



**CEPAD**  
COUNCIL OF PROTESTANT  
CHURCHES OF NICARAGUA

De la Rotonda El Periodista  
200 metros al sur, 100 metros al este  
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## Recommended Reading

CEPAD highly recommends that you prepare your group for better understanding the context of Nicaragua and the work of CEPAD within that context. There are many and varied resources below for you to use with your delegation. Please reach out to us if you haven't any questions.

**Doing Good...Says Who?** By Connie Newton - [here](#)

**The Human Farm** by Katie Smith beautifully captures the spirit of CEPAD, especially with its Christian foundation and its emphasis on training, empowerment and organizing, how CEPAD helps people help themselves. It is an easy read that tells the story of a Honduran farmer and teacher. It is out of print and does not have an electronic version, but check with your local library to see if they have a copy.

[When Helping Hurts](#) and [Toxic Charity](#) should be required reading for each team. Discussing a chapter as a team before arrival to Nicaragua is a helpful way to begin a group conversation. If it is too late in your planning to do this, the following article should be prioritized reading: [Staying for Tea](#) by Aaron Ausland.

To begin a discussion on how your gifts, financial and otherwise, can be understood, the [Power of Empty Hands](#) is an article written by the director of mission for the PCUSA and should be considered required reading.

The [wikipedia article](#) on Nicaragua is also very good.

Some CEPAD staff have read and can endorse [Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua](#), which focuses on Nicaragua in the 1970's and 1980's, and Nicaragua, [Living in the Shadow of the Eagle](#) (5th edition). Both are long, but are worthwhile.

Culture and Customs of Nicaragua by Steven F. White and Esthela Calderon has also been read by CEPAD staff and is a good overview to Nicaragua, even though it was published in 2006. Though it can be found on Amazon, it is very expensive, so we recommend checking with your local library or second-hand bookstores.



Ruben Dario is arguably the greatest Latin American poet and is Nicaraguan. [Here](#) is a New York Times article about him and the importance and prevalence of poetry in Nicaragua. You can find some of his poetry [here](#); they are, of course, much better in Spanish.

Ernesto Cardenal is one of the most famous living Nicaraguan poets. [Here](#) is a good NPR piece on him, with video of him reading poems, and [here](#) are a couple of poems that speak of life in Nicaragua.

A very different approach would be to consider the Nicaraguan author of international fame, Gioconda Belli, whose [The Country Under My Skin: a Memoir of Love and War](#), would not typically be a choice for some church groups, but may warrant consideration.

The following are varied in their content:

- [Nicaragua: Surviving the Legacy of US Policy](#)
- [My Car in Managua](#)
- [Dark Alliance](#)
- [Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua](#)
- [Adios, Muchachos](#)
- [Meet Me Under the Ceiba](#)
- [The Monkey's Bridge](#)



For the very studious (and resourceful, because these will only be found in libraries), the syllabus below, is graciously shared with permission from the chaplains of Davidson College:

*JOURNEY TO NICARAGUA*  
*February 28- March 8, 2015 Course Syllabus*

Taken together, the following readings will begin to open us to aspects of the reality (or better, realities) that we will encounter in Nicaragua. These new realities may challenge us to rethink our notion of the “real world.”

Accompanying this syllabus, you will receive several books and copies of the weekly readings. Please commit yourself to doing the readings for each week. It is more than a way to increase your own experience of our journey; it is a sign of respect for the Nicaraguans who will go out of their way to host us in the spring.

You will notice that each week includes the following assignment: “Daily Romero Reading.” You are to read a small selection (perhaps just 1-2 entries) from the collection of sermons and writings of Oscar Romero contained in the compilation of his works, *The Violence of Love*, ed. James Brockman (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing House, 1988). These daily devotional readings will set the tone for how God might work in our lives through this trip.

Also, note that the artwork in our reading binder is from public murals in Nicaragua, and/or from Philip and Sally Scharper, eds. *The Gospel of Solentiname in Art by the Peasants of Solentiname*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984.

## **CHRISTMAS BREAK**

### *General Information section*

Nouwen, Henri, et. al. *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*. New York: Image/ Doubleday, 1983. Introduction, Chapters 2 and 4.

Walker, Thomas W. and Christine J. Wade. *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle*, 5th ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011. Chapters 1-7.

## **WEEK ONE: RE-GATHERING**

Sharing about our winter break and discussing Christmas Break Reading Poem: Rubén Darío, “Christmas Sonnet” in *Selected Poems of Rubén Darío*. Trans. Lysander Kemp. Austin, TX: Univ. of Texas Press, 1965, 133.



## **WEEK TWO: CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP AND THE JOURNEY OF FAITH**

*Scripture readings:* Matthew 5:1-48 James 2:1-17

*Daily Romero Reading*

Articles:

Cardenal, Ernesto. *The Gospel in Solentiname*. Trans. Donald. D. Walsh. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976, vii-x, 170-175, 190-194.

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, 1-5, 136-151.

Miller, Sara. "Global Gospel." *Christian Century*. Vol. 119, No. 15 (July 17, 2002), 20-27.

Nouwen, Henri. *Gracias: A Latin American Journal*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983, 1-2, 6-9.

## **WEEK THREE: THE KINGDOM OF GOD? NICARAGUAN POLITICS & U.S. INVOLVEMENT**

*Scripture Readings:* Luke 4: 14-30 Luke 6:17-49

*Daily Romero Reading*

Poems:

Rubén Darío, "To Roosevelt," in *Songs of Life and Hope / Cantos de vida y esperanza*. Ed. and trans. Will Derusha and Alberto Acereda. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004, 84-87.

Michèle Najlis, "They Hunted Us at Night," in *Poets of the Nicaraguan Revolution*. Trans. Dinah Livingstone. London: KATABASIS, 1993, 38-39.

Articles:

Review Walker, *Nicaragua*, Chapters 2-4, 7.

Belli, Giaconda. *The Country Under My Skin: A Memoir of Love and War*. NY: Anchor, 2002, 233-241.

Kinzer, Stephen. *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007, 395-404.

Burbach, Roger. "Et Tu, Daniel? The Sandinista Revolution Betrayed." *NACLA Report on the Americas*, (Mar/Apr 2009), 33-37. Nouwen, *Gracias*, 15-21.

## **WEEK FOUR: GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD: ECONOMICS FROM A SCRIPTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

*Scripture Readings:* Isaiah 58:6-12 Leviticus 25:1-24

*Daily Romero Reading*



Poem:

Javier Torres, "The Hunger of Others," in *James McGinnis. Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985, 148.

Articles:

Review Walker, *Nicaragua*, Chapter 5. The World Bank Group. "Official List of MDG Indicators." 12 November 2010.

Dauids, Peter H. "God and Mammon: The Depth of Our Security." *Who Is My Neighbor? Economics as if Values Matter*. Washington, DC: Sojourners, 1994, 40, 42-50.

Gula, Richard M. *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality*. NY: Paulist, 1989, 116-122.

## **WEEK FIVE: GOD HEARS THE CRIES OF THE OPPRESSED: THEOLOGICAL RESPONSES // SPRING**

### **RETREAT**

*Scripture Readings: Exodus 1:8-14; 2:23-25; 3:7-10 Luke 1:46-56*

*Daily Romero Reading*

Poem:

Orlando Pérez V., "Prayer," in *James McGinnis. Solidarity*, 146- 147.

Articles:

Groody, Daniel G. *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice: Navigating the Path to Peace*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010, chapter 7.

Sobrinho, Jon. *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth*. Trans. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991/1993, 254-264. Nouwen, *Gracias*, 28-31, 133-134.

## **WEEK SIX: GOD OR MAMMON: WHOM SHALL WE SERVE?**

*Scripture Readings: Amos 8:1-8 Matthew 19:16-26 Psalm 12*

*Daily Romero Reading*

Poem:

Ernesto Cardenal, "Help, Lord" (adapted from Psalm 12) in *Psalms*. New York: Crossroad, 1981, 51-53.



Articles:

Hilfiker, David. "Naming Our Gods." *The Other Side*. July/August 1998, 11-15.

Cabestrero, Teófilo. Revolutionaries for the Gospel: Testimonies of Fifteen Christians in the Nicaraguan Government. Trans. Phillip Berryman. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986, 95-106.

## **WEEK SEVEN: FINAL PREPARATIONS**

*Scripture Readings: I Corinthians 1:18 -2:16 Matthew 6:1-7:29*

*Daily Romero Reading*

Poem:

Julio Valle-Castillo, "The Passion According to the Neighbors," in *Poets*, 214-219.

Article:

Review Walker, *Nicaragua*, Chapter 6.

## **WEEK EIGHT: THE TRIP**

## **WEEK NINE: IN A GLASS DARKLY: REFLECTIONS UPON OUR RETURN**

*Scripture Readings: Psalm 82 James 5:1-5 I Corinthians 13*

*Daily Romero Reading*

Poem:

Carlos Mejía Godoy, "Misa Campesina Nicaragüense," in *Religion in Latin America: A Documentary History*. Ed. Lee M. Penyak and Walter J. Petry. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006, 282-284.

Juan Sobalvarro, "Sleepless Sketch of Managua," in *Rubén's Orphans: Anthology of Contemporary Nicaraguan Poetry*. Trans. Marco Morelli. New Hyde Park, NY: Painted Rooster Press, 2001, 100-101.

Articles:

Cardenal, Ernesto. *The Gospel in Solentiname*, 226-237. Nouwen, Gracías, 183-184.

## **WEEK TEN: WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

*Scripture Readings: Matthew 25: 31-46 Acts 2:1-47, 4:32-35*

*Daily Romero Reading*



Poem:

Edwin Castro, “Mañana, hijo mío, todo será distinto” (source not identified; trans. by John Foster and Rob Spach)

Luis Enrique Mejia Godoy, “Revenge,” in *Poets*, 88-89.

Articles:

Kinsler, Ross and Gloria Kinsler. *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life*.

Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999, 39-41. Nouwen, Gracías, 187-188. Nouwen et al, Compassion, Chapters 5 and 9; review selections from Break reading.