

Personal Adjustments Due to EPI

SPIRITUAL ADJUSTMENTS

My wife and I cannot get over God's grace, goodness and faithfulness to us. We sense we are changing the world and God is giving us power to accomplish the task (1 Thess. 1:5). Many times my wife and I will look at each other and say, "Who'd of ever thunk it!" At no time did I experience this kind of blessing and power as a pastor in the United States.

OVERSEAS ADJUSTMENTS

1. **Cultural.** We often must live in conditions where there is no electricity, no running water, bathing must be done out of buckets with unclean water, the use of squat latrines, no air conditioning or heat, and all water must be drunk from a sealed bottle. Even in the larger cities like Nairobi, there is electricity only every other day for part of the day, often between 2:00 and 6:00 am. Eating a completely different diet—no variety, plain and sometimes unsanitary.
2. **Supernatural Phenomena.** There is much more observable supernatural phenomena in developing countries—healings, dreams, visions, spiritual gifts, etc. This often does not match our Reformed "God-box."
3. **Needs of the Developing Countries.** The poverty and needs of a growing church are endless. Africans, saved and unsaved, are constantly asking for money—the majority of those needs are legitimate. Most Africans think Americans are rich.
4. **Isolation and Loneliness.** When in the bush there is no way to contact the outside world. Occasionally we can get news of the BBC through short-wave radio, but very little about America. When no news comes from family or friends it's hard. When I travel without Carol I get lonely.
5. **Satanic and Demonic Activity.** There are attacks through strange happenings, discouragement, extreme tiredness, direct opposition from government or religion. You learn to live with spiritual warfare.
6. **Use of an Interpreter.** Often an interpreter must be used in teaching. This takes special skill. One is at the mercy of his interpreter. A good or bad interpreter will make a big difference if the audience is to really get the truth of the Bible.
7. **Denominational Differences.** While denominationalism is all through the world, the issue of denominations is not as strong overseas. Generally Roman Catholics and Baptists take the hardest lines. All Christians agree on 85% of doctrinal truth and fight over 15%.
8. **Living with Danger.** Most travel in the developing countries is done in old vehicles over dangerous roads. People are killed in car accidents daily. Matatu (taxi) drivers are lethal. There is always the possibility of getting serious diarrhea, skin diseases or severe cold viruses.
9. **Center of Attention.** When in the bush, Carol and I are often the only white people in the area. The children are afraid of us as they are told that white people kidnap children. Some touch our

skin to see if the white rubs off. When in the Middle East we were the only Americans on the airplane. Many times we feel like we are constantly watched.

10. **Flexibility.** Rarely do events start on time. People come an hour late or more. Talks and subjects are changed or added ten minutes before speaking. One must learn to go with the flow. We often look at each other and say, “Only in Africa!”
11. **Travel.** Travel is long and hard, sitting in cramped seats for 10-14 hours. Sometimes planes are delayed, flights are missed, and luggage is lost. The airplane food on most airlines and in the airports is of poor quality.
12. **Servanthood.** Learning to be a servant to the national church is a great challenge. We go not as the white man who thinks he knows everything about missions or who goes to plant churches American style. We go humbly as God’s servants to help the emerging church any way we can and any way they want us to be involved in the developing countries.

HOME ADJUSTMENTS

1. **Use of Time.** When in the States we must deal with long hours (writing, notes, raising finances, administrating EPI, missions speaker, etc.) tiredness and jetlag.
2. **Home Office.** We must learn to operate out of our home for all of EPI’s administrative activity. Learning to work 24 hours a day in the home with your wife as your secretary is a huge adjustment.
3. **Being Away From Home.** While EPI is based out of Winter Springs we are only home about 3 ½ months a year—the rest we are overseas, raising support, conference speaking, visiting family). Our home is often used by others while we are gone. Our cars are loaned out, sometimes without our knowledge. We have to remind ourselves that our home is the New Jerusalem, the heavenly country, and in the not too distant future, we will go to our real home in heaven forever.
4. **Asking For Financial Support.** The most difficult thing for me to do is ask individuals and churches to give money to support EPI. I went for 35 years as a pastor in the USA and never asked for money for myself. I asked for money for missions, for buildings, for social projects, etc. but never had to directly ask for myself. Today I am constantly asking for support – this is very different and uncomfortable for me.