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CATHERINE NOLD

After her first 90 days serving as a missionary in Ghana, West Africa, newly commissioned International Ministries (IM) missionary Rovaughna Richardson had already begun to see God powerfully at work among the young people she teaches.

“The young girls I work with were once thought of as only being good for work as farmhands, fishermen’s helpers, sex slaves, domestic servants and ritual slaves who were thought to be carrying a curse for someone else,” Rovaughna explains.

“Now they are starting to ask about Christ,” she says. “Now they dream and write about goals of being shop owners, nurses, bakers, dressmakers, cosmetologists, weavers, carpenters and even a medical doctor. Some can even share why they are good and special!

It's amazing to see the progress and the hope shining through. Just this week, a girl asked me to teach her how to pray. Last week, another accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior during a counseling session."

The Ghana Baptist Convention's Baptist Vocational Training Center (BVTC) where Rovaughna serves is growing. Now 82 students are enrolled there—71 girls and 11 boys.

The majority of the residents are young women who have been rescued from the practice of *trokosi*. According to this now-illegal tradition, young girls (8–12 years of age) can be given as slaves to local shrines to atone for a family member's misdeeds. The girls are then forced to endure a lifetime of labor, sexual and physical abuse and social isolation. Those who are able to leave trokosi slavery must learn not only job skills and basic educational competencies such as reading and writing, but also how to care for themselves and interact with others.

Drawing on over 10 years of experience as a social worker in the U.S., Rovaughna provides 30 girls with individual counseling, facilitates the weekly support group for the center's 71 girls and leads the weekly Business Skills Development Seminar for all of the students.

Rovaughna expresses deep thanks to her supporters all around the country who believe in this ministry, as well as to IM Area Director for Africa the Rev. Dr. Eleazar Ziherambere and the domestic staff at IM.

"I love it. There's never a boring moment!" Rovaughna says. "Yet there's still a lot of work to be done to develop the counseling and social work program."

Please help Rovaughna by praying:

- That God will continue to make plain the primary needs of the girls and that resources will be made available to address those needs.
- That this ministry will help put an end to the practice of trokosi.
- For the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical health of the girls and boys of BVTC and as well as of Rovaughna.
- For the health, well being and vibrancy of Mission Partnership Team members, volunteers and supporters.
- That Rovaughna will become fluent in the Ewe language within a year to better support the students who are not yet fluent in English and to better navigate the Ewe and West African culture.

To receive Rovaughna's monthly updates, click "Join the Network" on [her IM profile page](#). View her blog at www.RovaughnaRichardson.com.

To send words of encouragement or support, contact Rovaughna at r.richardson@internationalministries.org.

IM welcomes comments on [Facebook](#).

For more information, contact catherine.nold@internationalministries.org.