



Jason & Emily Atkins

Ministering in Guinea-Bissau

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What We've Been Up To *by Emily*

Question: What do a fiery furnace, snowcapped mountains, and a group of excited elementary school students have in common?

Answer: Us! Among other things this past month we counseled at a weekend youth retreat at Simpson Park Camp, went to Candidate Orientation with Youth for Christ in Denver, and spoke to a group of third through sixth graders at a Christian school in Imlay City. It was a blast!



By the end of the weekend I was wishing for a giant fiery furnace!

Youth Retreat

The youth retreat was pretty chilly but great! I was the speaker Friday night, Saturday morning, and Saturday night. We used the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to talk about the importance of knowing what you stand for and who will stand with you.

YFC Candidate Orientation

We left the retreat and drove straight for Chicago where we hopped on a train to Denver, Colorado, for Candidate

Orientation with YFC. The week-long training is a time for YFC to get to know potential full-time missionaries and for us to get to know how they operate. After personality and marriage tests, budget meetings, a mandatory morning with a counselor, and many days of information sessions about how YFC works, we emerged unscathed and fully approved to be full-time Youth for Christ missionaries!!!!



The group of Candidates at Orientation.

Imlay City Christian School

Jason's youngest brother Eli is in fifth grade and his class has been studying Africa for the past few weeks. His teacher wanted the kids to hear about life in Africa first-hand so she invited Jason and I to come and spend an hour with grades 3-6. We had a great time telling them stories about what life is like and what kinds of things missionaries do to help people in other countries. We did some acting that showed them how people in Guinea-Bissau greet one another and we talked about how they like to say things that might seem blunt and obvious to us. We had them laughing quite a bit with a story about the time my friends tricked me into eating fish eyes and about the time when a goat tied to the top of our taxi peed on Jason. A few days later they sent us a thank you note with a poem that they wrote telling about the highlights of our presentation. It made us laugh so much that I included it for you.

Continued...

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Hi whitey-white skin! How are you?
You are fat! I'm fine, thank you.

Roses are red, cashews are green,
unless they're cooked they'll make you scream!

We eat fish eyes, yes, it's true! Even though they look like goo.
...Now that you've eaten fishy eyes, Ha ha! We've just told you lies.

Goat are on buses, you are too.
If you get in a crash, they pee on you!

Love 5 and 6 grade.



You ate what?!?!

Voices of Guinea-Bissau

We love so many people that we've met in Guinea-Bissau and we thought it might be fun for you to get to know a few of them too. We decided that we would do some short interviews with some of our friends in Guinea-Bissau and publish them in our newsletters so you could see the country from their perspective. This month we interviewed Fernando Gomes Co. Some of you know Fernando already because he came to the States for six months to study English, and during that time he was at Simpson Park Camp with us.

What do you do at the YFC Youth Center in Guinea-Bissau?

Fernando: I am an English teacher and the director of the English department. One of my roles as the director is to make sure that the teachers are doing their homework, like correcting the students' papers and making the tests.

Why do you like being an English teacher?

Fernando: It makes me study, like knowing beforehand what I am going to teach, and in doing that I learn a lot. Also, it gives me a chance to practice my English all the time.

Why is it good for people in Guinea-Bissau to learn English?

Fernando: Guinea Bissau is way behind in the field of education compared to the neighboring countries. For example, in the capital city I think there is just one library. Also we know that half of the information online is either in English or French. So if someone can speak, read, and understand English, they could learn a lot by themselves just by going to the internet.

Why do people in Guinea-Bissau need Jesus?

Fernando: Because Satan is controlling people's lives here. Everyone here that is not Christian is so afraid of Satan. They think that if they kill their animals for food or sell some to help educate their children, Satan will do something terrible to them. Fear of Satan is ruining everything here. There is extreme poverty in the whole country because almost everybody is working for Satan. Even the politicians ask for power in the hands of Satan. So, when they get it, they do what pleases Satan.

How did you become a Christian?

Fernando: The short version is that my dad inherited a small compound in his village with all the shrines (idols) from his ancestors and he worshiped them. If someone was sick in the family he would ask his shrines to heal the person. One time one of his wives (my step mother) was very sick and everyone in the family was desperate. My dad asked his gods but nothing happened. He did all kinds of ceremonies; nothing. She was getting worse and worse. There were some missionaries from England in my village. They heard about my family's distress and came down to my neighborhood and asked my dad if they could pray for his wife. Since my dad wanted healing for his wife he said, yes and the missionaries prayed for her and she was miraculously healed. After my dad saw that, he said, "From today my household will follow the white people's God." That's how I began my relationship with God. Several years later my dad knew that he was about to die so he burnt all his idols and really gave his life to Jesus. It was pretty neat to see that event taking place.



Fernando posing for GQ ©



Fernando teaching Level 3 English

Support Raising

We've been encouraged by the support people have shown us so far and are excited to see God provide the rest of the funding needed for us to return to Guinea-Bissau.

Jaxon + Emily

