



Nicaragua

Republic of Nicaragua

Latin America

Geography

Area 127,849 sq km. The largest of the Central American republics. Central mountainous area between Pacific and Caribbean coasts.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	5,822,265	1.31%
2020	6,681,798	1.30%
2030	7,387,209	0.92%

Most live on the Pacific coast and adjacent highlands. Central America's most sparsely populated state.

Capital Managua 943,626. **Urbanites** 57.3%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 35%. **Life expectancy** 72.7 yrs.

Peoples

Latino 84.0%. Mestizo 67.5%; White Latino 16.5%. **Afro-Nicaraguan** 8.7%. On the Caribbean coast, speaking Creole English.

Amerindian 5.9%. Miskito 3.6% (many Spanish-speaking); Matagalpa 0.7%; Monimbo 0.3%; Sumo; Subtiaba.

Other 1.4%. Middle Eastern 0.8%; Chinese 0.2%; Romani 0.2%; European.

Literacy 76.7%. **Official language** Spanish. English-speaking communities on east coast. **All languages** 7. **Languages with Scriptures** 4Bi 1por 1wi.p.

Economy

Many minerals, fertile soil and low population make the country potentially wealthy. One of the poorer states in the Americas due to nearly two centuries of dictatorships, civil wars and natural calamities. Sandinista Marxist economic policies and US meddling in the 1980s led to hyper-inflation and economic collapse. Since 1991 there has been encouraging progress because of a more balanced approach. A mixed economy. Heavily dependent on remittances from Nicaraguans working abroad. Illegal

logging of rainforest hardwood is an increasing problem.

HDI Rank 124th/182. **Unemployment** 5.2%. **Public debt** 74.8% of GDP. **Income/person** \$1,028 (2% of USA).

Politics

Independent republic since 1838. The corrupt Somoza dictatorship ended in 1979 after a bitter civil war. The Sandinista government introduced Marxist ideology and economics, but was violently opposed by US-sponsored "Contras" from surrounding lands. This influence and conflict coupled with economic failure helped the right wing win elections in the 1990s. The new millennium sees the ascension of the Sandinistas to elected government once more, with a "post-Marxist" left-wing platform. Left-right cooperation may be a sign of either genuine progress or corrupt collusion.

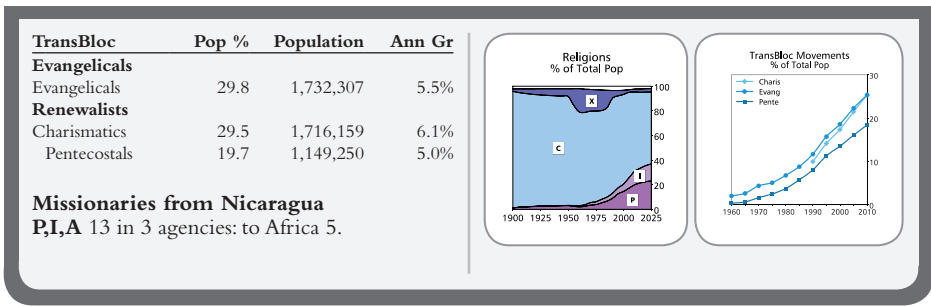
Religion

A secular state with complete religious freedom since 1990.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	97.32	5,666,228	1.4%
Non-religious	1.70	98,979	-2.9%
Ethnoreligionist	0.80	46,578	-3.1%
Chinese	0.06	3,493	9.9%
Baha'i	0.05	2,911	5.9%
Buddhist	0.04	2,329	7.3%
Muslim	0.03	1,747	1.3%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	39	21.25	1,237,231	4.5%
Independent	75	11.76	685,000	7.0%
Anglican	1	0.19	11,000	2.6%
Catholic	1	69.39	4,040,000	0.5%
Marginal	2	2.39	139,000	4.8%
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>		-7.65	-446,000	0.0%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	365	2,137,566	4,040,000
Assemblies of God	P	910	260,000	425,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	160	63,871	99,000
Moravian Church	P	209	24,300	91,500
Ch of God (Cleveland)	P	510	36,100	90,000
Chr Apos Min Centre	I	50	50,000	90,000
National Bap Conv	P	271	36,000	79,200
Apos Ch of Faith in JC	I	312	25,000	77,500
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	475	24,700	70,000
Latter-day Saints (Mormon)	M	138	36,508	69,000
Pente Ch of God Mission	P	305	16,800	58,000
Good Samaritan Bapt Ch	P	265	20,000	56,000
Ch of God of Prophecy	P	410	21,300	50,000
Christian Assemblies	P	125	13,333	40,000
Christian Pente Ch	P	159	12,500	35,000
Assoc of Chs of Christ P	P	118	15,000	21,750
Ch of the Nazarene	P	207	11,400	20,000
Other denominations[101]		4,889	268,112	699,756
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>				-445,500
Total Christians[118]		9,878	3,072,490	5,666,206



Answers to Prayer

- 1** God has used various means to bring about a remarkable turning to Himself, many involving suffering:
 - Natural disasters* such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and hurricanes shocked many into considering issues of life and eternity.
 - The massive upheavals* of war, conflict and political polarization forced many to turn to the compassion of Christians and hope in Christ.
 - Extensive evangelism* by mass crusades, “Evangelism in Depth” programmes and local church outreaches all added to the number of believers.
- 2** **Evangelical growth** is high and sustained amid the upheaval. Evangelicals grew from 2.2% in 1960 to 29.8% in 2010. This is more than a 40-fold numeric increase in 50 years, with no signs of such growth abating.

Challenges for Prayer

- 1** **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.
- 2** **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 programmes 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.
- 3** **Rapid evangelical growth** in an impoverished and dysfunctional society creates both challenges and opportunities. Pray about the following:
 - The deep trauma suffered by many* who are now turning to the churches – bereavement, family break-ups, material loss and other traumas.
 - 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.
 - The emergence of US-style megachurches* with their dynamism and confidence. Nicaragua needs culturally appropriate churches that serve the people and do not just mimic foreign models.
 - Economic programmes 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.
- 4** **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 megachurches have significant political muscle to flex. Pray that believers might have the wisdom and determination to be a righteous influence on the nation.

5 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 Hispanized 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.

6 **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 to meet their needs, despite the fact that 75% of the population is under age 30. CECNIC(IFES) has 22 groups in the universities where, along with YWAM and CCCI, they are active in evangelism and mission trips. There are even three evangelical universities; pray for a redemptive and transforming impact on society.

7 **Missions vision is still in an early stage.** There are a number of national agencies, linked by *Movimiento Misionero Transcultural Nicaraguense* (MMTN). This is driving a greater movement not only toward mission sending but toward unity in the churches involved as well. Pray that MMTN might be used of God to bring churches together and to ignite a strong missionary-sending movement.

8 **The expatriate missionary force** has changed in its numbers and direction. The major tasks for missionaries are Bible teaching, leadership training and helping Nicaraguans launch holistic ministries that address spiritual, financial and social needs. The largest agencies are **AoG, YWAM, BBF, ABWE.**

9 Christian support ministries for prayer:

- a) **Christian radio and TV.** There is one Christian TV station and 10 radio stations.
- b) **The Bible Society** has done much in enabling the translation and distribution of the new Sumo and Miskito Bibles. The Bible League and **GRN** also provide gospel literature and recordings in several languages.
- c) **Development projects** for urban and rural communities by means of credit and training that contributes to socio-economic and spiritual growth. These projects are a key aspect in empowering Nicaraguans to move their nation forward toward stability and prosperity.