



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau with



October 2018

Emily is in Little Rock!

Emily's Extraordinary Expedition *by Emily*

Flying to and from Guinea-Bissau is always an adventure, and this journey to the U.S. was no exception. My trip included 4 flights (two painfully rescheduled after delays wreaked havoc with the best laid plans), 3 continents, and 50 hours of travel; but in the end I walked out of the final security check point in the Little Rock airport into a giant hug from my dad, and it was all worth it. I will be at my parents' house in Arkansas until the end of November, helping out as mom recovers from extensive abdominal surgery to remove ovarian cancer.

Normally on these multi-day, multi-flight, multi-continent treks, Jason and I assume very different roles. He deals with the tickets and schedules, the customs forms and visas, and the customer service lines and agents when something invariably gets complicated. I

haul around a bag of snacks, little games, and spare sets of kiddo clothes, and make sure everyone has had something to eat and drink and currently has something to do. I know where everyone is and how they are feeling and what exciting thing is coming up next that we can chat about to pass the time, and I always keep track of where the nearest potty is. Because I was flying by myself there were no tiny hands to hold or emergency potty trips, and it was quite strange to be the one stating my case again for the third customer service agent in Portugal, figuring out which gates to go to as flights were moved around, and filling out customs forms as I entered and exited different countries.

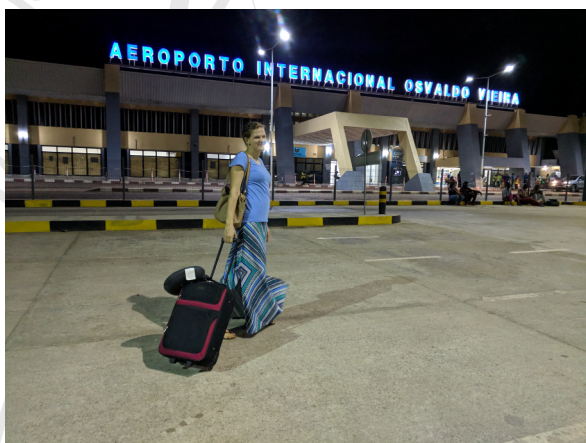
My mom, Linda, is two weeks out from her surgery and getting a little stronger every day. Next week I'll go with her to the follow up appointments

from her two surgeries and to see her oncologist to set a date for restarting her chemotherapy. She will need to have three more treatments with the chemo she was on before the surgery, and then they plan to switch her to a milder chemo and give her regular treatments with that for a little over a year.

Thank you for praying for her healing and for our whole family to have the ability to see God at work in and through all of this. Our God is with us on the easy days and the difficult ones, and He has been blessing us all with peace as we walk through this one step at a time.

The Welding Program Grows! *by Jason*

I'm excited to announce that our 9 month intensive welding training course at the vocational school took a big leap this year, growing from 12 students last year to 17 this year, its biggest year yet! We now have more equipment than we've had in the past, and although welding is still hosted in a pretty small space, we've arranged the equipment to increase the number of





Jason's Recent Conversation

Local mechanic: Also, here, I just need you to change these engine valves.

Me: What?

LM: No, they're from a different truck, I just need you to make them the same as this (holding up obviously different valve, as if this is a totally normal request.)

Me: What? The taper and diameter are different. The one you're asking me to copy is totally worn, and they have different retaining clip channels.

LM: Yeah, they're from a different truck. Just make them all like this (holds up the example again.)

Me: Ok... *Is this done here?*

LM: Yeah, every machinist knows how to do this.

Me: I imagine that steel is forged and really hard. Seems like it would be pretty hard to cut, no?

LM: I don't know, they do it. I'm sure you can figure it out.

Me: Ok. I'm going to need to figure out something I've never done, cutting really hard but spindly metal and it needs to end up exact in order to work. What do you usually pay for this?

LM: \$2 a piece.



The Welding Program Grows! (cont'd) by Jason

... students we can train. Being more remote than schools in the capital, classes



New welding students learning to use different measurement tools.

at the school often don't fill up, but this year welding was already encouraging people to sign up for 2019/20 because the course was full (even at its newly expanded size) for this year, before registration closed!

We're finishing our first week of classes, which included training on safety, a day on measurement and marking, first cuts with a hacksaw, and the students' first experience with stick welding. It'll be exciting to watch their progress through the year as

they learn to use grinders, bandsaws, wire welders, tube bending, and all kinds of other fun skills on their way to being ready to work as fabricators by next August, hopefully able to support their families by finding work or opening their own little shops!

Fixing the school well again by Jason

The well at the school is too shallow to properly support a water pump (it was dug for a bucket on a rope), and political problems involving land have prevented us from drilling a proper one. Just about every year or so, because of the silt being sucked through the pump sitting in shallow water, the pump requires rebuilding or replacement. Each year I try something new to try to slow the damage. We just installed the most recent edition, which is a much slower, physically shorter pump, to try to keep it up higher from the silt.

The pump controller has sensors to shut the pump off if the water level in the well gets below the pump. Unfortunately, they weren't included in what was sent for some reason, so we had to machine new ones from brass stock. Every time a need like that pops up that we can just handle on the spot, I'm thankful again for all of the capabilities our shop equipment provides.



The school's new maintenance guy, Quidam (kee-dahm), getting his first experience on the vertical mill-making brass probes for the pump.



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