

Nicaragua:

Challenges for Prayer:

Nicaragua's divided past still influences the present. The traumatic events of 1979-1998 divided politics (left- and right-wing), communities (the Hispanic-Mestizo west and Creole-Amerindian east), trade unions, churches and families. The situation is changing, but there is still lingering distrust along these fault lines that needs to be overcome.

Poverty is a deep-seated issue that is both the cause and the result of many political troubles. After years of civil war, Hurricane Mitch further devastated the nation's economy and infrastructure. Economic wisdom and long-term development are needed. Many economic uplift programs have been launched by CEPAD (The Evangelical Committee for Relief and Development), **AoG** and others. This longstanding state of poverty also shapes the spirituality of Nicaragua, with both liberation theology and prosperity theology playing major roles.

Rapid evangelical growth in an impoverished and dysfunctional society creates both challenges and opportunities. Pray about the following:

- a) The deep trauma suffered by many* who are now turning to the churches – bereavement, family break-ups, material loss and other traumas.
- b) Division among and even within churches* on liberation theology, the work of the Holy Spirit and interpersonal conflicts. The Evangelical Alliance of Nicaragua (FAENIC) represents 62 denominations and is crucial in forging a healthy national Christian presence.
- c) The emergence of US-style mega churches* with their dynamism and confidence. Nicaragua needs culturally appropriate churches that serve the people and do not just mimic foreign models.
- d) Economic programs by the churches.* With widespread poverty, churches are ministering to the most destitute (such as street children) and developing ways to assist their most needy members.

Involvement in politics. Evangelicals – a quarter of the population – are beginning to wield considerable (and overdue) influence in the public sphere. Many in the government are becoming believers, and both the Catholic Church and some evangelical mega churches have significant political muscle to flex. Pray that believers might have the wisdom and determination to be a righteous influence on the nation.

Ministry challenges for the Church:

- a) Revival for the English/Creole and Miskito churches* in the Caribbean eastern provinces. Many are Moravian, Anglican or Catholic and are often traditional and syncretistic. The Miskito in particular suffered severely at the hands of the Sandinistas.
- b) Those devastated by the civil war.* Ex-Sandinistas and Contras often find that, while the conflict has passed, their suffering and loss remain. They need those who can minister love and spiritual healing to them after the bitter war, with its many atrocities meted out to opponents and innocent civilians alike.
- c) The Hispanicized Indians.* These are nominally Catholic, and few active evangelical congregations exist among them.
- d) The Garifuna* are still largely animist, but there are some churches among them. The NT is being translated.
- e) Immigrant groups* are increasing, particularly Westerners looking to develop the economy and Chinese. There are no churches among this latter group.

Young people have grown up in a country ravaged by war and disaster and distorted by political ideologies. Stable families are rare. Not many churches are equipped or committed

