

# Informational Bulletin



It takes all of us to construct peace with dialogue, with an exchange of knowledge and wisdom, with a commitment to Mother Earth, nourished by our faith in order to unite in a great celebration of life.

January to June 2016

**INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS**



**E INVESTIGACIÓN INTERCULTURAL, A.C.**

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# Theology and Spirituality

## Theological Myths, prevention of domestic violence, and integral health

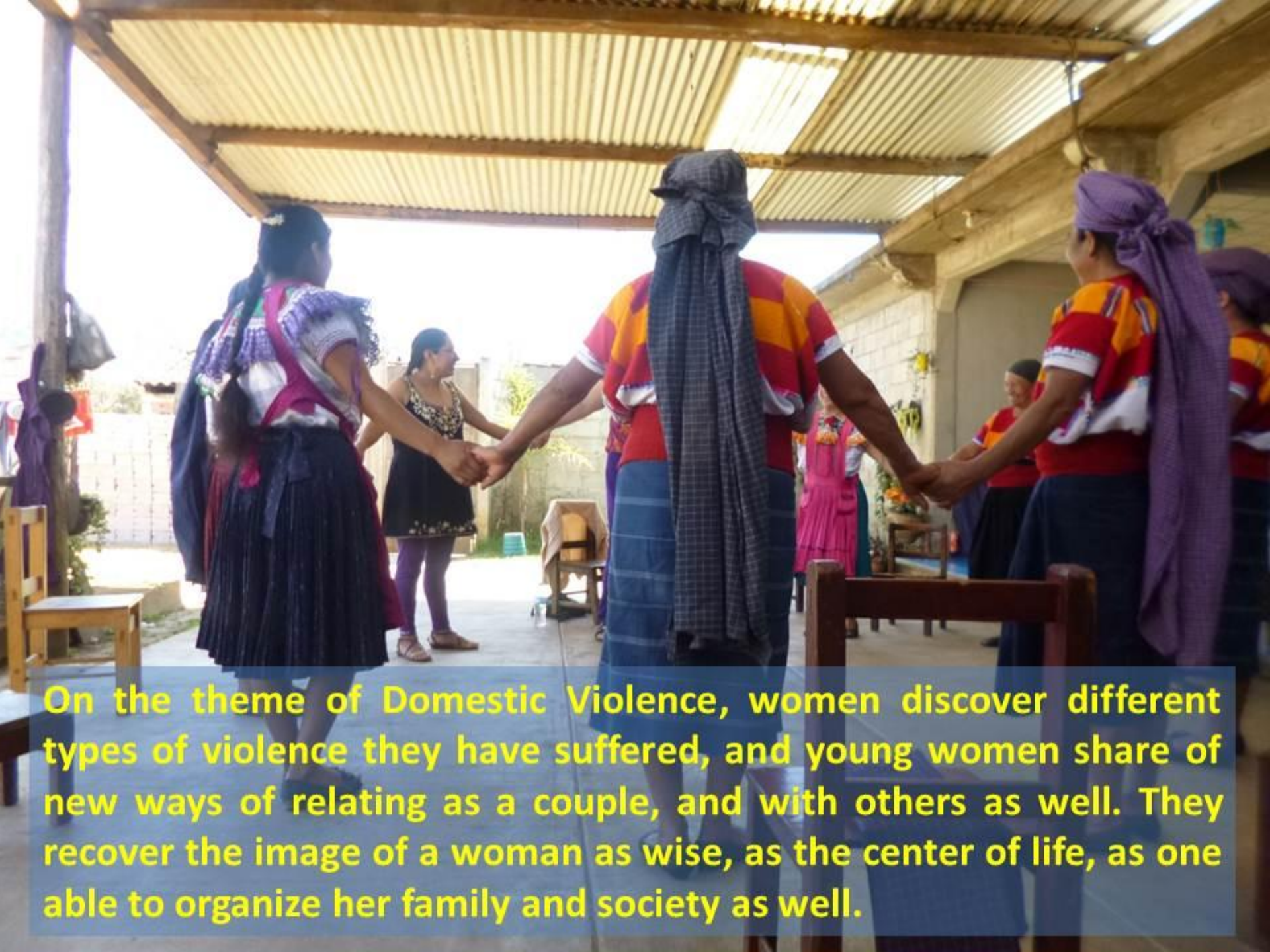
We worked with three different groups of women from San Gregorio Huixtán, Chanal, Amatenango, y and with women from the highlands, the boarderlands and the lowlands. In the process of getting to know, learn and grow together as women. They themselves recognize the capacity they have to work with their families and look for alternatives.



We have also complemented these workshops with other practical things, such as: artesian clothing design, cookie making, shampoo making, soap making.

# Gender





**On the theme of Domestic Violence, women discover different types of violence they have suffered, and young women share of new ways of relating as a couple, and with others as well. They recover the image of a woman as wise, as the center of life, as one able to organize her family and society as well.**



**Heart healing (or trauma healing) is important as women work at self-care: looking at past wounds and traumas that they bring from childhood on, affecting them physically, emotionally and psychologically.**





**With the tools of human development and Gestalt, they have succeeded in seeing themselves authentically as women with much power and light. One person remarks, "I didn't know that as a woman I was able to achieve many things, and that I have as much dignity as a man."**





With the integral health of women, we have rescued our ancestral wisdom, the relationship between women and the moon (menstruation) that is sacred, strength and power for personal and collective healing. We share our knowledge and wisdom by creating ecological feminine pads that have to do with our own health, and with care for Mother Earth.





The women value the work they do, becoming empowered, independent women helping one another. Having an income stream from the artisan work is important. In some situations, having this freedom allows them to make their own decisions, like whether to participate in workshops, or to purchase something for their own health.





A workshop of Indigenous Theology was held at the parish of San Juan Cancuc, where about 60 people participated. The theme was, "The spirituality of Mother Earth, and our liberating spirituality" from May 19-21, 2016.



Spiritual,  
Transformational Ecology



With this same project, we have gathered twice for the youth development program "Human Spiritual Development" (in January and June of 2016). Themes included trauma healing and family constellations. During the sessions, about 30 young people participated, with a 70% participation of women.







**A workshop on Spiritual Strengthening for Community Ecclesial leaders was held in the Huixtan parish, with 40 participants (held on the 24 of June in 2016).**



We offered a fourth workshop of capacity-building with representatives of Indigenous Theology, with the theme, "Indigenous theology in the documents of the Church, and in the messages of Pope Francis. 39 people representing 20 different parishes of the Dioces participated. (from June 8-10, 2016).



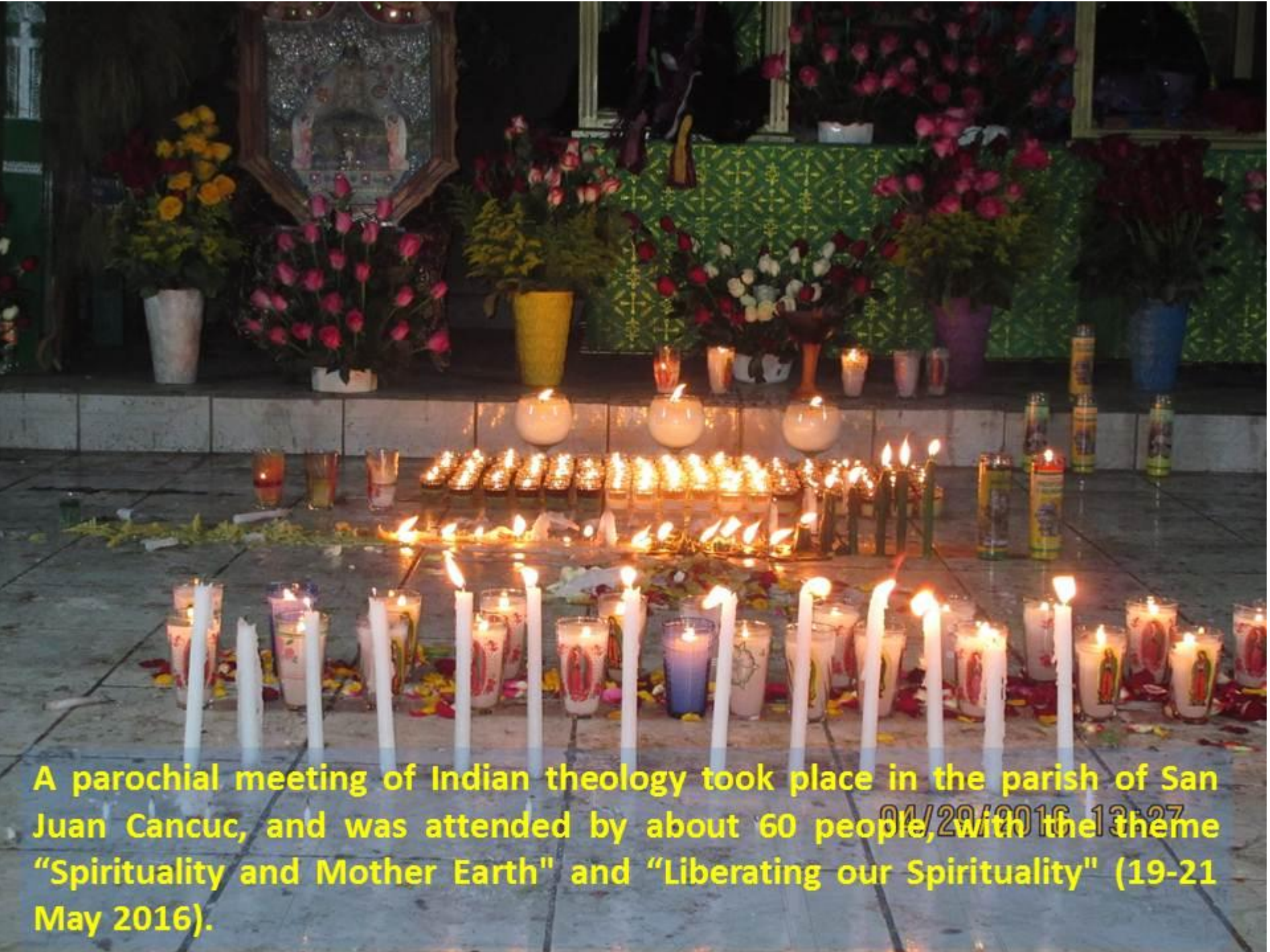




**We offered support to seminarians of the Diocese of San Cristobal with the theme of "ecological spirituality", in late April 2016. We went on a pilgrimage and did a ceremony in the sacred location of Sajal'Zul.**

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A parochial meeting of Indian theology took place in the parish of San Juan Cancuc, and was attended by about 60 people, with the theme "Spirituality and Mother Earth" and "Liberating our Spirituality" (19-21 May 2016).

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**We conducted a workshop of spiritual strengthening for women co-facilitated with CORECO. This was done with women from the Southeast of the state in Comitán (May 2016).**



**We organized the second theme of the diploma of Mother Earth for parish representatives of the Tzotzil region, and the subject was ecological spirituality.**







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Moment of ecological spirituality





**We did two workshops for young Indian theology of the parish of San Juan Diego of San Cristobal. Participated 13 youths.**



**Note: In training young people there is progress in the work to get rid of the personal things they carry that prevent them from growing and feeling free. They also recognize the gifts or presents that God gives them in their heart, in order to accept them.**



**There is progress in the knowledge of their own limitations and their own wealth; they also become aware that they have a mission and can continue to serve their communities with more joy.**





**In the community leaders of Indian Theology there is more clarity in methodology and purpose of work, and there is a recognition by themselves that the journey of Indian Theology has helped them a lot to improve their personal and family life and relationship with mother earth.**



In coordination with other related organizations, we delivered the recognition jTatic jCanan Samuel Lum 2016, for individuals, organizations and community groups working for the care of the land and the people. In this way we want to make their efforts visible and accompany their journey in the construction of life. During the program, the Interfaith Choir of INESIN provided a musical interlude.





# Strengthening Communities



Between March and April of this 2016, we participated in a meeting of children during a camp, with children of Christian Churches "The Good Shepherd" and their invitees from other churches.

It was an interesting time to raise awareness of environmental care in the context of faith.

As a practical activity and under the direction of civil servant Joel Dunant, we made a small tree nursery: the soil was prepared and put into bags with different seeds to grow trees. When they will have shed their first leaves to make room for the final ones, that will be the time of transplanting to their permanent location.





Active in our Ecological Transformative Spirituality, and Food Sovereignty projects, forest engineer Hans Scherrer, promotes the creation of small nurseries in communities associated with these projects. Seeds of different species of trees are planted, 100 or 200 bags each time, so that the opportunity is given to experience planting, caring, transplanting and watching the trees grow.



Nothing replaces experience in the process of learning, appreciating and changing our own attitudes and practices in caring for the environment. In our context, the government offers to replant trees, only of a few species; also it provides money to farming families who will care for a part of forest. This has caused people to look after the forest only if there is any money in question, and if not, then they do not care. Our goal is to work for awareness and at the same time, with practical actions. We care about the forest because the forest is life. No money should be involved, the reward is life itself.

- 
- Huitiupán, Simojovel
  - Trapichito
  - Chicocacatel
  - Ranch Gracias a Dios
  - Park El Encuentro
  - La Garita SCLC
  - Zapotillo
  - Col. Juan de Grijalva



**In search of food sovereignty and health with an integrated approach, we follow the communities of Pablo L. Sidar, San José Las Palmas, San Fernando Progreso, Zapotillo, Buena Vista, Jorge De la Vega and San Gregorio Huixtán. Through greenhouses it is intended to extend to almost every month of the year, the chance to grow their vegetables.**







**The activities are diverse but all aimed at strengthening the consolidation of Food Sovereignty. We offer workshops on green fertilizers, compost, double digging, indoor crops, crop association, preparation of tinctures, integrated farm management, etc.**





**We also cater to new community groups with the same approach to Food Sovereignty:**

- Llano Alto
- San José La Nueva
- Juan de Grijalva, Chiapa
- La Florecilla
- La Siberia
- Chanal

**There is enthusiasm in participating families, to harvest products to be enjoyed with their family.**

**At present 74 families are integrated into all project communities, and have a total of 848 square meters of vegetables. For now only they produce for family consumption.**



In the communities of Llano Alto, San Jose La Nueva and Chanal, working groups have also begun to work on preservationist family agriculture experimentally. This form of agriculture is based on ensuring that the same land produces the nutrients that plants need. Farmers are encouraged to make it completely organic, that is without use of pesticides or chemical fertilizers.

Many families use a part of their backyard to plant vegetables. It is amazing all the things one can harvest on a small space .





In addition to the workshops that have to do with the care of vegetables, nutrition and medicinal plants workshops are offered. We encourage the participation of minors in the workshops, because hopefully they will come to love the land and acquire knowledge to produce their food in a more healthy way.







Every group, every community walks at their own pace. Some families will leave but others will come, it is a slow process. Because the building of food sovereignty is not simple and even less when government programs and projects have opted for creating dependency and paternalism in the localities, In these cases people get used to waiting and receiving and when it comes to compromise and work, many choose to backtrack or to keep waiting and few are those who really decide to work and move forward without excuses of any kind.





Despite not having enough water to irrigate because lately it has rained very little, despite not having great amounts of land because they live in urban areas, they are there; they do not want to keep waiting, because they believe it is possible to live from agriculture, because they believe that a more harmonious relationship with nature is possible, because they just want to eat and have a healthier life.



**Doña Candelaria Gómez Navarro from the community of Siberia is one of those people who does not sit and wait, she likes planting, have diversity in her garden, and in a nutshell is a working woman. When we visited and asked if they sell their surplus crop, she said: "It is only for the consumption of my family because we are many, so we have to accompany the beans we eat every day."**







**On one visit we made in Chanal, Don Higinio said to us : "We are afraid that you will leave us, that you will only come once or twice to visit us. It is very important for us that you give us these workshops, that we meet and learn to grow vegetables, most of us just planted corn and beans, because it is hard to get vegetable seeds, and we also do not know how to plant them. We ask you not to abandon us." (Higinio Gomez Mendez, Chanal)**



Dona Maria Esther told us that sometimes she goes to buy some vegetables to eat but that for lack of money can not make the purchase. She told us that now, with this project, they eat more vegetables (radishes, zucchini, green beans, carrots and onions), because now she is planting it herself. "It all grows, it's just that sometimes we do not know how or do not have seeds to plant." (Maria Esther Hernandez, Llano Alto)





**We have identified areas of rural training, and use them for the education of extensionists, that is, people in our working groups, which have the ability to learn and pass on their knowledge, and who are committed to accompanying and advising families in their own community. This year we held an activity of this kind in the training center Tsomanotic, municipality of Zimol.**





**In June we carried out in a tripartite collaboration with the Institute, DM Echange et Mission and Brot für Alle (Bread for All), two workshops on climate change. The first took place in the El Pozo community, in the municipality of San Juan Cancuc.**



**It was interesting to collect the same experience from the participants, data confirming climate change: decreased rainfall and increased average temperature. In the same workshop were identified the maximal risks that the community are confronted with and prevention plans were developed.**



The second workshop was about regional climate change, held in San Cristobal de Las Casas, and with participants from different States of the Mexican Republic and Cuba. In addition to implementing a participatory assessment tool on climate change, lectures on topics such as reforestation, natural disasters and climate justice were presented. It was a very stimulating and motivating experience in order to continue developing these topics in our working groups.





# Institutional Strenghtening

Pastor Rick visited us with an American delegation. They came to join us with resources and labour for the construction of the Memorial Hall jTatic Samuel Ruiz. Progress was made by installing roof.

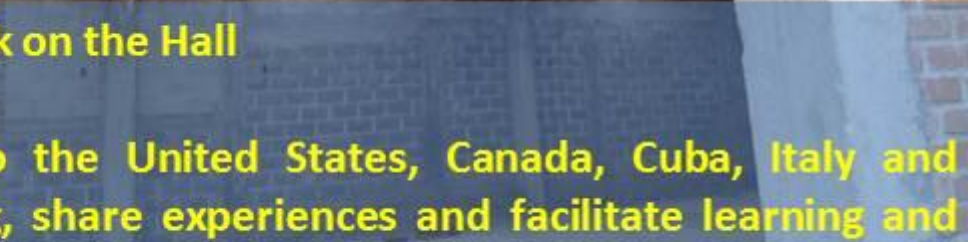
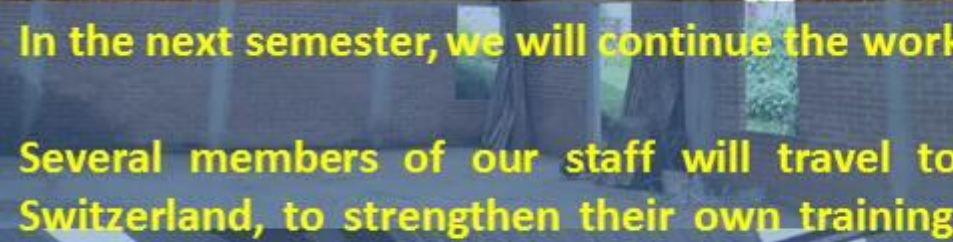






**This year we have built a room for drying and storing seeds, a gallery with an efficient firewood oven and a seed dryer. In the background the Memorial Hall jTatic Samuel Ruíz is seen with its roof freshly constructed.**





**In the next semester, we will continue the work on the Hall**

**Several members of our staff will travel to the United States, Canada, Cuba, Italy and Switzerland, to strengthen their own training, share experiences and facilitate learning and growth meetings.**

**Work will continue in communities on both the issues of food sovereignty and reforestation. We will celebrate Theological Week, an event that brings together evangelical and Catholic public for training in gender, interculturalism and ecumenism.**