



The Atkins Family

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Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

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We are making progress
and looking forward to
the end of the rains!

A Sanctuary Full of Tents *by Emily*

I have been teaching kids' Sunday school at our church for a few years now, but this past month I had a Sunday school teacher first - teacher training camp. The organization Child Evangelism Fellowship has excellent Sunday school resources in many languages, including Portuguese. In addition to curriculum, they also have teacher training materials, and they have established a network of churches in Guinea-Bissau who all get together for training events over summer break (which is mid-July to early October here).

A group of Guinean pastors and lay leaders has done a ton of work to put all of the training materials into Portuguese Creole, and this past month they used that material to hold a 4-day intensive teacher training camp for the teachers from a whole group of churches from our county. It was held in a town about an hour from me, and since my kids have already started school I wasn't able to attend all 4 days, but I did take public transit out and back to be there all day on Saturday.

(The transportation was a whole adventure just on its own. Each way I was in a Kandonga, which is a 12-passenger van into which they cram 21 people (live chickens are inside with the passengers, live goats and pigs ride tied up on the roof). It's exactly as comfortable as it sounds, haha. On the way there, the van was so full of holes that it was actually raining on me through the ceiling. The van on the way back broke down twice, turning the hour-long trip into 4 hours...)

The conference was wonderful! I was in the group of first-year attendees and there were 50 just in that group. They talked about ways to make clear gospel presentations, gave lots of practical advice on how to study and pray when preparing lessons, gave out a whole list of verses that teachers should have memorized, and did resource-specific training. (cont'd)



My training group - over 50 Sunday school teachers from our county who were attending this training for the first time.



The front of the sanctuary was the first year's classroom space. The rest of it had been cleared out and filled with tents where the attendees slept.

Cat And Mouse *by Jason*

Well, in what I consider one of the ultimate dad-joke-ironies, it was the mouse that got the Cat(erpillar). Last month I told you that we'd been a month without the skid steer, since it hadn't worked when Savannah and I returned from the U.S. After a lot of troubleshooting, a Cat service tech in Michigan said, "Are you sure it's not just a bad switch?" I tested the parking break unlock switch and it was good, but then noticed a gap in the bezel leading to the switch that looked like it would be enticing to a mouse. Sure enough, while I was gone a mouse had made a nest and chewed a bunch of the wires. After patching them back up, the tractor is back in action and let me tell you, all of us at the site were excited to see it working again!

Almost immediately we put it into service hauling sand to the (cont'd)



Mice chewed the Cat's wires!

A Sanctuary Full of Tents (cont'd) *by Emily*

(...) The vast majority of the other teachers were teenagers or young adults and it was so encouraging to see their enthusiasm. I talked to many of them on the session breaks, and each one that I talked to had come to know the Lord through a Sunday school class that someone had invited them to when they were a kid. None of the attendees that I talked to came from a Christian family, though some had led their own younger brothers or sisters to Christ since becoming Christians themselves. The majority of the kids in my Sunday school class also do not come from Christian homes (they walk to church from the surrounding neighborhood just for Sunday school and walk home afterward). I am so grateful to be part of this ministry that is changing the lives of so many little ones all across Guinea-Bissau.



Public transit in G-B does sometimes involve roadside maintenance stops.

(First) Moving Day! *by Jason*

Ever since the 3-phase electricity needed by much of my equipment broke at the old shop, the space has been seeing less and less use. With our truck broken, smaller tools have migrated over to the site and the new shop in my backpack on motorcycle rides. This month though, we made our first run with a big truck to start moving larger supply cabinets and equipment. The move to the new shop will happen gradually over the next few months as more space at the new shop is covered and protected from the elements, but it's an encouragement to see the process starting! Although the two places are a short ride apart, having more and more equipment at our fingertips at the new site will only continue to accelerate the building process!



Cat And Mouse (cont'd) *by Jason*

(...) concrete mixing station, concrete to a column and bond beam pour, and raising the second to last steel column for the shop. The part of the shop's structure that touches the ground is now complete except for one small section of wall and the last steel column. Once those are done, we'll be on to the final bit of block work above the big overhead door and then the roof!



We at the site were all relieved to have the tractor running again! I had started evolving a plan to raise the remaining 500 pound columns without it, and I sure didn't like what I came up with as much as doing it with the tractor's hydraulics!



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