

Trokosi of West Africa

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For hundreds of years in the Volta region of Ghana, West Africa, the Trokosi practice (Trokosi is a Ghanaian word meaning "slaves to the Gods") has been enslaving young virgin girls in ritualistic sexual bondage.

These innocent virgins, some as young as five years old, are given by their parents under the fear of the death curses of the Fetish (village) Priest to serve a life of slavery in the Fetish shrines as payment for the crimes and offenses of others. These shrines are compounds where idol worship takes place. It was in this region of Ghana where the voodoo cult originated and came to the Americas with the slave trade.

An aggrieved person determines what the crime or offense is and reports it to the shrine priest in order to punish the guilty party's family with mysterious deaths and diseases. It is then that the family is forced to send a young virgin to stop the curses believed to be caused by the Fetish gods. During the humiliating initiation ceremony, the new slave is stripped of any clothing except a cloth between her thighs. She is then paraded through her village. Read "Forgotten: Esther's Story".

I.N. Network Ghana was established in 1987 and is committed to the development of the rural and underprivileged people of Ghana. The Trokosi Liberation and Vocational Training Project springs from the compassion and vision of Rev. Walter Pimpong, who has built a relationship of trust with the Fetish priests and village elders over the years.

Working closely with the government, I.N. Network Ghana has played an integral part in passing a law on June 12, 1998 that made the Trokosi practice a criminal offense, punishable by a minimum of three years in jail. Even with the law, it's almost impossible to enlist the help of regional police because of their fear of the curse.

However, the power of God is at work as approximately 31 shrines have stopped the practice through the efforts of Rev. Pimpong and his staff, and over 3,500 women have been freed. But, there are still an estimated 2,000 more slave girls in bondage, not including their 8,000 children who are fathered by the priests and are also subjected to a life of captivity and abuse.

The political climate of Ghana now is right to eradicate the practice of slavery; therefore, it is the goal of I.N. Network Ghana and I.N. Network USA to affect the release and rehabilitation of these Trokosi over the next 3 to 5 years. The role of I.N. Network Ghana does not end with the release of these women--it is just the beginning. Each of them is welcomed into I.N. Network's Vocational Training Program which teaches them to read and write the local language, provides them with nutritious meals, healthcare/counseling, clothing, and equips each woman with a skill such as dressmaking, weaving, pottery, baking and hairstyling. These skills allow her to be self-sufficient and to eventually provide for herself and her children. The children also are rehabilitated through the loving staff at I.N. Network schools where they are clothed, provided with nutritional food, given a quality education and medical care.

Listen to the story of one girl's journey to Freedom from slavery and how the I.N. Network has played a role in this young woman's life. Please press the play arrow to start the audio clip.

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You can learn more about this important ministry by viewing the I.N. Network USA documentary video "Slaves to the God's", a 20-minute, gripping picture of God's love in action as you hear first-hand from the released Trokosi slave girls, visit their villages and see the Vocational Training facilities at Adidome, Ghana. Once you see it, you too will want to add your voice to the many who are already crying "Freedom"!

Support the Trokosi Freedom project with a one-time donation or monthly support. [Sponsor Now!](#)

{mospagebreak title=Page 2 Nicloe C. Mullen}

Moved by the story of the Trokosi slave girls as depicted in the I.N. Network video documentary "Slaves to the Gods", Nicole C. Mullen, Dove Award-winning Christian recording artist, did as she often has - she put her feelings into the song "Freedom".

With a snappy African beat and the back-up voices of the Uganda Children's Choir, Nicole captures the joy of freedom the released Trokosi slave girls discover as the chains fall away and their feet dance down the road of freedom.

The catchy lyrics keep bringing you back to the promise that those who Jesus sets free are free indeed. The truth that 95% of the freed Trokosi girls come to faith in Christ is highlighted as the chorus repeats "I'm gon' be free, no boundary of slavery can block my liberty."

You can get your own copy of Nicole's release, "Everyday People" at your local Christian bookstore or from Nicole's website.

Nicole had agreed to allow I.N. Network USA to use her popular song "Freedom" on the documentary video and, once she viewed the rough footage shot by filmmaker John Grooters and I.N. Network USA President Rody Rodeheaver, she donated her time for an on-camera endorsement of the project .

Please double click on the video screen or click on the play arrow to run the video. Please allow a few seconds for the video to load.

{mov}1_trokosi{/mov}

I.N. Network USA's President says "Nicole C. Mullen is a very gifted artist that takes her Christian commitment seriously. She has a heart of gold and a sensitivity for the Trokosi slave girls that is very moving and genuine. She's made a wonderful contribution to the cause."

In addition, Nicole is booking a special "Freedom Tour" to highlight the work of I.N. Network Ghana in freeing and restoring the Trokosi slaves. Nicole is hoping that her efforts will encourage thousands of people to pray and give in the support of freeing the 2000 Trokosi slave girls still in bondage along with their 8,000 children.

The "Freedom Tour" coincides with the release of Nicole's new CD called "Everyday People". Nicole's inspired new song, "Gon' B Free (Freedom)" about the Trokosi slaves, is featured on her album Everyday People. Each album has an insert that tells the Trokosi story. For more information on Nicole C. Mullen or a location of a "Freedom Tour" concert, follow the link to NicoleCMullen.com.

{mospagebreak title= Page 3 Trokosi FAQ}

One of the difficult issues for people in the West as they consider global ministries is the temptation to filter everything that happens in the world through our Western grid of experience and worldview. It is impossible to totally remove oneself from our enculturation. In order to assist people in understanding the Trokosi story, the following questions and answers can serve as a filter and enhancer of understanding:

How long has the Trokosi institution been in existence and is it tied to a specific religion?

The Trokosi practice can be traced back hundreds of years. It has always been connected to the African traditional religion. However, the Volta region, where the Trokosi are located, is also believed by many to be the place where voodoo originated and was exported to North America, through the slave trade.

How is the release of the fetish slaves accomplished? Do you pay a ransom to the fetish priest?

One of the principles that Rev. Pimpong established was that the girls must be released through negotiation and not by placing a price on the heads of the girls. This commitment contributes to a slower process of negotiation and relationship building between the I.N. Network Ghana staff and the fetish priests and village elders. However, the end result of this negotiated release is that the priests and the village elders agree to not take any more slaves and end the practice.

I.N. Network does pay for the costs of a liberation ceremony, which is performed by the priest. It is important for the slave girls to be psychologically released by these liberation rituals since they came into the Trokosi institution through rituals.

What the priest and the village elders come to realize through the negotiations is that the Trokosi institutions not only enslave the girls but they and their entire village is victimized by this evil and destructive practice. Cooperation with the I.N. Network opens their villages up to sanitation, water wells, and education for their children. Gaining opportunities for these types of community enhancements allows the priest and the elders to gain respect and status among their people.

What have been the long-term benefits of the Trokosi Liberation Project?

First of all, the slave girls are released with their children. They are given the opportunity to receive literacy and job skills training, Biblical counseling, medical treatment and placement in a safe environment where they can move from freedom to independence. Over 95% of the Trokosi girls come to faith in Christ.

Their children are also assimilated into the I.N. Network child sponsorship program which provides them with education, medical care and a hot meal each day.

In addition, the villages that free their slaves have done so through relationships with I.N. Network Ghana and that relationship continues with a plan to provide sanitation facilities, wells, and other basic community development tools. Often, an I.N. Network church planter has been part of the negotiating team and is frequently allowed to start a Church Plant in a school in the village. In one former Trokosi village, a 300-pupil school has been built and is being run on ground given to I.N. Network by the fetish priest. The whole culture is being changed a generation at a time.

The school buildings and operating costs are a result of financial support by I.N. Network donors in North America

First time visitors to Ghana are often amazed by the proliferation of Christian symbols and scripture verses on buildings, automobiles and billboards. Does this mean that Ghana is a Christian country?

This impression is deceiving and often leads to high percentages of population designated as Christian. There is about 64% of the population who would call themselves Christian. Of that figure, 33% would be considered evangelical. Unfortunately, there is a high degree of nominal Christianity. The Christian symbols and verses are frequently the equivalent of a spiritual rabbits foot. It is not unusual for people to continue to have idols in their home and consult them in difficult times.

There is also a growing population of Muslims in the North part of Ghana and the term Christian is employed from a political perspective to counter the growth of Islam.

What is the greatest need in the I.N. Network's ministry in Ghana?

Two things:

- Because the Trokosi institution is rooted in voodoo cults, intercessory prayer on behalf of the I.N. Network Ghana staff is extremely important. They need protection, wisdom and encouragement. Ephs. 6:12
- The funding of church planters, training of Trokosi girls and the education of their children is necessary to continue this battle against evil.