



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

May 2024

May was packed getting everything ready for the rainy season and our time in the States!

Good To The Last Drop *by Jason*

I am delighted and relieved to announce that we are finally done pouring the new workshop's slab! The nearly 5,000 square foot building has a 6" thick slab to deal with the weight of machines, vibrations, and loaded pallet jacks. In total, the floor was poured in 23 sections, totaling about 100 cubic yards of concrete, mixed in approximately 530 batches in our single-sack gas cement mixer. (Our sacks are about 15% bigger than in the U.S. for some reason.) Although not perfect, I'm excited about how the slab came out and glad that we were able to finish it before the rainy season arrived and ruined the compaction of the subgrade under it. (Emily would point out that we cut it as close as possible, as the first rain fell the evening we finished the last pour! I still say we made it by the deadline, so on time, haha...)



As you've seen in previous newsletters, we already have a good start on several of the shop's walls. We'll continue the process of laying block, pouring columns and bond beams, and eventually roofing the building before turning to interior finishing, electrical, plumbing, and the like. While it may seem like we're just beginning, as we've only now finished the last of the floor, the foundation and slab were slow, but the process of building the walls will go relatively quickly. It's (cont'd)



School's Out *by Emily*

The kids and I finished 7th, 5th, and 2nd grades about a month before our departure date for the U.S. They were excited to have some extra time to play with friends, and I was looking forward to doing a lot of extra sewing and gardening between all of the packing. They did get a lot of time with their friends, and I did get the house packed up, my garden beds cleaned out and cover crops planted, all of my mending done, and 2 dresses made; however, the month of May was quite a bit busier for me than I had planned.



When we told our church at the end of April that we had tickets and would be leaving in the beginning of June, everyone decided to schedule me to speak as much as possible before we left. I preached at our church and at our sister church, and taught every week at women's discipleship group and Sunday school for the whole month. Thank goodness school was already out for the summer!



Good To The Last Drop (cont'd) *by Jason*

(...) exciting to see the building getting more three dimensional and looking more and more like it eventually will. When standing in the middle the walls now seem quite tall (even though they're not at full height yet), and the building already has an echo.

Thank you again for your faithful support through this building project. We're excited to have reached another important milestone on the way to a permanent home for the shop and expansion of the reach of its programs through training and helping other church and development organizations with their mechanical needs.



Right: Here's the site as we're leaving it. What a beautiful place!

Getting Ready To Go *by Jason*

Our early June flight to the U.S. meant that all of the work we need to do each year to be ready for the rainy season to arrive coincided with the work we do to button things up before leaving for furlough. It was extra complicated because of the shop equipment being spread across two sites this time. Fortunately, with Emily's diligent work at home and the help of my hard-working crew at the site, we were able to get things out of the path of the gusty rains and buttoned up safely to weather both the humidity and our time away. We look forward to a time when the new shop is built and much more rain-proof than the current one in order to protect the shop equipment. We're also excited for our new house which won't suffer nearly as many plumbing leaks, gushes of rainwater driven inside under doors, and bugs invading the many cracks in the walls, foundation, and floors of the current house.



Some of the work to get ready for the rainy season was simply putting material and tools inside after being used to not having rain for months.



In other cases, we needed to finish work that was in process but would be damaged by the rain, like pouring the ceiling of the one-room basement in our house whose formwork was already in place but susceptible to rain damage if left unpoured.



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