SHORT TERM MISSION?

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Category: Observations

In 1962 Mary Steele arrived in Ghana to work as a Bible translator. Moving up to the North of the country, which was very under-developed at the time with few schools, Mary started work on the Konkomba language.

When the Konkomba New Testament was completed and local language literacy well underway, Mary started work in another language, Bimoba.

Then when the Bimoba NT was translated, she returned to help the Konkomba team work on the Old Testament.



Last night I attended a reception at the British High Commission in Accra to celebrate Mary's 52 years of service to this country. Perhaps the most remarkable intervention was from a former government minister from the Konkomba area who said that he and other successful Konkombas could not have received an education and done as well as they did without the work of the woman they call their mother.

Mary's story brought to mind a recent blog post by Rollin Grams in which he writes:

> *The local church can support a missionary perspective by separating the recent concept of â€˜short-term missionsâ€™ from â€˜missionaries.â€™ Missionaries are called into a life-time of cross-cultural ministry. They are skilled in cross-cultural interaction, Biblically educated (or should be!), able to share the Gospel clearly, and working to evangelize, plant churches, and nourish people and churches in the faith through training in the Scriptures and for ministry. Their example is Paul the apostle and his missionary team, not the Peace Corps or the Red Cross.*

Not everyone has the health and strength to serve for 52 years, but mission work is by its nature a long-term venture. This is something our short-term church culture needs to grasp.

