

Honduras

Geography

Area: 112,090 sq. km. (43,278 sq. mi.); slightly larger than Virginia

Cities: Capital--Tegucigalpa (1,150,000); San Pedro Sula (800,000-900,000)

Terrain: Mountainous, narrow coastal plains

Climate: Tropical to subtropical, depending on elevation

People

Nationality: Honduran

Population: 8.14 million

Religions: 65% Roman Catholic; 35% Protestant

Languages: Spanish (official)

Education: Years compulsory--9. Primary school net attendance--79%. Literacy--84%

Health: Infant mortality rate--25/1,000. Life expectancy--72 years. There are about 57 physicians per 100,000 people

Work force: Services--39.8%; natural resources/agriculture--39.2%; industry--20.9%

Government

Type: Democratic constitutional republic.

Independence: September 15, 1821.

Constitution: 1982; with amendments.

Branches: Executive--president, directly elected to 4-year term. Legislative--unicameral National Congress, elected for 4-year term. Judicial--Supreme Court of Justice (appointed for a 7-year term by Congress and confirmed by the president); several lower courts.

Political parties: National Party, Liberal Party, Innovation and Social Democratic Unity Party, Christian Democratic Party, and the Democratic Unification Party.

Economy

One of the Western hemisphere's poorest countries, with most wealth in the hands of a very small minority. Widespread unemployment, low wages, the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and limited development weigh in to make life difficult for the majority, with most of the population below the poverty line. Agriculture, services, tourism and remittances account for most of the economic activity.

History

Honduras was originally inhabited by indigenous tribes, the most powerful of which were the Mayans. The western-central part of Honduras was inhabited by the Lencas. These autonomous groups had their conflicts but maintained their commercial relationships with each other and with other populations as distant as Panama and Mexico. On July 30, 1502, Christopher Columbus first saw Honduran soil and he claimed the territory in the name of his sovereigns, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. The Spanish ruled the region for approximately three centuries.

Honduras became independent from Spain in 1821 and was for a time part of the First Mexican Empire until 1823 when it became part of the United Provinces of Central America federation. After 1838 it was an independent republic and held regular elections. Comayagua was the capital of Honduras until 1880, when it was transferred to Tegucigalpa.

Since independence, nearly 300 small internal rebellions and civil wars have occurred in the country, including some changes of government.

In the late nineteenth century United States-based infrastructure and fruit growing companies were granted substantial land and exemptions to develop the northern regions. As a result, thousands of workers came to the north coast to work in the banana plantations and the other industries that grew up around the export industry. The banana exporting companies in northern Honduras, controlling infrastructure and creating self-sufficient tax exempt sectors, contributed relatively little to economic growth.

A constitutional crisis in the 1940s led to reforms in the 1950s, and as a result of one such reform, workers were given permission to organize, which led to a general strike in 1954 that paralyzed the northern part of the country for more than two months, but which led to more general reforms.

In 1969, Honduras and El Salvador fought what would become known as the Football War. From that point on, the relationship between the two countries grew acrimonious and reached a low when El Salvador met Honduras for a three-round football elimination match as a preliminary to the World Cup. Tensions escalated, and on 14 July 1969, the Salvadoran army launched an attack on the Honduras army. The Organization of American States negotiated a cease-fire, which took effect on 20 July and brought about a withdrawal of Salvadoran troops in early August. Contributing factors to the conflict were a boundary dispute and the presence of thousands of Salvadorans living in Honduras illegally. After the week-long football war, as many as 130,000 Salvadoran immigrants were expelled.

Hurricane Fifi caused severe damage while skimming the northern coast of Honduras on 18 and 19 September 1974. In 1998, Hurricane Mitch caused such massive and widespread destruction. The former Honduran President Carlos Roberto Flores claimed that fifty years of progress in the country had been reversed. Mitch destroyed about 70% of the crops and an estimated 70–80% of the transportation infrastructure, including nearly all bridges and secondary roads. Across the country, 33,000 houses were destroyed, an additional 50,000 damaged, some 5,000 people killed, 12,000 more injured – for a total loss estimated at \$3 billion USD. Then 2008 Honduran floods were severe and around half the country's roads were damaged or destroyed as a result. In 2009, a constitutional crisis culminated in a transfer of power from the president to the head of Congress. Countries all over the world unanimously condemned the action and refused to recognize the de facto government. The Honduran Supreme Court ruled the proceedings to be legal. The government that followed the de facto government, set up a "truth and reconciliation commission", which after more than a year of research and debate concluded the ousting to be a coup d'état "to the executive power" and illegal in their opinion.

On 26 November 2017 general elections were held. Voters went to the polls to elect the President of Honduras to serve a four-year term, as well as 128 members of the unicameral National Congress, 20 members for the Central American Parliament and mayors for the municipalities of Honduras.

The election was the first after the constitution of Honduras was amended to allow for a president to seek re-election in 2009. The sitting president, Juan Orlando Hernández had been the favorite going into the election, but early results showed a significant advantage for his major challenger, Salvador Nasralla. As the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) slowly announced the vote totals, Hernández gained in the vote counts amid numerous irregularities, leading to cries of electoral fraud and protests across the country. The protests escalated over the next several days as the country awaited final results, and on 1 December, Juan Orlando Hernández's government issued a ten-day curfew to try to control the protests.

Following the election, both candidates claimed victory. On 17 December, twenty-one days after the election, Hernández was declared the winner by the TSE, which is dominated by Hernández loyalists. The Organization of American States (OAS), which conducted independent monitoring of the election, found widespread irregularities in the conduct of the voting and doubted the validity of the official results. Protests continued throughout the country, with 16 deaths and 1,675 arrests for several weeks.

Christianity in Honduras

Five decades of evangelical growth began with the successful Evangelism in Depth program of 1963. In 1960, evangelicals numbered 32,000 and were 1.7% of the population. They are now 1,750,000 and 23.0%, and growth shows little sign of stopping. Some polls show that up to 36% of the population identify with evangelical beliefs.

Challenges in Honduras

The government faces an uphill battle in establishing true stability and order. A young nation, Honduras' colonial past and military rule for most of its independence mean that democratic structures and mentalities must be nurtured. Corruption within the government, preferential treatment of the rich minority and prevalent poverty make the nation vulnerable to structures of sin.

Socio-economic problems are widespread and deeply entrenched. At the root of most problems lies endemic and lasting poverty, affecting up to 80% of the population.

More than half of Honduras' population is children, the majority living in poverty. Destitution drives them to desperate measures.

Illegal emigration. Thousands of children attempt to cross to the USA to find family members working there. Usually, they end up incarcerated in Guatemala or Mexico – in terrible conditions.

Pepenedores, or garbage dump children, are more prevalent in Honduras than in any nation in the Americas.

Street children, numbering in the thousands, are often exterminated as a nuisance by ruthless groups in the name of social cleansing.

Vice and crime. Many of the above groups and others get swept up by organized crime and exploited as gang members and sex workers.

Powerful gangs known as *maras* are made up mostly of youth, but have massive influence and power in Honduran society. They are becoming more violent and ruthless and are linking up with drug cartels using Honduras as a transshipment point. The government is waging an increasingly intense war against these groups for whom kidnapping, extortion and assault are the main activities.

AIDS has decimated the population. Honduras is home to 60% of Central America's AIDS cases. Poverty, ignorance, a widespread sex industry, a macho culture, and the Catholic stance against contraception all contribute to its rapid growth.

Ministry Partnership – His Harvest Ministries

His Harvest Ministries was founded by Timothy Solterman, along with his helper and friend Soyla Gloria Radcliff. This work was established to raise up churches, leaders, and outreaches for the poor, homeless, widows and orphans in the nation of Honduras. Shortly after establishing the ministry, Brother Timothy Solterman went home to be with the Lord.

Soyla has faithfully continued the ministry and currently serves as director of His Harvest Ministries. For nearly twenty years she has dedicated herself to the Honduran people.

Soyla quickly gives all glory to her Lord Jesus for the privilege to be His hands, feet, mouth, heart and His eyes in Honduras. She is quick to confess, "For I of myself, am nothing without Him." The Lord raised Soyla up from her deathbed, when doctors had given up all hope. Since then, Soyla has had a deep desire to serve Him at whatever the cost.

In Honduras, Soyla partners with several different ministries and churches. She has been actively involved in prison ministry, feeding and caring for elderly people who are homeless, feeding and caring for abandoned disabled children, ministry to street children and youth, building homes for the homeless, ministry to the people living in the garbage dumps, village and slum outreaches, and much more.

His Harvest Ministries has a mission's home in Tegucigalpa, Honduras which houses several missions' teams throughout the year from all over the United States. His Harvest Ministries is in the process of building a second missions home in a remote area called Orica Mountain. This area of Honduras has very few churches and the Gospel has not infiltrated most of the surrounding towns and villages.

Sister Soyla is now 80 years old. She clearly demonstrates the love and compassion of Christ to those she meets. She is always searching for ways to help and better the communities of Honduras and also encourages others to do the same.

Expenses

Passport - \$140.00 (approximately)

** A passport is required for the trip to Honduras

Airplane ticket - \$800-1,000

** Must be purchased no later than one month prior to departure. Although you will get a better deal the earlier you purchase your ticket.

** You are responsible to purchase your own airline ticket. If you need assistance or have questions, please contact us. Do not book your plane ticket until you know you have been approved to go on the trip. You must arrive in Tegucigalpa on the start date - either August 25, 2018 or January 19, 2019 (**Not the day before or after**) and depart on the end date - either September 1, 2018 or January 26, 2019 (**Not the day before or after**). Only a few airlines fly into Tegucigalpa and they all arrive and depart around the same time each day.

** Most airlines charge \$25.00 for your suitcase.

Accommodations/travel/meals/ministry expenses while in Honduras - \$575.00 per week

** Payable to Buffalo Dream Center.

** Must be received by the Buffalo Dream Center no later than two weeks prior to your departure date.

Airport Exit Fee - \$40.00

** Paid when leaving Honduras only when flying on certain airlines. You must have exact change.

Spending money for shopping day and extra snacks - suggested \$50-\$100

Daily Activities

Most days the missions team will participate in at least two ministries. They will include the following but are not limited to the following:

Build a house for a homeless family (takes a whole day)

Village outreaches

Outreach in the garbage dumps

School outreaches

Slum outreaches

Orphanage outreach

Visit to elderly hostel

Hospital visits

Orica Mission House work projects and outreach (1-2 nights of trip)

Door-to- door visits

Community Campfire Outreaches

** We will have an afternoon off, probably Sunday. During that time we will visit the Valley of the Angels where you will be able to buy souvenirs.

** During the men's work week there will be work projects/construction projects every day with ministry some of the late afternoon/evenings.

Other Important Schedule Information

You will be scheduled with another team member to do devotions one day of the trip.

You, along with other team members, will be scheduled every day for a household chore at the mission house you will be staying at.

Tolupan Indian Outreach

The Tolupan or Jicaque people are an indigenous ethnic group of Honduras, primarily inhabiting the northwest coast of Honduras and the community La Montaña del Flor in central Honduras. They raise beans, maize, and sweet and bitter manioc. They also fish, hunt, and raise livestock. They are polygamous.

In the 19th century, a Roman Catholic missionary, Manuel Jesús de Subirian encouraged many Jicaque to assimilate to mainstream culture, settle in villages, and grow maize. The other Jicaque who maintained their traditional lifeways remain on Montaña de la Flor.

The villages of Montaña de la Flor now have about 700 inhabitants. They are the only Tolupán communities retaining their original traditions and language. Most villagers still speak Tol, although most also speak Spanish. They do not drink alcohol, do not practice Catholicism, and for the most part disdain the surrounding villagers and their money-oriented ways. The Montaña de la Flor communities are also some of Honduras's poorest, plagued by extreme poverty. Every year some of the villagers die from malnutrition and starvation.

In order to develop a relationship with the Tolupan Indians one must be invited by the chief. Due to a God-ordained appointment in the summer of 2015, the Buffalo Dream Center's mission team was invited to visit the people of the San Jaun tribe. After a rugged six hour drive through the mountains and streams we reached the tribe. Some missions work has been done amongst the San Jaun tribe – the second colony on the mountain. There is an established church in the tribe and the people are very open to the Gospel. However there are other tribes, higher up the mountain, more difficult to reach, that remain unreached with the Gospel. During the second Buffalo Dream Center's mission trip in 2015, the trek was made to two of the other colonies.

Also, during the Buffalo Dream Center's 2015 trip, some of the leaders also had the privilege of meeting with the 115 year old chief of Montana De La Flor. He was the first Christian on the mountain and was persecuted for it over the years. We were able to pray with him and promised him we would do our part in reaching his people. Then next day he went home to be with the Lord. The Buffalo Dream Center leaders have also met with some of the local Church leaders who have been trying to reach the Tolupan people on Montana De La Flor. We are excited that God has opened the doors for us to take to the Gospel to the "ends of the world."

What we will do: During both weeks we will set aside 1-3 days to visit the Tolupan people of Montana De La Flor. We will spend the night at the mission house in Orica (which is still under construction) and drive up the mountain for the day.

Things to pack

- Passport + 2 photocopies of it
- Jacket/Sweater
- Bible, pad and pen
- Sleepwear-you will be sharing a room
- Wet wipes / hand sanitizer
- Toiletries
- Water bottle
- Backpack (bag to carry daily supplies in)
- Bug spray / After bite
- Clothing: casual work clothes, at least one pair of long pants, something nice for Sunday
- Running Shoes are a must for some activities (Sandals are fine but not for everything we do. Bring an old pair of running shoes that you don't care if they get dirty or ruined.)
- Flashlight
- Hat/Sunscreen/Sunglasses
- Pepto Bismol/travel sickness medication
- Medication/Tylenol
- Band-Aids/antibiotic ointment
- Work Gloves
- Camera
- Towel/Wash cloth
- Hair dryer if needed

Ladies dress – Short sleeve shirts and shorts (Modest Please!). No half shirts or halter tops/sleeveless shirts. Modest tank tops are acceptable for some activities but not all. Your clothes should not be expensive clothes you are afraid of ruining. Work clothes that are cool, comfortable, and modest. Capris are also good for ladies. You should have a nice outfit for Sunday – skirt that comes to or below the knee. No expensive jewelry.

Men's dress – shorts and t-shirts. No tight muscle shirts - except when building the house you can wear a muscle shirt. Work clothes that are cool and comfortable. Clothes you are not afraid to ruin especially for the men's work week. Nice clothes for Sunday – cotton pants or nice jeans with a polo shirt or button down shirt.

When packing your clothes, keep in mind that it will be hot. The average temperature will be 85. You will not be in air conditioning. It may be cool in the evening or when we are near water, so pack a light sweater or jacket. You will not have time to do laundry and your clothes will get dirty especially when we build the house.

There is WiFi at the mission house in Tegucigalpa. You are welcome to bring a laptop and or ipod/ipad but nobody is responsible for lost or stolen property.

Additional items you must pack if you are spending the week in the mountains: sleeping bag/blankets, flashlight, and warm clothes for at night

Please consider filling 50% of your suitcase with items to bless the ministry including but not limited to: balloons, toothbrushes, toothpaste, pens, pencils, school supplies, flip flops (all sizes), jump ropes, small toys and prizes for children, lotion, hotel size toiletries, stickers, nail polish, Frisbees, deflated soccer balls, and candy (individually wrapped, no chocolate)

The Traveler's Ten Commandments

1. Thou shalt not expect to find things as thou hast them at home, for thou hast left thy home to find things differently.
2. Thou shalt not worry. He who worrieth hath no pleasures...and few matters are ever fatal.
3. Remembereth thy passport, so that thou knowest where it is at all times. A man without a passport is a man without a country.
4. When thou goest through customs and immigration points, be thou pleasant and smile at any cost.
5. Blessed is the man who can say "Thank You" in any language, for he will receive thricefold blessings.
6. Thou shalt not let other team members get on thy nerves, for thou art a missionary living and working CLOSELY together.
7. Thou shalt not become frustrated when traveling in a group, even when it's hurry, hurry, and wait, wait, wait!!!
8. When thou arrivest in a new country, forget all the stories thou hast heard. For then you will see it through your own eyes, perhaps seeing things others have missed.
9. Thou shalt ask questions and OBSERVE; not forming opinions too quickly; not judging a land or people by only one or two people.
10. Remembereth that thou art a guest in the land; treat the people with respect and you shall be treated as an honored guest. You have something to share and give. You have something also to receive and be taught. Do not form any quick opinions; but wait to get a bigger picture.

Our Mission:

Defend the weak and fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy. *Psalm 82:3*

Our Attitude:

Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always "me first," doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end. Love never dies. *1 Corinthians 13: 4-8 (Message Bible)*

Our Promise:

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.

Psalm 91

Your promise to your team . . .

I will be patient with my leaders and teammates when I do not understand why.

I will be kind to other team members even if they are not kind to me, especially when they use my toothpaste without asking.

I wouldn't even think of being jealous or envious of my teammates when they are asked to do something that I am good at doing, and what do I have to brag about anyway? For it is God who deserves all the glory!

I will demand of myself and not demand my own way.

After long and hard days with little sleep (and no coffee), I will not even know the meaning of the words or how to act with irritability or touchiness.

Certainly there won't be any room for holding grudges for my hands will be busy carrying luggage, candy, props, sound equipment, groceries, boxes, rakes, shovels, brooms, garbage bags, and praying for people.

I will be loyal to the members of this team no matter how badly they mess up or how bad the circumstances that come against them.

Because I am a believer, I will always believe the best of each team member and if there be any gossip or rumors, as far as I am concerned, it is a lie!

I will eagerly expect the success and the prospering of each team member. No matter what they set out to do, I have decided I am going to cheer them on!

I will believe in this team, I will stand by each member, and defend them in prayer, in word, and in deed, holding my ground, never giving up!