



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

May 2026

We arrived in the U.S. in early June and look forward to seeing as many of you as we can!

Roof Covered! *by Jason*

In our previous installment, we left you with the structure of the final, central section of the new shop's roof half done and no roofing installed while the first rains loomed only a month away. I'm happy to report that after an exhausting May, we were able to complete the roof just in time to keep the contents of the shop dry from the first rain. We worked on it right up until the day before we left Guinea-Bissau in a 4am bush taxi! My guys actually installed the last few roof panels without me while we were in the car leaving the country.



After the last joist was hung, we welded the purlins all down to prepare for the first roofing sheet.

It's a huge relief to have the roof of the whole shop sealed up. (There's still some mostly-cosmetic trim work to finish up later.) This milestone has been years in the making and facilitates several very important transitions for our ministry. First, the whole shop being protected from sun and rain means we finally have enough protected floor space to completely move out of the old shop at the vocational school. Most of the shop's functionality has already moved, but when we complete the move in December, we'll bring the CNC plasma cutting table over, some shelving, and the last of the tools and supplies. It'll also mean we'll be done paying rent on the old shop.

to move forward finishing the rest of the shop. While we're in the U.S., the masons will plaster the whole rest of the inside of the new shop, so that when we return we'll be able to do paint, install electrical and lighting, and then finally move machines into their permanent spots. After looking at the

eventual layout of the new shop and its equipment in my building drawing for the last six years, it's going to be a dream come true to see it all in front of me in real life!

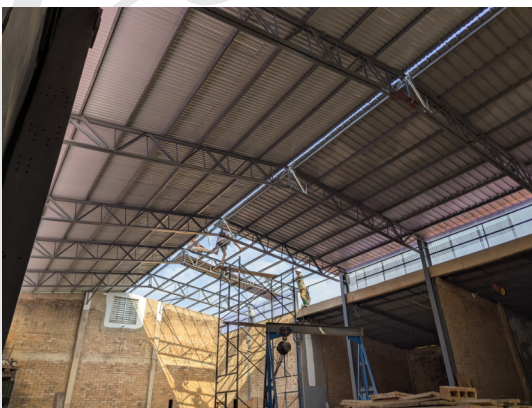
Finally, though we still have more construction to do, the finished shop will let us begin some of the programs we have planned for it, including beginning to bring community iron workers in for periodic training events to help them expand their skills and learn the capabilities and opportunities of some of the machines we have which they don't, which we will provide them access to. (cont'd)



Setting the 2nd-to-last joist using the scaffolding-hoist counter-weighted by the tractor!



After carefully squaring the middle sheet together, the guys marched across while I cut partial sheets to finish the runs.



We have a dry, protected shop!!

Roof Covered! (cont'd) by Jason

Thank you again to all of you for your continued prayers, interest, and support that have gotten us this far. It's a major step, and now the end of the shop construction project is in sight!

Goodbye Africa, Hello America by Emily

Even though we love our friends and family in the US, it's not easy to leave home. You can never get all of the loose ends tied up, all of the projects finished, or all of the goodbyes said, and the final month before furlough always feels like a mad scramble of excitement, loss, travel anxiety, complicated logistics, and so much packing.

Even in the middle of that, our last month in Guinea-Bissau contained several celebrations. The kids finished the school year, I taught my women's choir a song in English which we performed for the congregation, and Savannah hosted an all-day youth group retreat at Project Hope.



Miriam admiring one of my garden pineapples.

Our trip back to the US was not seamless - public transit cars were unbelievably slow, border crossings were a bit tricky, a boat was cancelled, a flight was missed, and every plane was significantly delayed on the tarmac. But, we made the most of each stop along the way, doing a little sight-seeing in Senegal, spending 4 days in Madrid where we ate our fill of Spanish oranges and even had a few churros, and meeting Jason's parents in Chicago for a day at Shedd Aquarium and some deep-dish pizza.

We will be in the States until the first week in December, spending time in Michigan, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Illinois, West Virginia, South Carolina, Texas, and California, and we hope to see you while we're here.



Nathaniel has been making a few small projects from leftovers in the wood shop as he becomes "dad-licensed" to use different tools.



Nathaniel and Miriam cracking cashews from the campfire with the guys after work.



Admiring the fish at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago.



Savannah leading a fun group game for her youth group in front of our new house.



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