

The Centro Cristiano de Derechos Humanos (CCDH) or the center for Christian Human Rights was formed in 1998. It is a group of Christian lawyers united from various locations throughout Nicaragua with the goal of protecting and promoting human rights among the Nicaraguan people while attempting to involve the Christian Church of Nicaragua in these civic pursuits. CCDH realizes that there is a difference between the biblical theme of justice and the political definition of human rights. As a result, it seeks to distinguish itself as an organization that pursues justice with a biblical motivation rather than a political agenda. For this reason, CCDH is grounded in the spirit of service as seen through the fact that all of the members of CCDH work on a strictly volunteer basis.

CCDH's relation to the Lawyer to Lawyer program exists because its basic goal coincides perfectly with that of PCD in Nicaragua. In other words, both organizations seek to improve the well-being of the Nicaraguan people through transformational development. For CCDH, the root of this development lies in education and training. As a result, the Lawyer to Lawyer partnership with CCDH is an invaluable asset to the continued transformation of Nicaraguan society.

CCDH operates by establishing Houses of Justice throughout the country. It is to these locations that citizens may bring their reports of abuses both large and small. One of these Houses is located in a city by the name of Chinandega. Over its short life, the House of Justice in Chinandega has been very effective in addressing the needs of the community. For example, during the most recent quarter, 228 cases were heard, of which 192 were completely resolved while the remaining 36 are still being addressed. The impressive nature of this achievement is seen when one becomes aware of the breadth of the cases being viewed. The Chinandega House addressed issues from all ends of the legal spectrum. This included general reports of crime, requests for mediation, abuses of authority, cases of illegal imprisonment, family violence and dispute resolution, property ownership disputes, marriages, labor disputes, and basic legal advice. At the same time, this House, is making progressive efforts to strengthen its relationship with key governmental agencies and organizations as well as with important grass roots groups.

Including Chinandega, six Houses currently exist. Due to the increasing success of these six, CCDH desires funding to maintain and improve the effectiveness of each of these projects. In November of 2003 CRWRC began a partner pilot project with CCDH to develop these houses of justice. According to projections, each house needs funding of \$2500 per year for each of the next three years. \$1500 of this will go toward establishing the House and \$1000 of this will go to CCDH for administrative and facilitation purposes. Any contributions will go into the general fund to support these Houses. However, a portion of chapter contributions will go the House of interest. The end goal of all support, however, is to provide sufficient funding to promote the growth and development of each House.

Over the next three years CCDH has three main goals for the growth of this project. First, it seeks to give continuity to all of its programs so that they may contribute to each others success. Second, CCDH desires to consolidate the efforts of the Houses of Justice with the lay promoters that assist people in bringing their cases before each House. Lastly, CCDH hopes to open a number of new Houses throughout the country.

In an effort to promote the fulfillment of these goals Lawyer to Lawyer has the potential to provide much needed resources as well as a wealth of training, experience,

and knowledge. Therefore, a tremendous opportunity exists to support a very promising endeavor with a relatively limited level of financial contribution.