Stalinism and the punitive system of the Gulag left an indelible stamp on the entire social matrix of Russia. Because of the multidimensional and multigenerational nature of the trauma of Stalinism, Russian society retains the label of a traumatized culture. This dissertation explores the significance of this phenomenon for contemporary Christian mission in Russia.

The narratives of Varlam T. Shalamov’s Kolymskie Rasskazy provided an empirical (based on sensory evidence) inquiry into the reality of enormous sufferings experienced by the inmates of the Kolyma Gulag. Holy Scripture, on the other hand, provided the theological (faith-based) inquiry into the causes and implications of those sufferings. This study demonstrates that the traumatic microcosm of Shalamov’s characters belongs to the larger cultural world—namely, the macrocosm of everyday Stalinism.

A biblical-theological assessment of Stalinism reveals that once a totalitarian system of pseudo-religious theocracy was established, the result was a culture demoniacally infected by the worldview of Marxism-Leninism. Being not just a sociopolitical system, but a state of mind, the Stalinism resulted in the legitimization and institutionalization of a culture of lawlessness and death.

The method of socio-textual interaction, utilized throughout this study, sets forth a certain conception of Christian mission based on the commitment to liberation, healing, and transformation as envisioned in the Nazareth Manifesto of Jesus (Luke 4:16-21). At the heart of this approach to mission lies the Lukan imagery of a God who has compassion on “the poor” (the traumatized), who enters their dysfunctional oikos, casts out...
its demons, and calls humans to join *Familia Dei*.

The following three missiological strategies should be considered essential to the reality of post-Soviet society. First, the profoundly countercultural power of the worship service needs to be channeled toward healing the worshippers. Second, just as Jesus chose the family/household as both the social structure and spatial location for His ministry, so too the contemporary church-in-culture must consider this approach as her *modus operandi*. Finally, political participation suitable to the healing ministry of the Russian Christian community should be understood in terms of both creating an externally focused self-awareness and practical involvement in the life of the *polis*.

Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A Strategy to Strengthen the Role and Function of the District Pastor for Effective Leadership and Guidance of Local Churches in Ghana

Name of researcher: Paul Adu Sampah

Adviser: Rudi Maier, Ph.D.

Date completed: April 2008

Ever since the General Conference introduced Unions and Conferences to run local churches, progress of the gospel work in Ghana has been slow. Before their introduction, churches were grouped into districts and run by district pastors. Due to the high administrative expenditure at the conference and union level, local churches have poor pastoral care. When church administration is given back to the districts, the district pastor’s role strengthened, and conference expenditures reduced, more pastors can be sent to the churches and more money will be available for the local level.

Studies were carried out by reviewing current literature on church structures. Interviews with conference leaders, departmental directors, retired ministers, district pastors, church pastors, church elders, and all interest groups were conducted. A ministerial manual for district pastors was developed for future training needs.

A new administrative model that includes districts has been developed. A ministerial manual for the district pastors has also been developed. In order to strengthen the new church structure, a curriculum for training church leaders has been outlined with evaluation and monitoring tools. The restructuring of the church organization will hopefully free up more pastors for the work at the district level that will contribute to greater church growth in Ghana.

A new administrative structure including districts has been designed to be implemented throughout Ghana. A program to strengthen the roles and