



# The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,  
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau,  
West Africa

April 2026

Steady shop roof  
progress in the last  
guaranteed-dry  
month!

## Camping At Home *by Emily*

In early April I had the opportunity to preach at another women’s conference, but this one was quite a bit closer to home, actually literally inside of it. The women from our church camped for 4 days inside of our partially-constructed, future house at Project Hope. With electricity, running water, shade, and a nice level place for the tents to be set up, we couldn’t ask for a better place for the camping retreat.

Fourteen of my closest friends and I pitched our tents in the bedrooms, cooked, ate, and had services under the mahogany tree in the side yard, played ladder golf in the front yard, ate cashew fruit from our trees, swam in the salt-water tidal river, and had dance parties under the stars in the living room each evening.

Our theme verse was Galatians 5:1 “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not



*Mabintu and Kadi washing dishes after lunch.*

let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” In the different services we looked to scripture to answer the questions: What is freedom in Christ? Freedom from what? Freedom for what? and What does it mean to stand firm?

Pretty much nothing happened according to the schedule, and I stayed up way later than normal—both of those things are, well, stretching for me... But God made His presence known to me in so many ways over the long weekend and it was definitely a blessing.



*Santah, Bebe, and Sonia cooking over a campfire.*



*Serving up bowls of peanut stew over rice.*



*Lunch with the ladies.*

## Wedding Trusses *by Jason*

In April we made progress on the next steps of the new shop’s roof construction, with an eye on the calendar toward both the rains and our departure in late May. The first major milestone on the roof project was marrying the first truss halves together to make the first of the five completed trusses. (We call them trusses, but I think in truth they’re actually joists since there’s no bottom chord.) This arrangement is great for keeping the maximum height available in the shop, but the trade-off is that it puts a huge amount of strain on the connection in the middle of the joist, where the two halves (cont’d)



*Left: What a huge blessing to have reliable power and good equipment that we can depend on to make strong welds. Especially important when those welds will hold several thousand pounds of steel above your head!*

## Wedding Trusses (cont'd) by Jason

(...) come together.

Fortunately, we had enough electricity from our lovely solar power system, the right welding electrodes sent in the last shipping container, and a couple of reliable, heavy-duty welders to be able to get the job done. The welding came out great, we hung the first two joists up to finish painting them while they were still at ground level and easy to reach, and then we made a plan for the next big step.

Lifting the joists up so their ends could catch on the top of the 20'-tall steel columns was going to be no easy task. The peak of the joist, where we'd be lifting, would need to reach a height of 24' up from the floor. The little electric forklift we have can reach up to almost 11' and the skid steer is good for about 12', so neither of those were going to get even close. I have been thinking about different ways to solve this challenge for more than a year, knowing this roadblock lay ahead of us.

Fortunately, with a little creativity, some existing equipment, and some brute strength from my guys, we were able to get the first three trusses up safely, with each lift being a little more straightforward than the last, but none of them feeling unsafe at any point. We used the electric forklift to get the joist up the first 11'. At that point, we turned to another asset.



you again to all of you who gave to make this project possible. Years of giving, planning, praying, and hard work are coming together, and it's a privilege to have a front row seat to see it all!



*The central section of the new shop is playing both doctor and patient as we build the roof trusses to cover it, inside it.*

My guys jokingly complain sometimes about how heavy the scaffolding that I made from scratch is. They're not wrong, when we're lifting the pieces up to set it up or take it down (when we need to move it somewhere it can't roll), it's mighty heavy. However, in this instance its heavy construction became a huge asset! Sitting atop auction-sourced 1500-pound-rated casters, the scaffolding became host to a chain fall attached to its top level, which is how we lifted the joist almost the rest of the way from the top of the electric forklift's reach. The chain hoist on the scaffolding got us up high enough that we could swing one side of the joist up on to the wall. Then, using ropes and a lot of strength, my guys had to lift the other side up onto the opposite wall, about 3' more feet up.

Once we had the two ends up on the wall, we carefully moved them bit by bit so they were sitting next to the columns they needed to go on top of. Then, again by hand, they lifted one side onto its column, then the other. Fortunately, because of the shape of the joist ends, the joist didn't want to roll over and was quite stable even before it was welded to the tops of the columns!

It was so much fun to see the structure taking shape above our heads! Thank



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