



The Atkins Family

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The Atkins family-of-five flew back to Guinea-Bissau on March 1

February 2016



The kids made new friends on every flight.



Speaking in Healdsburg: it's always a privilege to share our life & ministry with a church family!



The kids were very impressed by the giant Redwood trees.

Wild Western Adventure by Emily

Our kids are seasoned travelers, but with three of them now, Jason and I are officially outnumbered! Last month we decided to put our family-of-five traveling skills to the test with a marathon trip across the western U.S.

We started in Denver, meeting with our supervisors at Youth For Christ to set the ministry agenda for the next term and talk about some new policies for overseas staff. While we were there we got to see several dear friends and eat some fun Mexican food at Illegal Pete's.

Then we flew to San Francisco and journeyed north to Healdsburg, California, where we stayed with our friend Richard, the chemist who brought everyone together to build the water filter factory in Guinea-Bissau. He and Jason spent hours talking through the next phases in getting the factory up and running. We also had the opportunity to speak at his church and meet with a team of people who are coming out to Guinea-Bissau in April. We took the kids to see some pretty amazing Redwood trees and enjoyed a California favorite - In-N-Out Burger.

From there we went to Seattle to speak at another church and spend some time with the missionaries who founded WAVS (the

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vocational school we are partnered with in Canchungo). We didn't eat at any famous Seattle restaurants (though I did think about getting coffee from an official Seattle Starbucks) but we did get to see the Pacific Ocean. I even got to wade quickly out into it when Savannah's shoe suddenly fell off and started floating rapidly away - not an activity I'd recommend in January in Washington (brrrrrrr), but a mom's gotta do what a mom's gotta do!

We weren't sure what to expect, jamming so much travel into three weeks, but God provided the funds and we even got an amazingly cheap deal on the plane tickets. When we boarded our first flight in the Detroit airport there was a small part of me that thought we might be a little crazy; however, the kids loved the adventure, and we came back with a whole new vision for the next several years of ministry, and some new friends as well! After so much flying, Nathaniel is asking pretty much every day if we get to go on an airplane today or not - soon enough, little world traveler, soon enough. :-)

Never a dull moment with Miriam
by Emily

Growing up I always longed to be a mother, but when we decided that we were ready to start adding children into our life, we were living in West Africa. I was more than a little intimidated at the thought of raising my kids in such a dangerous place. With almost no access to doctors and our family so far away, I knew that we would have to depend on God in a deeper way for the strength to take care of them and for their protection.

Right after that, God blessed us with Savannah, and she was the world's healthiest baby. Then we added Nathaniel, another healthy Atkins who did great in Guinea-Bissau. Then our third child, Miriam, took her sweet time coming into this world (we finally induced labor 12 days after her due date), and when she was born in October we breathed a sigh of relief, thanking God again for another healthy baby who would join in our family's calling to life and ministry in Guinea-Bissau.

Then, at her one-week check-up, we found out that she might have a rare thyroid disorder requiring daily medicine and regular blood work. The test result was borderline and many of you began to pray for her healing. Further blood work over the next three months showed the problem getting worse, but we did not feel like God was telling us that she would need to stay in the U.S. So, as we continued to pray, we started finding out about treatment options, insurance requirements, and medication and testing availability in Guinea-Bissau. It was all pretty overwhelming, but right in the middle of it God reminded us that He had not forgotten where we live and what He had called us to do when He gave us this child.

Then the day before our January 29 appointment with a Pediatric Endocrinologist to get her on a treatment plan, we did one more blood test, and the result was completely normal! After an examination, the doctor confirmed that her little body was totally healed and there's no reason why this should be a problem for her again in the future!

Thank you for your prayers for us as we walked through the past three months. In the midst of the uncertainty we were filled with peace. Thank you for your prayers for Miriam - God provided, right on time!

Jason + Emily



Em's parents with their grandkids. It's going to be hard for our kids to leave our family this time!



Praise the Lord for our healthy baby girl!!!



Saying goodbye to winter before we fly out - who needs a sled when you have a feed sack!



The kids had a ball playing trains with Richard and Carla in California.