



# The Atkins Family

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Serving in Guinea-Bissau,  
West Africa

December 2025

Thank you for your  
involvement in our  
ministry in 2025!

## Christmas In The Tropics *by Emily*

All across the world December is a busy month for kid's ministry. At Christmas we celebrate the creator and sustainer of the universe willingly taking on the body of a baby so that He could walk and live among us, and we could come to know Him; and something about that wonderful, mysterious generosity of God makes Him seem so close and real to children all around the world.

In mid-November I wrote two skits with parts for 30 kids. The other Sunday school teachers chose some Christmas songs, and we started Saturday afternoon rehearsals. Then, in early December, I attended another Sunday school teacher training event where they rolled out the theme of children's ministry Christmas programs all across Guinea-Bissau: Ephesians 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God." The lesson that went with the verse was about who we give gifts to and why God would give us such a precious gift.



*Getting the kids lined up and ready to sing.*

On Sunday, December 21st the morning service was done by the kids. We sang our songs, performed our skits, taught the verse to the congregation, had the lesson, and sang happy birthday to Jesus. Afterward, a group of volunteers cooked a large meal for the kids while two other Sunday school teachers and I entertained 60 kids aged 2 to 12 for 4 hours in a dusty field with a wide variety of big group games. It was a bit of organized chaos, and I don't know that I have ever been more grimy, sore, hoarse, and exhausted than I was that Sunday evening!

Kids' ministry—there's nothing like it!

## Big Machine Moving Day *by Jason*

Celebrate with us, a major milestone (and huge relief) has happened in our progressive move out of the old shop at the vocational school: we moved the heaviest of the machines! This month we made two big trips to carry equipment the 3/4 of a mile to the new site. The first trip brought back most of the heavy woodworking equipment, including the table saw, vertical bandsaw, jointer, and shaper.

The second trip was the big one, moving all of the machines that are too heavy for the tractor to lift. After prepping the machines to be transported, we used pinch bars, a pallet jack, and machinery skates to move (cont'd)



*Sunday school teachers from Canchungo and the surrounding villages at the Christmas program training.*



*Though our towing situation is a bit compromised currently, we were able to move all of the big machines the 3/4 mile to the new shop!*

## Big Machine Moving Day (cont'd) *by Jason*

(...) the vertical milling machine (2,930 pounds), the big lathe (2,250 pounds), and the surface grinder (2,400 pounds) each in turn under the gantry crane to be lifted up, the trailer/truck backed under them, and then lowered and secured. After loading the lathe and surface grinder onto a rented truck and the milling machine onto my trailer, we disassembled the crane, loaded it onto the truck, and then headed over to the new shop. Since I haven't been able to fix our truck yet, I towed the trailer using the skid steer. It was slow and a little nerve-wracking on the uneven/bumpy parts, but we took it slow and got there eventually. Once at the new shop, we unloaded the crane and set it up. After it was set, we unloaded the machines one at a time, moved them out of the way, then backed the next machine under the crane to be lifted up, then set down on the ground, hopefully never to be up in the air ever again!

These moves are significant for two reasons. First, since the three-phase power system at the old shop was damaged several months ago, I haven't had the ability to do any machining work or wood working, both of which have been missed in the meantime! Now that they're at the new shop and in the process of being wired up, we'll regain access to those capabilities, even if not necessarily in their final location while the shop continues to be quite fluid as different sections are being worked on, wired, and finished. Secondly, moving all of this heavy equipment (even with good equipment to do so safely) was a daunting challenge, and after years of uncertainty with the situation at the old location, it is an unbelievable relief to know that they're now safely into the new shop.

Although there is still a lot left to bring over from the old shop before we completely vacate the space, we've now transferred 90% of the functionality to the new shop, where the power system is working, so that will help us continue accelerating the construction of the new site. Exciting!



*The surface grinder and big lathe are safely on the ground in the new shop!*



## Solar Expansion *by Jason*

In November we roofed a whole new section of the new workshop, and this month we installed a new bank of solar panels on that section! After converting the block maker, roto-tiller, and one of the cement mixers to electric power in the last few months, the solar electrical system running the site was getting a little squeezed in the less-sunny winter months. The extra bank of solar panels required both a roof section to sit on and a batch of aluminum brackets which needed to be machined on the milling machine that had (until recently) been unpowered at the old shop. With both the roof covered and the milling machine brought over and hooked up, we were ready to expand the system!

In February 2025 we upgraded the system from 3kw of panels to 7kw. This month, we bumped that up to 11kw. We're getting closer to the eventual full size of 15kw. In the weeks since the upgrade, we've had batteries getting full before noon and been able to weld, make blocks, and mix concrete all in the same morning. It's so exciting to see a system I designed, purchased, and sent five years ago finally getting closer to its full capacity, and to see all of the work that can be done by that much electricity! Thanks to all who contributed toward making this project a possibility!



*The shop roof is filling up with solar panels to power the site! So thankful!*



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