



# The Atkins Family

Ministering in Guinea-Bissau

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Jason welding a plasma table leg.



The skeleton of the table taking shape and already hard at work!



Jason's intern, Widafa, got a lot of welding practice making the plasma table.

## It's a... by Jason

Our shop has given birth to an exciting new addition! While in the States, I did a lot of research and some concentrated deal hunting to find the components to build a new piece of equipment for our shop -- a plasma table. We were able to build it for around a quarter of the cost of a similar new machine, and gain some experience using our other new equipment while making it!

A plasma table uses compressed air and a boat load of electricity to cut flat steel plate. In our case, anything from thin sheet metal up to 3/4" thick plate!

The system uses a computer controlled head that moves above the piece it is cutting to cut the design you've created. They're commonly used in the U.S. to cut all kinds of parts from sheet metal signs for businesses and custom off-road truck parts to air conditioning ducts and everything in between. After building the table, we were able to run some quick tests and try a few first cuts before having to break it back down for paint and transport. The sign pictured is about 2 feet tall and was cut out of sheet metal on the table in about 5 minutes (aside from the time designing it).

We hope that eventually the table will be able to be a revenue source to help fund the ongoing operations of the shop as well as give us a rapid prototyping tool that will help with all



Widafa, Bill, and Jason getting the electronics working for the computer-controlled cutting head of the plasma table.



Jason used the partially finished plasma table to make several of the parts needed to finish it. Here's the cutting torch in action.

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A freshly painted sign cut from sheet metal using the plasma table.

of the small agriculture machines we're excited to develop! It's fun watching people's eyes light up as they see it work for the first time. It's the only computer-controlled tool of its kind in Guinea-Bissau, as far as I can discover – so it's fun seeing people see a totally new thing.

I'm sure in the coming months as we finish painting and reassembly of the machine that we'll have some more pictures of projects it has been involved in!

There's a short video of it working at <http://youtu.be/ZqztbahArrc> or linked on our website!

### The Explorer Becomes a Pickup *by Jason*

When we were given the opportunity to buy a well-maintained Explorer from a missionary family leaving the field several years ago, we jumped at it! They gave us a great deal and the car has been a workhorse ever since. For a lot of work we do, however, a pickup would be very handy. Compact (Ranger/Dakota sized) pickups here though, are \$30,000 new or \$15,000 for a 7-10 year-old very used version! So, instead of trying to switch to a more expensive and less family friendly compact pickup, I've been on the hunt for a way to turn our Explorer into a pickup when necessary with a tough trailer.



The trailer, ready to head to its first jobsite, loaded down with a cement mixer, a wheelbarrow, shovels, and 25 gallons of water.

Trailers aren't nearly as common here as they are in the U.S., so there aren't many used ones. Fortunately, while scouring the scrap yard for material for a project, I recently found a broken down trailer that we bought and are outfitting! It had been used at the Bissau airport for years with a big generator on it, so it's pretty stout!

We're still in the process of rebuilding it, but so far things look promising. We took it for a first test run to pour cement pads for a shipping container storage unit at the water filter factory site, and although its deck isn't finished, we used it to haul equipment, sand, gravel, and water, and it didn't complain a bit!

Hopefully soon we'll find time/material to put a good deck, sides, and lights on it!

### Friends *by Emily*

When we got back to Guinea-Bissau in November, Savannah was lonely. She missed the friends she had made in the U.S. and she was so used to speaking easily in English that she was too shy to say much in Creole. So, I started to pray – for language skills, for friends, for my little girl. We had a few different kids over, but because of superstitions about white people, they were terrified of Jason; and out in the neighborhood or at church, she got too shy to talk much in big groups.



Everybody loves Legos.

Then, over the past few weeks we found several little Guinean girls who live nearby who have started coming over to play. All of a sudden Savannah started saying words in Creole and actually really enjoying spending time with people who don't speak English again.

I am constantly amazed at all the ways that God provides for us – even down to the motivation for a three year old to branch out into a new language. I've always known that nothing is too big for God, but sometimes it's not the huge stuff, but the small ways He takes care of us that mean the most!

### Election Runoff *by Emily*

The votes are in from the run off May 18, and Guinea-Bissau has a new president. The voting process was peaceful and efficient and we're hopeful that the next few months will be too.



Jason welding some i-beams to support the deck on our trailer.



Tricycle time with Maranata.

*Jason + Emily*