

PERU



Peruvian children join teams from CC Westmoreland and CC Russell, PA, in passing stones uphill hand to hand to build a church.

*Story by Christmas McGaughey
Photos by Jim Stowe*

Believers from two Calvary Chapels in Pennsylvania traveled to Lima, Peru, for a week to build a church in a poor village and openly share the Gospel at several schools. The two head pastors from Calvary Chapel of Westmoreland County and Calvary Chapel of Russell were among the 17 teens and adults.



John Morris, CC Westmoreland, shares candy and the Gospel with local children.



Kate Pickens of CC Westmoreland, PA, left, makes rebar rings to stabilize concrete.

While part of the team worked 12-hour days to build a church in the small village of Costa Azul (Blue Coast), Pastor Clark Lauffer of CC Westmoreland led the rest of the team to several schools with a local Christian man interpreting. During the week they ministered to hundreds of elementary and high school students, performing skits, leading worship, and sharing the Gospel openly. “We passed out *The*

Book of Life to everybody. Quite a few professed faith in Christ,” Clark said.

One of the younger team members, Rachel Stowe, 16, recalled teaching children about prayer and grace. Speaking of the children, ages 4 through 6, she shared, “When our translator Hector started to pray, they began reciting a [memorized] prayer. We tried to gently explain that this was a little



Pastor Clarke Lauffer of CC Westmoreland digs a boulder free for removal.

different. They could speak to God from the heart, as if to a friend.” Elsewhere, they performed a wordless skit about a young woman who was shown grace and forgiveness despite her past. “It communicated grace very well. She was able to be forgiven and be changed, and she didn’t have to do anything to earn it,” Rachel said. “They seemed to understand that.” The trip also made Rachel appreciate having a Bible and investing in people instead of possessions.

At the construction site, the Lord seemed to soften the hearts of the entire village. Unknown to the Calvary pastors, many of the villagers were wary of having a non-traditional Christian church in their community, said Pastor Jeff York of CC Russell. He recalled a “breakthrough” as one day the team had to move several piles of rocks uphill, but the hill was too steep and sandy for trucks or wheelbarrows. Curious children who had gathered jumped up to help, forming a line up the hill, and the team members lined up next to them. With a joyous camaraderie, the laughing children passed the smaller rocks hand to hand up the hill as the adults passed the larger ones. “All of a sudden, it brought the parents out,” Jeff said. “It seemed like their attitude changed to, ‘This church is going to be a good thing now. It’s ours.’” After that, some parents asked team members to pray for their children in their homes and were more open to the Gospel. ↵

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