

Missionaries Readjust After 10 Years in Third World

Ed and Linda Baker spent the last decade abroad, living in a tent in Third World countries, digging wells and spreading the gospel.

Nowadays, the couple feels more like foreigners in their Lawrenceville, Ga., home.

"I still assume there's going to be an animal somewhere," Linda Baker said recently. "Any animal you can think of, we had in our house."

Both Methodists "pretty much from birth," the Bakers raised their family in the metro Atlanta area, Ed a civil engineer and Linda a database consultant. They dabbled in missionary work in the '90s, traveling to Honduras after Hurricane Mitch.

They bought their home a few miles outside downtown Lawrenceville in October 2000. Within two months, they were bound for Central America.

Aside from the occasional, brief return voyage—to see the births of their two grandchildren—they wouldn't come back for another 10 years.

"We quit our jobs, sold the house that we raised our kids in and left for the field," Ed Baker said.

Hooking up with the Norcross-based Mission Society, the plan, originally, was for the Bakers to spend five years in "the field." They soon learned it would take much more time to feel they had completed their work.

"In the first couple of years, you're just really figuring everything out," Ed Baker said. "You don't know the people, you don't know the culture, you can't really effectively

relate to people.”

The journey began with a year in Costa Rica and ended with two in Nicaragua. In between, the heart of their mission, was seven years spent in rural areas of Paraguay, a landlocked South American country sandwiched between Brazil and Argentina.

Read the rest of this story in the *Gwinnett Daily Post*.