



The Atkins Family
Ministering in Guinea-Bissau

October 2014

New Role *by Jason*

One of the exciting changes that came with moving our shop and family out to partner with the WAVS school in Canchungo is the opportunity to help out with their metal fabrication school. Their next class of students arrived this past week to begin training for a new career. Though we are still defining exactly what role I will have, I will be teaching some classes to their students, mostly to try to help them embrace more modern (though still simple) tools to help them work more quickly, safely, and with better accuracy. Cirilo (sih-ril-o) is the program’s instructor, and seems excited to have me help improve some of their processes.

A fun example happened last week when they needed to cut the pieces of sheet metal for eight doors (pictured below) from larger sheets. They are used to doing this task either with a chisel and sledge hammer, or carefully cutting with an angle grinder. The results are time consuming, less than straight, and often leave a really jagged edge. With a pair of tools in our shop, we were able to make quick work of the whole task, ending up with straight, smooth lines. It’s fun to see people’s eyes open big the first time they see a new tool in use and realize just how much time it can save compared to the way everyone is used to doing it here.

We also continue our primary mission of supporting the local church and outreach projects through shop work. We had the privilege this month of beginning work on 15 two-person desk/bench combinations for a missionary’s school out on the remote islands. It’s exciting to be able to be a part of showing God’s love to those who have been forgotten by much of the rest of the world by helping to meet their tangible needs. Thank you for helping us in this through your giving!

English Teacher Training Round Two – The Canchungo Edition *by Emily*

After I finished the week-long English teacher training at the Youth Center in Bissau we had a week of furious packing so that we could head out to Canchungo for Jason to teach a week-long training with the welding teachers and interns from a neighboring electrical school. The WAVS school where Jason’s new shop is also has a small English school, and

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Cirilo standing by one of the doors made using Jason's sheet metal sheers at the WAVS welding school



Tube steel getting cut to make desks for the island school



Mario, one of the English teachers at WAVS, working during the teacher training seminar at our house

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two days before we left, knee deep in suitcases, I found out that the school had assumed that I could do a training for the English teachers while Jason was training the others!

I'm not great with surprises and since I don't know anyone in Canchungo who could watch the kids, I was a little thrown. Since there are only four teachers I asked if we could do the training at our house and they graciously agreed. Contrary to my brain's natural worst case scenario predictions (Jason would say that I'm a pessimist, but I prefer the term "realist") the training went wonderfully. The teachers were at our house from 9 to 12 every morning. Nathaniel extended his morning naps and slept pretty much the whole time every day, Savannah made sandcastles with the neighbors, and I loved getting to know the English teachers. We worked on teaching techniques and English writing skills and I made four new friends in the little town that is our new home.

Far Reaching Effects of Ebola in the Region *by Emily*

In all of the small towns and villages across Guinea-Bissau there are weekly market days. Vendors travel from town to town and set up stalls filled with used clothes and shoes, colorful fabric, spices, and fruit and vegetables that are grown in other regions.

In Canchungo (the small town where we now live) this happens every sixth day. When I asked last week what day would be market day, I found out that there wouldn't be one. A large number of the traveling merchants are from Guinea (the country just south of us where the current Ebola outbreak started) and ever since the border was closed to help control the spread of the Ebola virus, the weekly markets across the country have stopped.

Because all of the countries in West Africa are so small, they rely on trade from neighboring countries, and since the borders have been closed there have been shortages of food and lots of other essential things. If the tide of the Ebola outbreak doesn't turn soon the victims of the outbreak won't just be people who have been infected with the virus itself.

Currently, in the capital, bulldozers are scraping piles of trash off the streets as part of a country-wide clean up effort to stop the spread of Ebola in the region (see photo below).

We're continuing to pray for the end of the outbreak. For wisdom for the governments in the countries affected. For wisdom for the governments in the countries who are sending doctors and treatment supplies. For safety for the brave doctors and nurses treating the sick. And most of all, for scared and hopeless people to find God in the midst of all of the suffering and heartache around them.

Jason + Emily



Savannah and her friends playing in the sand pile



Scraping piles of trash off the streets in the capital



This dead papaya tree on our back steps is covered with baby snails.

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