

*"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*

Hebrews 11:1

## Planting Trees and Growing Faith

On Saturday, we planted trees.

We met at the Institute for Intercultural Study and Research (INESIN), one of Global Ministries' partners in San Cristobal, at 7:30 a.m. We loaded around 200 trees and ourselves into the back of a pickup truck and drove 30 minutes on a highway and 30 minutes more on patchy dirt and gravel roads to arrive at the farm of a local pastor. Perched on the side of a mountain, we looked out over the plains to another mountain range as it was just starting to be covered by the ever-present daytime clouds.

Despite the desire to stand and gawk at the spectacular view, we got to work. We split our group, half digging holes and half moving seedlings into the holes. We learned the proper technique to give each seedling the best possibility to grow into a strong, mature tree.

Five years ago, the pastor bought the land and started growing crops to sustain his family. When asked about how he learned to farm, he replied "as I went." Now, he looks to the futures of his children and his grandchildren, a time he will never see, and plants trees.

To plant trees is to connect with our roots and bring new life into the earth. To pack and kneed the earth around the seedling is to massage our souls. To believe in the growth of a tree is to put faith in the patience of generations to come.

To take something you cannot see and put your hope in it, to will it to grow so that it sustains future generations, takes heart. It takes patience, foresight, hope, and most importantly, faith. It takes belief in something you cannot see.

*Cara McKinney serves as a Global Mission Intern with Melel Xojobal, in Chiapas, Mexico. Her appointment is supported by Week of Compassion.*



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