 18 November 1890, E. G. White Estate. Conradi repeatedly emphasised the vastness of the Russian field in exhorting Adventist leaders to increase support for efforts there. See, for example, Conradi to A. G. Daniells, Chairman of the SDA Mission Board, 26 October 1903, General Conference Archives, Record Group 21: Secretariat, SDA headquarters, Silver Spring, Maryland.
- <sup>16</sup> Guy Dail, ‘Another European conference’, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald (ARSH)*, 30 January 1908; James L. Barton, ‘The religious situation in Russia’, *TMRW*, October 1908, p. 727; Baron Woldemar Üxküll, ‘Actual religious conditions in Russia’, *TMRW*, vol. 32, January 1909, p. 38; *American Baptist Foreign Mission Society Report*, 1910, p. 156; Conradi, ‘The Russian Union Conference meeting’, *ARSH*, 12 May 1910. Like Conradi, Barton emphasised that the population had increased by 15 per cent since 1900 and he claimed that there were ‘more than 12,000,000 dissenters [from the Orthodox Church] in Great Russia alone’. Along the same line, evangelist Sherwood Eddy commented that ‘vast in area, vast in its suffering, vast in its possibilities, Russia grips the heart.’ Extract from Eddy’s March 1912 report reproduced in Eddy, *A Pilgrimage of Ideas* (New York, 1934), p. 316.
- <sup>17</sup> ‘Siberia as a mission field’, *TMRW*, March 1908, p. 229. A. Hotovitzky, dean of the St Nicholas Cathedral in New York, challenged the widespread idea that Russians did not understand Slavonic services in a letter to the editor of *The Christian Advocate*, 12 October 1905, p. 1628.
- <sup>18</sup> ‘Beacon lights in mission history ...’, p. 27; Wilhelm Fetler, ‘Russia and the Gospel’, *TMRW*, October 1912, p. 745; ‘Under the czar’, *TMRW*, March 1913, p. 224. Since few Russians had ever been nourished by the Gospel, Americans believed, there was an acute spiritual hunger or thirst in Russia. See, for example, John R. Mott, ‘An unprecedented world situation’, *TMRW*, February 1914, p. 88.
- <sup>19</sup> The Baptist World Alliance, *Record of Proceedings*, 19 June 1911, p. 23. Fetler reiterated that Russia was ‘the largest nation of white people in the world’ in ‘Russia and the Gospel’, p. 740, and in a statement published in *TMRW*, June 1918, p. 406. Similarly, a Pentecostal missionary who stressed Russia’s ‘innumerable population’ quoted a Petrograd writer’s declaration that ‘Russia is the greatest white race in the world!’ Andrew D.

- Urshan, 'The future of Persia and Russia', *The Weekly Evangel*, 30 September 1916, p. 8.
- <sup>20</sup> F. I. Richardson, 'The Eastern Question – no. 2: Russia's part in the closing work', *ARSH*, 18 April 1907; W. A. Spicer, 'Review of the world-wide field: the secretary's report', *ARSH*, 13 May 1909; W. W. Prescott, editorial 'Russia and Turkey', *ARSH*, 4 April 1912; Francis M. Wilcox, editorial 'Russia and Constantinople', *ARSH*, 11 March 1915. Spicer explained that while in the nineteenth century Adventists had proceeded 'along the line of least resistance' and focused on Protestant lands, as it became clearer that the end of history was approaching Adventists shifted their emphasis to 'the dark Catholic and heathen lands'. For background on the application of biblical prophecies to Russia, see Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), esp. pp. 84–86, 98, 102, and 152–56.
- <sup>21</sup> John R. Mott, 'An unprecedented world situation', pp. 89–90, reiterated in 'A view of the situation in Russia', *TMRW*, March 1918, p. 172. For other predictions that Russia would be 'one of the greatest powers of the future' and a stepping stone to the evangelisation of Asia see 'The Gospel in Russia', *TMRW*, May 1915, p. 390; and 'The Slav religion', *TMRW*, November 1916, p. 866.
- <sup>22</sup> For discussion of the variety of decrees and laws, see John Shelton Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900–1917* (New York, 1940).
- <sup>23</sup> 'The religions of Russia', *TMRW*, May 1903, p. 390; 'Religious freedom for Russia!', *TMRW*, June 1905, pp. 469–70; 'The upheaval in Russia', *TMRW*, December 1905, pp. 950–51. Rev. Arthur T. Pierson was the editor-in-chief of this journal until his death in 1911, when his son Delavan replaced him. For biographical information about the elder Pierson, see *TMRW*, July 1911, pp. 487–89 and *TMRW*, August 1911, pp. 567–83. Ernest R. Sandeen identifies A. T. Pierson as a leading millenarian in *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago, 1970), pp. xv, 186. After 1905 Pierson repeatedly urged missionaries to seize opportunities in Russia. See *TMRW*, June 1906, p. 471; *TMRW*, February 1907, p. 154; *TMRW*, October 1907, p. 725.
- <sup>24</sup> Conradi to Daniells, 17 November 1905, RG 21, Secretariat, General Conference Archives, SDA headquarters. See also Conradi's *Circular Letter* of 16 November 1905, partially published in 'A visit to the Transcaucasus', *ARSH*, 8 February 1906 and 'The Meeting at Alexandrodar', *ARSH*, 8 March 1906.
- <sup>25</sup> N. J. Rosen to Dr H. K. Carroll in New York, 15 October 1907, Rosen file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ. Believing that Methodism's 'greatest victories' would come in 'its onward march eastwards', Rosen adopted the watchword 'Not back to Sweden but forward to the Empire with which Providence has connected us'. Rosen, *Finland Mission Conference: Forwards or Backwards*, 24 March 1904. By November 1905 Methodist leaders believed 'nothing could be more important ... than to lay strong foundations for work in Russia', and appropriated \$10,000 earmarked for the Y.M.C.A. in St Petersburg. 'Annual Meeting of the General Missionary Committee', *The Christian Advocate*, 23 November 1905, pp. 1868–69.
- <sup>26</sup> Dunstan, 'George A. Simons and the Khristianski pobornik ...', pp. 25–26; Simons to H. K. Carroll, 5 August 1907 and 10 November 1907, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>27</sup> Simons to My dear Brother [Dr Homer C. Stuntz], 17 October 1908, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives. Simons believed the Methodist Church was 'preeminently adapted to minister to the spiritual needs' of Russians because it was 'a revival and missionary church' and it encouraged 'lay preaching as perhaps no other'. Simons' views of the faltering Orthodox Church and the spiritual hunger of the Russian people were widely shared. See, for example, 'The religious situation in Russia five years after the Manifesto', by an anonymous Russian resident of St Petersburg, in *TMRW*, September 1910, p. 667; G. Perk, 'Daybreak in Russia', *ARSH*, 4 July 1912; and Nevin O. Winter, 'The medieval Orthodox Church in Russia', *TMRW*, October 1913, pp. 760–66.
- <sup>28</sup> 'The opening door in Russia', *TMRW*, June 1909, p. 471, reprinted from *Khristiansky*

*pobornik*.

- <sup>29</sup> Simons to Stuntz, 29 September and 7 November 1911, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>30</sup> 'The Baptist situation in Russia', *TMRW*, February 1910, pp. 85–86; *American Baptist Foreign Mission Society Report*, 1911, pp. 116–17. While the Baptist report claimed 1609 members were added by baptism that year, the net growth of the specific Baptist groups covered was modest – from 25,726 in 1910 to 28,900 in 1913.
- <sup>31</sup> Boettcher to Spicer, 27 January 1908, RG 21, SDA archive, Silver Spring, Maryland. Boettcher agreed to go to Russia in 1907, around the same time that Simons accepted his call. Conradi to Daniells, 21 June 1907, RG 11 (Presidential), SDA archive. Despite his German-sounding name, Boettcher considered himself an American. See Boettcher to Bowen, 1 March 1915, RG 21 (Incoming Letters), SDA archive.
- <sup>32</sup> Conradi, 'New developments in Eastern Europe', *ARSH*, 4 July 1912. Even after the war against Germany prompted the Russian government to prosecute many Adventists, Conradi claimed that 'we are winning precious souls everywhere and feel our way thru in spite of all difficulties'. Conradi to Mission Board, 12 December 1914 ('Confidential'), RG 21, SDA archive.
- <sup>33</sup> 'Events in Russia', *TMRW*, November 1911, p. 804.
- <sup>34</sup> A. Boettcher, 'Giving the message to people of other tongues in the United States', *ARSH*, 17 March 1910.
- <sup>35</sup> W. A. Spicer, 'Review of the world-wide field', *ARSH*, 13 May 1909. A. G. Daniells, president of the SDA General Conference, elaborated on this providential technological innovation in 'Why this world-wide missionary movement?', *ARSH*, Harvest Ingathering Number, 4 November 1909.
- <sup>36</sup> K. C. Russell, 'Russia's crisis a terrible warning', *ARSH*, 29 March 1906.
- <sup>37</sup> L. R. Conradi, 'The Meeting at Alexandrodar', *ARSH*, 8 March 1906; Guy Dail, 'The Baltic and the West Russian Meetings', *ARSH*, 16 January 1908.
- <sup>38</sup> 'Signs of the times', *TMRW*, October 1909.
- <sup>39</sup> 'What shall we say of Russia?', *TMRW*, January 1906, p. 3.
- <sup>40</sup> Rev. Homer B. Hulbert, 'The Russo-Japanese war and Christian missions in the East', *TMRW*, August 1904, pp. 569–72.
- <sup>41</sup> Baron Woldemar Üxküll, 'Actual religious conditions in Russia', *TMRW*, January 1909, p. 38. Raised as a Lutheran in Estonia, Üxküll became a Baptist in 1892. He visited the United States in 1906, in part to raise funds for a Baptist seminary in Łódź. As a result of his trip and his articles he exerted significant influence in missionary circles. See 'A Russian baron in America', *TMRW*, June 1906, p. 471; 'Baron Woldemar Üxküll', *TMRW*, June 1907, p. 461; 'The opportunity in Russia', *TMRW*, October 1907, p. 725.
- <sup>42</sup> Richardson, 'The Eastern Question ...'
- <sup>43</sup> J. T. Boettcher, 'The Annual Meetings in Russia', *ARSH*, 17 December 1908.
- <sup>44</sup> See, for example, L. R. Conradi's *Circular Letter* of 16 November 1905, SDA archive; J. T. Boettcher's remarks in *Annual Report of the General Conference of S.D.A. European Division*, 1912, p. 66, and *Quarterly Report of the General Conference of S.D.A. European Division*, First Quarter, 1913, p. 11.
- <sup>45</sup> Simons to Board of Foreign Missions, 12 December 1907, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives. After reporting the gratifying results of taking collections, Simons pledged 'We mean business, brethren!'
- <sup>46</sup> *Minutes* of 23 February 1890; *Report* of March 1891; and *Minutes* of 10 March 1893, Foreign Mission Board Minutes, RG 48, SDA archive; Conradi to Daniells, 26 October 1903, RG 21, SDA archive. Expressing his lack of faith in a cotton plantation proposition, Conradi advised the board 'The more we keep out of such worldly schemes the better'. However, two weeks earlier Conradi described how the northern Russia field was prospering and commented 'Were all our fields operated on such a small expense, and did they show the same proportional gain, our results would be different ...' Conradi to Daniells, 15 October 1903.

- <sup>47</sup> Simons to Stuntz, 6 October 1911, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>48</sup> See, for example, J. T. Boettcher, 'Russia', *ARSH*, 22 October 1908; *Quarterly Report of the European Division of the General Conference of S.D.A.*, Third Quarter, 1912, vol. 1, no. 3; *American Baptist Foreign Mission Society Report*, 1910, pp. 155–56; Fetler, 'Russia and the Gospel', p. 745.
- <sup>49</sup> Stuntz to Simons, 23 October 1911, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives. On the eve of the Great War the Methodist board again disappointed Simons, informing him that 'We are not ready yet to undertake large advances in the work which you represent ...' Dr Frank Mason North to Simons, 24 November 1913, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>50</sup> With Adventist missions facing increasing difficulties from the Russian police, Conradi issued a call for 'more good, consecrated native workers', perhaps hoping they would be less vulnerable to prosecution as well as better 'able to present the gospel to their own countrymen', *ARSH*, 4 July 1912.
- <sup>51</sup> James L. Barton summarised the conclusions of the committee in 'The religious situation in Russia', *TMRW*, October 1908, pp. 732–33. While advising the cautious indirect approach of supporting Russian evangelical organisations Barton concluded that 'In many respects Russia presents an opportunity surpassed by no other country for an immediate Christian advance ...'
- <sup>52</sup> Already in late 1908 and 1909 articles in *TMRW* cautioned against exaggerating the extent of religious liberty ushered in by the tsar's proclamations and the Revolution of 1905. See 'Religious liberty delayed in Russia', *TMRW*, November 1908, p. 806; Üxküll, 'Actual religious conditions in Russia', pp. 35–36; 'Religious liberty in Russia' (editorial), *TMRW*, October 1909, p. 792. Although the latter editorial maintained that 'Religious liberty seems bound to come, however slowly, in the great empire of the north', it warned that 'The Orthodox Greek Church continues to be the State Church and exercises despotic authority, and persecution goes on against other creeds.'
- <sup>53</sup> Dail to Spicer, 16 December 1910; Dail to Spicer, 13 March 1911; and Conradi to Spicer and Daniells, 7 July 1912, RG 21, SDA archive; J. T. Boettcher, 'Riga (Russia) publishing branch closed', *ARSH*, 4 July 1912. On the curbing of Protestant outreach by new regulations introduced in October 1910, see Dunstan, 'George A. Simons and the Khristianski pobornik ...', pp. 28 and 38.
- <sup>54</sup> 'Religious freedom in Russia', *TMRW*, November 1913, p. 867. The editor claimed that 'No missionary of any religion is allowed in Russia'.
- <sup>55</sup> *Annual Report of the Russia Mission for the Foreign Missions Report of 1913*, 18 February 1914, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives. For further discussion of the crack-down against Protestant 'sects', see Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia*, esp. pp. 330–32.
- <sup>56</sup> O. E. Reinke to Spicer, 19 October 1914; J. T. Boettcher to Bowen, 19 April 1915; and Dail to Spicer, 17 October 1915, RG 21, SDA archive; *ARSH*, 15 April 1915 and 12 August 1915.
- <sup>57</sup> Simons to Dr S. Earl Taylor, 18 April 1915, and Simons to Frank Mason North, 5 July 1915, Simons file, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives. Although Simons was informed that Methodism's roots in the Anglican Church 'would insure a somewhat friendly attitude' from the Orthodox Church, he reported being attacked in print by an Orthodox priest for the first time in early 1915. The next year Simons arranged a cordial visit to Metropolitan Pitirim, who was expected to become head of the Holy Synod. Simons to North, 27 August/9 September 1916. On the banishment of Fetler and eleven other Baptist preachers, see the *American Baptist Foreign Mission Society Report*, 1915, pp. 197–98; and Fetler's letter in *The Baptist Times and Freeman*, 5 February 1915.
- <sup>58</sup> Reinke to General Conference, 3 April 1917, RG 21 (Secretariat General Files), SDA archive. Somewhat more cautiously, an Adventist editor wrote: 'That it will open the great Russian empire fully to the heralds of the cross, is to be devoutly hoped.' 'The Russian Revolution', *ARSH*, 29 March 1917. Like Reinke, Pentecostal missionary Andrew Urshan

- was tremendously 'happy over the victory of the New Cabinet', and he issued an urgent appeal for prayer 'that the great door may be opened for the harvest of thousands of precious souls in that old European Nation'. *The Weekly Evangel*, 24 March 1917, front page.
- <sup>59</sup> Simons, *Russia's Resurrection*, May 1917, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives. Published in *The Christian Advocate*, 12 July 1917.
- <sup>60</sup> Simons to G. H. Jones, 23 November/6 December 1913, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>61</sup> North to Simons, 11 July 1917, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives. North reiterated his deep interest in 'the greatest opportunities' in Russia in letters to Simons on 21 August 1917, 28 September 1917 and 8 January 1918, when he also informed Simons of a \$1500 increase in the annual appropriation for Russia.
- <sup>62</sup> G. S. Eddy to Raymond Robins, 5 May 1917, Robins Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI. 'Our three best friends in Russia have been suddenly called to the chief places of power under the new government', Eddy continued, 'and a great future is opening for our work there.' Eddy planned to join Baron Paul Nicolay and to work 'from within their own Greek Orthodox Church'. However, Eddy apparently did not fulfil his plan, since he did not discuss a 1917 trip to Russia in his autobiographies *A Pilgrimage of Ideas* (New York, 1934) and *Eighty Adventurous Years* (New York, 1955).
- <sup>63</sup> 'Russia on the threshold of – what?', *TMRW*, vol. XL, May 1917, pp. 323–25.
- <sup>64</sup> George Simons, *The Moral Significance of America's Entrance into the War*, speech in Petrograd City Duma, 10/23 April 1917, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>65</sup> 'From Petrograd', *The Christian Advocate*, 8 November 1917, p. 1166. 'Five hundred hymns of Anglo-American origin translated into Russian are already gripping the Slavic heart', Simons wishfully added.
- <sup>66</sup> 'Liberty and license in Russia', *TMRW*, March 1918, pp. 163–64. Three months later Pierson was pleased to note that the 'unfortunate breaking down of law and order in Russia ... has not lessened the interest of American Christians in the spiritual welfare of Russians'. 'American interest in Russian evangelization', *TMRW*, June 1918, pp. 405–6.
- <sup>67</sup> Andrew Urshan, 'Russia and Pentecostal people of United States and Canada', *The Christian Evangel*, 30 November 1918.
- <sup>68</sup> Delavan Pierson criticised the Bolshevik 'reign of terror' and antireligious campaign more sharply than many other Protestant leaders, but he continued to stress the need and opportunity for evangelism. 'Unhappy Russia', *TMRW*, October 1918, p. 723; 'The twofold famine in Russia', *TMRW*, April 1923, pp. 252–54; 'Russia's religious chaos', *TMRW*, June 1923, pp. 421–24; 'Soviet Russia and religion', *TMRW*, November 1923, pp. 886–88.
- <sup>69</sup> Simons to Board of Foreign Missions, New York, 26 August 1918, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives; John R. Mott, 'A view of the situation in Russia', *TMRW*, March 1918, p. 174.
- <sup>70</sup> Simons to North, 7 October 1921, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives. Although Simons favoured cooperation with the Soviet government in educational and humanitarian work, conflicts with the ardently pro-Soviet Julius F. Hecker and Bishop J. L. Nuelsen led to the termination of his work in Russia. See Simons to Dr Fowles, 24 January 1923; Simons to North, 21 September 1923; Nuelsen, *Memorandum*, 21 June 1923, Russian Orthodox file; and Julius Hecker files, Missionary Files Series, United Methodist Church Archives. In later years Simons became a passionate opponent of 'the bloodthirsty Bolshevik antichrist'. See *Must Christian America Harm Christian Finland?*, excerpts from an address by Simons on 17 August 1941, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>71</sup> Malone, 'A Methodist venture in Bolshevik Russia', pp. 241–43, 250–51. Louis O. Hartman, who at Nuelsen's request represented the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Council of the Orthodox Church in 1923, credulously accepted Soviet promises of freedom of religion, hailed the espousal of 'the American principle of separation of Church and State' and expressed enthusiasm about a 'reformation' led by progressives similar to 'the more liberal evangelicals of America'. L. O. Hartman, 'The religious situation in Russia',



*TMRW*, August 1923, pp. 611–19.

- <sup>72</sup> H. J. Loeb sack, 'Through revolution and famine in Russia', *ARSH*, 15 June 1922; L. H. Christian, 'A visit to Soviet Russia', *ARSH*, 18 May 1922; E. Kotz, 'Good news from Soviet Russia', *ARSH*, 18 November 1926; Neufeld (ed.), *Seventh-Day Adventist Encyclopedia*, p. 1520; W. A. Spicer, 'Russia attacks week', *ARSH*, 24 October 1929.
- <sup>73</sup> J. T. Boettcher, *Report*, 1909, RG 21 (Incoming Letters: Foreign), SDA archive. Although Boettcher had been in Russia less than three years he complained that 'We have been driven out of our place of meeting a number of times.' For additional complaints about Orthodox opposition, see *ARSH*, 17 December 1908, 9 December 1909, 12 May 1910, 21 March 1912; *TMRW*, January 1909, p. 35; June 1913, p. 405; November 1913, p. 803.
- <sup>74</sup> *Stoite v vere! Stado Khristovo i lyutyie volki*, approved for publication 20 September 1911, printed in Kiev, 27 February 1917, Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives. Simons noted on the pamphlet he sent to the Methodist board that it was 'being extensively used in Russia'. William Fetler discussed and reprinted the cartoon in 'Revolution and religion in Russia', *TMRW*, May 1917, pp. 339–49. According to Fetler the illustration was published 'in one of the priestly papers in Moscow' about the time he first preached there.
- <sup>75</sup> Mark Elliott, 'East European missions, *perestroika* and Orthodox–Evangelical tensions', *Religion in Eastern Europe*, vol. XVI, no. 2, April 1996, pp. 15–25, esp. 17 and 20. See also the article by Mark Elliott and Sharyl Corrado in this issue of *RSS*.
- <sup>76</sup> Simons file, United Methodist Church Archives.
- <sup>77</sup> See, for example, Alexander Hume Ford, 'America's agricultural regeneration of Russia', *Century*, vol. LXII, no. 4, August 1901, pp. 501–7; Anna M. Babey, *Americans in Russia, 1776–1917* (New York, 1938), esp. p. 8; and Robert Bruce Davies, *Peacefully Working to Conquer the World: Singer Sewing Machines in Foreign Markets, 1854–1920* (New York, 1976), esp. preface.
- <sup>78</sup> Kennan, 'A voice for the people of Russia', *Century*, vol. XLVI, July 1893, p. 470; 'Russian state prisoners', *Century*, vol. XXXV, March 1888, pp. 765–66.
- <sup>79</sup> 'The situation in Russia', *TMRW*, June 1908, p. 407; Woodrow Wilson, *Address of 2 April 1917*, in Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson: War and Peace* (New York, 1927), vol. 1, pp. 11–13.
- <sup>80</sup> For some interesting comments along this line see Miroslav Volf, 'Fishing in the neighbor's pond: mission and proselytism as challenge to theology and church life in Eastern Europe', *Religion in Eastern Europe*, vol. XVI, no. 1, February 1996, pp. 34–47.