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Coming Home *by Jason*

After 13 fulfilling and tiring months in Guinea-Bissau, we are back on American soil! The preparation for leaving was a lot of work, but we are glad to be home. In addition to wrapping up several projects so the center was ready for us to leave, Emily packed up our entire house so that the apartment could be rented while we're away. We were sad to say goodbye to our friends, but glad to get home and see everyone here.

Our trip home was a fun adventure – and not even the “stressful so you have to call it an adventure and smile” kind either! We found that the cheapest flights to get home happened to go through England, so we were able to stay a few days at the headquarters of a big English mission agency (WEC) and rest a bit! We made the trip with another American missionary family who served with us in Bissau. They were a lot of fun and we all got some much needed decompression time.

Our flight home went from Bissau to Portugal to England to Iceland to New York to Detroit. We counted it up, and between Emily's trip to the States in April and this trip home the baby has been on 13 flights already – not bad! We arrived home and headed straight to Simpson Park Camp, and now we're getting settled in.



This is just a small part of the old castle that is now WEC headquarters just outside of London. We stayed here four days on our way home and we had a great time rambling around the grounds.



Life imitates art ☺



Jason, Joseph and Anna looking fierce by the giant lion in Trafalgar Square in London.



Peeking around a phone booth in London.

continued...

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Shop Update *by Jason*

Leaving is always difficult. I was glad to have Emily home for the final push getting ready to come back to the U.S. We've had the privilege of being able to work on several different projects while we were in Bissau, and we didn't want to leave any of them with loose ends that would cause trouble while we were gone. We made a valiant effort leading up to the day we left to finish the shop, and in the end we left things done enough for the rain not to damage anything. The rest will wait for us to get back in January!

The shop is now completely plastered inside and out. The first coat of paint is on as well. Electrical is being worked on while we're gone, so that hopefully when we return we'll be ready to hit the ground running! We started work on the big barn doors that will be on two sides of the shop to close the big doorways. The roof has been almost completed as well. The shop will be used while we're away to make basic repairs around the center, but most of the tools are locked in a container to make sure they don't walk off as contractors come and go while we're away. I'm really looking forward to getting back, getting the finishing touches done on the building itself, and getting into the projects we have waiting for us!

I have high hopes for what the shop can do to help the youth center and the wider Church in Guinea-Bissau. We are thankful to everyone who has prayed and given so the shop could be realized. Please continue to pray that we'll be wise about what projects will do the most good!

English Teacher Training *by Emily*

One of my favorite projects in Guinea-Bissau is working with the English teachers at the Youth Center. Three times a year we have a teacher training week where I get to spend about four-hours-a-day with our nine Guinean English teachers. We do advanced English practice activities and we talk about all kinds of new and better ways to teach grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, memorization and all kinds of other things they might do in a normal day. But, my favorite part is the time that we get to spend talking about how to have the heart of an evangelist as an English teacher – how to pray for their students and get to know them, how to share the stories of what God has done and is doing in their lives in a meaningful way, and how to model a Christ-like attitude as each one of them leads their classrooms.

This year I ushered in the third trimester of my pregnancy by doing one of these training seminars right before we left. Being so pregnant, it did wear me out a little more than normal, but I'm so glad that I had the chance to do it before we came home. I'm so proud of our teachers and our school and I love seeing the way that God is working in our students' lives and in the lives of our teachers.



One of the critical stages of waterproofing - adding the plaster that turned water soluble blocks into waterproof walls.



Attaching the sheet metal roof to the second story of the shop.



Jason working on the shop doors. Welding in Africa with pants, long sleeves, and protective gear is hot work!



Almost there.



Some of our English teachers jumped into my 27 week photo during a break in our training

Jason + Emily