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Answered Prayers

BY SARI BUTLER

We were concerned. Jim Oliver and I worried because the church we would construct with 27 teenagers in Quirao, Chile, was not the usual type of building. The methods and the materials were considerably different from the previous mission projects we were involved with.

Jim, a professional mason from Poland, Indiana, served as construction manager on the trip. When he received the blueprints from Maranatha Volunteers International, Jim discovered the church would be built using a honey-combed, terra cotta type brick. As trip director, I also sought counsel from others experienced with



Twenty-seven students from Andrews Academy traveled to Quirao, Chile, to erect a church. As they learned new brick-laying skills, God blessed their efforts.

this type of construction. The biggest challenge would be that what was constructed would be the finished product; this would necessitate keeping the brick very clean, keeping all joints and courses even, and striking all the mortar joints and seams. This felt more like a job for well-seasoned professionals rather than a group of teenagers. Many would actually hold a trowel in their hand for the first time on the trip when their work would have to be nearly professional.

On the first morning in Chile, Jim and Matthew Nash, an Andrews Academy junior who served as student construction manager, taught the students the very basics of bricklaying. The students learned quickly, willing to receive instruction and anxious to seek answers when they weren't sure of some technique. Work on the church structure progressed smoothly.

At the end of the first week of construction, we had an unannounced visit from the Chilean architect responsible for this particular type of church. He inspected the work, looked carefully down the walls and checked the joints and seams. He confirmed that the students were doing very good work. "This is a good as it gets," he said. This was af-

firmation indeed. The students worked hard to finish the project by the end of the second week, including installing the roof.

Upon our return home, I told my husband Jon all about the project and how the kids worked, how the Spirit moved and how God blessed our efforts. He then shared his story, a story that affirmed

God still pours out blessings.

Shortly after we departed for Chile, Jon read about Moses and the building of the tabernacle. Reading Exodus 31:6 and 36:2 (NIV), "I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you," and "Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work," he was prompted to pray that the Lord again "give skill and ability" to the students. Jon prayed that the students be gifted, with more skill than they naturally had, from God above.

And without question, the Lord answered prayers—the prayers of parents, the prayers of financial supporters, the prayers of church families and the prayers of my husband—leading me to conclude again that mission trips would not be as successful without a band of prayer warriors at home doing their job.

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