

**CHRISTIAN CENTER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**
Managua, Nicaragua
Spring 2004 News Bulletin

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SEEDS OF JUSTICE IN PUEBLO NEUVO

Before dawn had a chance to stretch her rosy fingertips across the shores of Lake Managua, we were on the road headed for a remote village by the name of Pueblo Nuevo near the Honduran border. “Pueblo Nuevo” translates as “New City”; a fitting name for the site of the cultivation of newly planted seeds of justice. Our small group was guided through the streets of Pueblo Nuevo by Norman, the director of the Christian Center for Human Rights, and his two companions. We were headed for a small evangelical church that would serve as the site of the day’s activities. After a few wrong turns and the occasional words of greeting to passers-by, we arrived at the church. It was a simple place filled with a few plastic chairs and adorned with the remnants of a wedding celebration the night before. It was in this place that the Christian Center for Human Rights was to conduct its next civic education seminar to recruit local promoters of Human Rights.

The meeting was scheduled to begin at ten, but due to the fact that a large portion of those involved came from up to two hours away, by foot, horseback, and bus, the meeting did not get under way until nearly eleven. However, the delay was not frustrating. In fact, it was encouraging. Watching people arrive dusty and tired from such remote locations was a powerful testimony of the desire for justice and human development here in Nicaragua.

As the meeting got underway, I seated myself near the rear of the assembly. As I sat there, I wondered over the diversity of the people that I saw before me. The gathering was comprised of between 20 to 30 people encompassing nearly all demographic possibilities. My eyes were confronted by men and women aged by many years of hardship seated next to young people not yet finished with high school. However, as diverse as the eager attendees may have been, they were all united in their desire to learn, teach, and assist their fellow Nicaraguans in the ceaseless pursuit of justice.

The meeting began with a basic introduction to CCDH and its mission. This introduction was followed by a lecture on the relationship between the Bible, Government, and Human Rights. The audience then participated in a discussion on the structure of the

Nicaraguan justice system. Lastly, these topics were connected to the Biblical pursuit of human rights by a sermon on Justice.

As the meeting came to an end, Norman introduced me to Jose Ramón. Jose is the regional director of the area that includes Pueblo Nuevo. While he has been involved in Human Rights work for the past twenty years, he has only been active with CCDH since December. However, the brevity of his relationship appears to be more of an asset than a hurdle as he brings with him a fresh perspective and an incredible fervor for the work he is doing. Jose plans to seek out and train new promoters in order to make the area surrounding Pueblo Nuevo into a stronghold of action and results. With committed individuals like Jose Ramón working at its helm, it seems that CCDH will continue its life changing work long into the future.

After everyone had set out on their respective journeys home, Norman and a few others remained behind. Everyone seemed content with the results of the days work. Thirteen people committed to becoming new human rights promoters; Norman left a number of binders on the basics of human rights for this group of people to study; and plans were put into place for a more in depth teaching with these promoters in three months. The seeds have been planted and with the proper cultivation these seeds will grow into the next group of concerned individuals fighting for a more just society on the foundation of Biblical principles.

NEWS-IN-BRIEF

- The 2004 goal for Lawyer to Lawyer support is \$15,000. Each of the six Houses would be fully supported at \$2,500 each year. So far this year we have received donations of \$6,680. This means that each house has only received less than half of what it needs.

Goal for 2003-2004	Donations so far this year	What we still need
\$15,000	\$6,680	\$8320

- During this quarter, CCDH held five human rights seminars which resulted in the addition of 45 new promoters.
- The Houses of Justice received 376 cases this quarter, 346 of these cases have been resolved and the rest are still process.
- Emily Boldenow who has worked in Nicaragua with the Partners for Christian Development programs for the last couple of years will be leaving the field in June. Bob Vryhof will assume PCD Liaison position and coordinating PCD work in Nicaragua including Lawyer to Lawyer. Bob is graduating from Calvin College this month with degrees in Business and Political Science and plans attend law school after spending two years in Nicaragua.
- A month ago, one of the promoters was assaulted while trying to defend a case of human rights abuse. This assault is a reminder that our work is necessary and that must continue to put on the armor of God to defend the human rights of those who can't defend their own rights.

- Mark your calendars! The 2004 Nicaragua Lawyer to Lawyer visit is coming up November 15 to 22. Find out more about the details of this upcoming visit to Nicaragua in the next News Bulletin.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Partners for Christian Development (PCD) is encouraging attorneys in North America to partner with CCDH through the Nicaragua Lawyer to Lawyer Project. Attorneys involved in the Nicaragua Lawyer to Lawyer project may choose to: 1) Receive this electronic newsletter every three months and pray for the work of CCDH; 2) Make a service and learning visit to Nicaragua to provide important international endorsement to the work of the Houses of Justice; 3) Help contribute to the financial support of the Houses of Justice.

If you want to receive this newsletter or would like more information about a service and learning visit or some other aspect of the work of CCDH, please write Joel Huyser huyserj@ibw.com.ni If you would like to financially contribute to the work of CCDH, please send your check to Partners for Christian Development, 2850 Kalamazoo Avenue S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49560 and designate your check for “Nicaragua Lawyer to Lawyer Project.”

In Canada, make the cheque out to CRWRC, with: “PCD Nicaragua, Lawyer to Lawyer” written on the memo line. It should be sent Attn: Henrietta Hunse.