

*“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”
(Genesis 2:15, NRSV)*

The beekeeping project among Mapuche churches and communities in southern Chile serves one of the purposes of the Bolick’s ministry: to help Mapuche men and women discover their vocation as productive stewards of God’s creation.

Experienced beekeepers will tell you that there are two kinds of people who work with bees. “Bee-havers” take honey from the bees and don’t tend to the well-being of the bees themselves. They exploit, instead of “keep” the bees.

“Bee-keepers” watch and study the bees to learn how to keep them healthy. They make sure the hive is safe from hunger, disease and predators. They are partners with the bees in a sustainable livelihood.

Ivan Catrin and Alfonso Coñoepan are two of the first beneficiaries of White Cross’ funds for starting beekeeping. They are now in their third year and “keep” 15-20 hives each. Sales of the honey provide a supplement to their families’ income.

Beekeeping helps them move beyond subsistence. Alfonso is training his daughter, Dorca, to be a beekeeper. She, like many young people, wants to stay in the rural area and thrive. This is indeed God’s creation vision.

White Cross funding is also allowing us to expand to another community, Isla Huapi, on the coast. We are establishing a more formal program, training and accompanying a group of ten for two years. In exchange for the startup equipment and bees, they must give back a complete colony of bees from their established hives for new participants in the program to use.

This is the vision! Thank you, White Cross, for helping us run with it and accompany our Mapuche brothers and sisters in their quest to be productive stewards, “keepers” of God’s creation.