

**MISSIONS ATLAS PROJECT
AREA OF THE WORLD
COUNTRY**

Snapshots Section

Country Name: Republic of Honduras

Country Founded in: 1821

Population: 7,639,327

Government Type: (national, regional and local) Democratic Constitutional Republic

Geography/location in the world: Honduras is located in Central America and is bordered by El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.

Number of people groups:

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and % of population: Statistics regarding religious affiliation differ considerably because there are no reliable government statistics. The CIA Factbook stated that 97% of the population is Roman Catholic. However, a Gallup poll taken in 2007 found that 47% of the respondents considered themselves to be Catholic.

All religions and % for each:

	CIA	CID-Gallup
Roman Catholic	97%	47%
Protestant	3%	36%
Other/ Non-religious		17%

<http://www.cidgallup.com/docs/boletines/BOLHON65a.pdf>

<http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108530.htm>

Other Religions Listed By *Operation World*

Non-Religious/ Other	1.7%
Spiritist	1%
Baha'i	.4%
Muslim	.16%
Buddhist/ Chinese	.03%
Jewish	.01%

Government interaction with religion: There is no official state religion. However, the military does have a Catholic patron saint, and the Roman Catholic Church is extremely influential culturally.

Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: *Republica de Honduras* or Republic of Honduras

Demographics:

The estimated population of Honduras is 7,639,327. Children up to fourteen years of age account for 38.7% of the population. There are 1,508,835 male children between the ages of newborn to fourteen years of age. There are 1,446,530 female children between these same ages. Adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years of age account for 57.8% of the population. There are 2,210,187 males in this age category and 2,203,620 females. In the last age category, sixty-five years and above, there are 121,839 males and 148,316 females. This 65 and over group accounts for 3.5% of the population. The median age for males and females is 20 years old.

The birth rate is 26.93 births for every 1,000 people. There are an estimated 3.38 children born to every woman. The infant mortality rate is 24.61 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The death rate is 5.36 deaths for every 1,000 people. The life expectancy for the total population is 69.37 years. The life expectancy for males is slightly lower at 67.81 years while the life expectancy for females is slightly higher at 71.01 years.

There are approximately 24 different people groups living in Honduras. About 90% of the people are *Mestizos* meaning they are of mixed Ameriindian and European descent. Another 7% are descendents of various Amerindian groups. About 2% are black and 1% white.

The risk of infectious diseases is high. Travelers should be aware that bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever may all be contracted from polluted water or food. Other risks include malaria, dengue fever, and leptospirosis.

AIDS is a risk. In 2003, the HIV/AIDs adult prevalence rate was 1.8% In 2003, 63,000 people had contracted AIDS while 4,100 people had died because of AIDS. The number of people and

children who actually have been infected by HIV/ AIDS is probably substantially higher. This epidemic may have caused discrepancies among population estimates.

Language:

The majority of the population use Spanish. Some Amerindian groups like the Chorti have retained the use of their indigenous language. English is used on the Bay Islands and along the Atlantic Coast as a secondary means of communication.

Society/Culture:

The quality of life differs considerably between the poor and the elite rich. Most of the poor in rural areas live in small huts made from materials of indigenous plants or in adobe styled huts with grass roofs. Most of the floors are made of dirt, and many family members live in one or two rooms. These dwellings sometimes lack indoor plumbing or running water. In areas where large landowners have enclosed previously rented fields, families are forced to leave their homes and build makeshift dwellings on the edge of the now fenced fields.

In urban areas, the poor live in small neighborhoods that are prone to sanitary problems and to overcrowding. These poorer areas have long rows of connected houses that face each other. Seven people may live in one small house and pay rent. The alleys in between the rows of houses function as the receptacle for trash and sewage. On the other hand, the rich usually live in mansions with indoor plumbing and with several other amenities such as electricity. Security gates ensure privacy and protection from criminal elements.

Family functions as the most important unit in Honduran society. Extended families form social units that provide stability and places of safety and trust. They also provide the economic or social means for advancement. Wealthier members of the family are expected to provide financial assistance or patronage for poorer members. Sometimes, such an arrangement involves the wealthier members informally adopting a child and raising it. In such cases, the adopted child may be treated as a real member of the family or could serve as unpaid domestic help.

Godparents are also influential leaders in the family. They may choose to adopt children in cases where parents can no longer care for the child or when parents are deceased. Parents may choose to ask wealthy citizens in their city to serve as godparents in the hopes that the godparent will give the child access to higher levels of society when grown. Such systems of patronage are common among Central American societies.

Three forms of marriage exist in society. Church weddings are prized among the middle class and the wealthy. Poorer families may choose to forego a church wedding, if they are Catholic, due to the expense involved in the wedding and the difficulty in obtaining a divorce from the Roman Catholic Church. Couples that do not wed in the church may opt for a civil union where they go to a local official to obtain a marriage license or may simply live together in free unions for as long as they choose to do so. In the case of official civil unions, divorce simply requires a fairly simple legal proceeding. In cases of the latter informal free unions, people who decide to leave the relationship simply modify their living arrangements.

Men and women's positions in society differ considerably. Boys are raised with more freedom and autonomy than girls. They are taught to be the heads of the families. Men may engage in extramarital affairs and may have several families. They are expected to provide financial assistance to children that they have officially recognized as their own progeny. Many times the fathers will be distant from their children and will be seen as the authoritarian of the family. Men also have more opportunities to obtain jobs and status.

Women, on the other hand, are supposed to be much more circumspect. Girls are reared very carefully and are expected to be quiet and chaste. Girls, who engage in pre-marital unions, may be chastised by family members. Women, whose husbands desert them, will become the functioning head of the household and will maintain close bonds with their progeny. They will expect extended family members to offer strong emotional and financial support.

Because of the high rate of poverty, children may be expected to begin to earn a living at younger ages. Some families abandon children while others simply expect older children to learn to make their own living if the family can no longer financially support them. Such children may sell small items on the street corner or may even become homeless. Homeless children are targets for traffickers or other types of exploitation.

Some homeless youth form street gangs in order to find protection in the harsh urban world. These street gangs provide a type of family but may also bring association with criminal elements of society. Some problems have been reported of gangs being involved in murder or kidnapping. Both murder and kidnapping are reportedly concerns in urban areas. International travelers may especially be at risk if the gangs perceive that the visitors have access to money or are well connected with financially stable institutions, which could ransom kidnap victims.

Most families typically eat tortillas and beans. Although rural families raise goats and chickens, the meat is not eaten daily but rather is used for special occasions. Vegetables that can be locally grown will supplement their meager diet. People in urban areas that must purchase food often choose to buy cheap foods that are filled with carbohydrates and not as many nutritional supplements.

There are some foods that are special treats. Soup made from tripe is called *mondongo*. Corn dumplings made with honey or carrots stuffed with cheese are also local delicacies. Creamed beets or plantains are also local favorites. *Baili* is made by dipping a flour tortilla in coconut soup and mixing it with crab meat. *Tapado* is a soup made of different types of seafood, plantains, and coconut milk. Alcoholic beverages made from fermented corn and sugarcane are also popular drinks.

There are several different types of cultural celebrations important to family life. In Catholic families, the baptism of a newborn is an important time for families to gather and celebrate the new life that has been added. Since most people are named at baptism after a specific saint, they will celebrate on their saint's day instead of their birthday.

Christmas and Easter serve as important religious holidays for people of all Catholic and Christian religious persuasions. *Posadas*, which commemorates Mary's and Joseph's search for

an inn in Bethlehem, is a celebration which helps to begin the Christmas season. People will use the celebration to visit the homes of neighbors and family members. Then, on Christmas Eve, Catholic families attend mass followed by a special Christmas Eve dinner which could last for several hours. Tamales and a type of rum punch are popular components of Christmas festivities.

The feast day, which honors the Virgin of *Suyapa*, is another momentous holiday for all Catholic Hondurans. The Virgin of *Suyapa*, the patron saint of Honduras, is a tiny wooden figurine of the Virgin Mary which is purported to have magical healing powers and was discovered in the 1700's. The figurine normally remains in a basilica in Suyapa. Ceremonies honoring the Virgin of *Suyapa* normally occur in February to commemorate when the statue was first discovered.

Secular holidays include Labor Day on May 1st and Independence Day on September 15th. In October, Columbus Day and Armed Forces' Day are also observed.

Families may choose to invite visitors to their house to share a special meal. Guests can honor the hostess by bringing fresh flowers as a gift. Also, more formal attire should be worn. Courtesy titles of *Senor* or *Senora* should be used unless the host or hostess invites the guest to use their names. Consequently, for guests who use Spanish, *usted* (the formal form of you) must be used unless the other person invites the guest to use the more informal *tu*.

As in the case of all societies, no depictions should be over-generalized. The overviews depicted above seek to span the entire gamut of familial situations in Honduras. Every family is unique and will be somewhat different. Some families are extremely stable and unions are monogamous. Other families will experience the disruptions mentioned above. The wise reader will consider this description an attempt to broadly describe the cultural scene in Honduras today.

http://www.hondurasthisweek.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=920%3Ahonduran-christmas-traditions-endure&Itemid=83

http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/114/public_holidays/Central-America/Honduras.html

WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life

Government:

The government is officially a democratic constitutional republic. There are three major branches of national government—the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. Laws are based on the most recent constitution which was ratified in 1982. Subsequent amendments have been ratified in recent years. All men and women over the age of 18 may vote.

The executive branch consists of the offices of the president, the vice president, and the presidential cabinet. Each president is elected to serve for four year terms and must be a native Honduran. The president and vice president must both be elected on the same ballot. The president usually selects the members of his cabinet. The current President is President Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales. He was elected in 2005. In this election he received 49.8% of the popular vote. The next Presidential elections are scheduled for November 2009.

The legislative branch consists of the unicameral *Congreso Nacional* which has 128 members. Representatives are elected for four years and the number that come from each department are

decided proportionally. In the last elections which were held in 2005, the Liberal Party gained 62 seats while the National Party of Honduras got 55. The Democratic Unification Party won 5 seats while the Christian Democratic Party got 4. The National Innovation and Unity Party won the last 2 available seats.

The two most powerful parties are the Liberal Party and the National Party. They both evolved from political parties which have existed from the 1800's. The Liberal Party, also officially known as the *Partido Liberal*, gains many supporters from urban areas. The National Party for Honduras tends to be somewhat more conservative.

The judicial system consists of both civilian and military sectors. The highest civilian court is the *Corte Suprema de Justicia*. This body consists of 15 judges who are elected by members of the *Congreso Nacional* for seven-year terms. Justices of the Supreme Court appoint lower judicial representatives to serve on both local courts and courts of appeals. Ideologies from Roman and Spanish civil law have influenced judicial proceedings in the past, but precepts of English common law are currently impacting the system. The Honduran government accepts International Court of Justice jurisdiction with reservations.

The country is subdivided into 18 departments, with each having a governor to oversee political matters. The governors of each department serve two years and are elected by the people. Each department is further subdivided into municipalities which are governed by councils. Each town also usually has its own mayor, legal representative, and council member. Mayors in smaller towns often hold immense power.

Economy:

Honduras has been a fairly poor country with large economic gaps between the poor and the rich. In 2008, the inflation rate was 11.7%. The economy is highly dependent upon the success of exports such as bananas and coffee. Fluctuations in these markets have affected the growth rate of the economy. Also, the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 has continued to affect the ability of the Honduran economy to recover. The Honduran government has worked to improve economic conditions through continual reforms.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2008 was \$28.48 billion. Its real growth rate was 2.3%. About 13.4% of the GDP came from agriculture while 28.2% came from industry. The final 58.5% came from service related endeavors. The GDP per capita is \$3,700. The lempira is the national currency.

In 2008, \$6.236 billion free on board (f.o.b.) came from exports. Exports included agricultural products such as coffee, bananas, palm oil, and fruit. Seafood like shrimp and lobsters are also sold. Finally, gold and lumber are exported. In 2007, 67.2% of the exports went to the U.S. while 4.9% went to El Salvador 4.9%. Another 3.9% were sold to Guatemala 3.9%.

In 2008, imports cost \$10.2 billion f.o.b. Items such as machinery and transport equipment, industrial raw materials, chemical products, fuels, and foodstuffs were purchased. In 2007,

52.4% of the imports came from the United States while 7.1% came from Guatemala Another 5.2% came from El Salvador, and 4.5% were from Mexico.

About 2.892 million people are part of the work force. In 2005, 39.2% of the labor force were engaged in agriculture related endeavors while 20.9% worked in some type of industry. The remaining 39.8% worked in service related jobs. Some of these people are day laborers who also have their own plots of land where they attempt to grow enough food to feed their families. In 2007, the unemployment rate was 27.8%.

Literacy:

According to the 2001 census, about 80% of the people could read and write. Working parents may send their younger children to some form of preschool or leave them at home with grandparents or older siblings. Children ages six to twelve must attend school according to national law; however, the enforcement of this law is not always stringent. Students who complete primary school may attend a form of lower secondary education for another three years before applying to complete the higher level of secondary education. This higher level takes another two years, and students must generally choose between literary or scientific majors. Those who do not attend this higher level of secondary school may go to a technical or vocational school instead. The highest educational institution in Honduras is the National Autonomous University of Honduras, which is in *Tegucigalpa* but has extension centers in *San Pedro Sula* and *La Ceiba*. Classes at all levels are usually held between February and November. Student to teacher ratios may be as high as 34 students to every one teacher.

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/honduras_statistics.html
WorldMark Encyclopedia of the Nations Americas Volume 12

Land/Geography:

There are three different topographical regions—the two coastal lowlands on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts and the interior highlands. About 80% of the people live in the interior highlands even though the soil is not very fertile for agricultural use. The temperature is generally milder than the other areas, but gets cooler the higher a person ascends.

The most prominent industries in the past were mining and raising livestock. The people engaged in the raising of livestock settled into the valleys between the highlands where there is enough vegetation to support the dietary needs of the cattle. Those people who do attempt to engage in subsistence farming usually work on the edges of the highlands and struggle to produce enough food for their own consumption. The presence of many types of woodland in the highlands is ample evidence of the previous existence of rainforest that was decimated over centuries of use. Some logging companies are showing renewed interest in the remaining groves of trees.

The Caribbean lowlands are roughly divided into two separate subareas. The northern area, which consists of coastal plains intersected by river valleys, is much more settled. In fact, the *Río Ulúa* is the most developed river valley in Honduras. *Puerto Cortés*, which serves as an important import/export center and *San Pedro Sula*, which houses many of the country's industrial endeavors, are both located in this northern area. The second subarea is *Mosquitia*.

This area is not densely populated. The *Miskitos* people live here predominantly and make their homes among the savannahs and mangrove swamps. This area can become so heavily flooded that people's only mode of transportation may be by boat. Usually the temperature is fairly high and the air is very humid.

There are several islands that lie just off of the Atlantic Coast that are under Honduran control now. The Bay Islands or *Islas de la Bahía* are the largest grouping of these islands. There are three main islands in this chain---*Roatan*, *Utila*, and *Guanaja*. Smaller islands in this chain include *Isla Barbareta*, *Santa Elena*, and *Morat*. The *Islas Santanillas* or Swan Islands are further out in the Caribbean. The last three main islands under Honduran control are *El Tigre*, *Zacate Grande*, and *Exposición*.

The Pacific lowlands form the third geographic region and the smallest area. They consist primarily of shallow coastal plains with soil accumulations that have washed down from the mountains due to erosion. Usually, the climate is humid with fairly high temperatures. From November to April, a dry season occurs. Fishermen find that the area has rich deposits of shrimp and other species of edible fish.

WorldMark Encyclopedia of the Nations Americas Volume 12
<http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/hntoc.html>

History

The ancient history of Honduras is dominated by the cultural achievements of the Mayans. Copan, a centre of cultural activity, saw the development of astronomical and other scientific activities. Yet, inexplicably this site was abandoned by Mayan leaders and the remaining inhabitants did not continue to achieve such high levels of understanding. Rather, society degenerated into groups of subsistence agriculturalists who lived from season to season. Several other indigenous groups also migrated into areas and began similar existences.

The Spanish came to Honduras around 1525. Initially, three different Spanish leaders attempted to gain control of the area and their quarreling caused the famous Cortez to come from Mexico to maintain order. Cortes arrived in 1525 and stayed for a time. He was successful in pacifying the Amerindian groups and establishing some Spanish towns. However, upon his return to Mexico, the quarreling between rival Spanish factions resumed. Eventually a royal governor was assigned to take charge of the area and some order was maintained.

The Spanish invasion of Honduras brought many hardships to Amerindian groups. Although Cortes managed to initially pacify the concerns of indigenous leaders, later Spanish conquerors had to fight different Amerindian groups. Lempira, the most famous Amerindian fighter, led a successful revolt for a time before being murdered by the Spanish. Many peoples were seized and exported to work in mines or plantations in other areas. Those that remained were subject to exploitation as workers in the gold and silver mines or on plantations owned by the Spanish. Eventually, many of the Amerindian groups lost their own culture and were absorbed into a new mestizo culture that emerged from the mixing of the Spanish and Amerindian societies.

The Spanish settlers exploited the mining opportunities offered, but also attempted to establish some agricultural pursuits like cattle ranching. Both ventures were somewhat successful during the early days of the colony, but economic benefits in easier to access areas like Mexico caused Honduras to receive less attention from the Spanish Crown. Settlement remained largely in coastal areas until the 17th and 18th century when renewed interest caused further exploration of the interior.

English sailors and Caribbean pirates influenced Hondurans on the Atlantic coast. In fact, the Bay Islands still retain influence from those times. However, in 1786, control of the islands officially was ceded to Spain.

By the early 1800's, Spain was losing its ability to govern its Empire. Difficulties with Napoleon caused internal wars in Spain and colonists decided to gain independence. Thus, all of the Central American nations declared independence from Spain on September 15, 1821. They formed a temporary union with headquarters in Mexico. However, this union only lasted for a short time. In 1838, each nation formed its own independent entity.

The early years of the independent existence of Honduras were marked by internal strife and external threats. Neighboring Central American governments continually interfered in Honduran politics while conservative and liberal groups sought to gain power. Consequently, the economic difficulties experienced under Spanish rule largely continued as well. General Ferrera became the first official President and sought to retain power even after his term of office had ended through ceding power to a series of leaders under his direct influence.

Throughout the 19th century, Honduras continued to experience the rise of a series of different presidential leaders. Economically, Hondurans sought to gain economic stability through the exploitation of the mining industry. In the latter part of the 1800's, the development of the banana and later the coffee industry helped the economy. The United States came to have a strong influence in Honduran politics at this time because of the investment of private American businessmen in the coffee and banana industries.

In the 20th century, the military came to be strongly influential in Honduran politics. War with El Salvador occurred in 1969 and lasted for a short time. This war became known as the Soccer War due to the fact that tensions erupted after the World Cup. Later, conflicts arose in the 1980's with neighboring Nicaragua because of the presence of Contra rebels who used Honduras as a launching ground for attacks. The Honduran and Nicaraguan government later reached peace agreements where such rebels were subdued. Today, the Honduran government is a democratic constitutional republic. Civilian rule dominates, but the military still has a strong influence.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/hntoc.html#hn0032>

Christian History

Roman Catholic priests first came to Honduras around 1524. Major efforts were made by the Franciscans beginning in 1540. The influence of the Roman Catholic Church grew slowly as Amerindian groups were often forced to outwardly become members of the Church. Some came to believe in the doctrine of the Church while others simply performed the necessary rituals

while still believing in their own deities privately. This mixing of religious traditions caused syncretism to arise. This syncretism continues to exist today and influences many believers. The Roman Catholic Church had about 145 churches prior to independence and continued to grow in both size and influence. Today, estimates listed by different research groups indicate that between 47 and 97% of the population to consider themselves Catholic.

Protestant evangelistic efforts largely began in the Islas to Bahia due to the influence of the British. Miskito chiefs were associated with the Anglican Church by the 1730's. Wesleyan Methodists sent missionaries there around 1860. In the 20th century, this work was transferred to the African Methodist Episcopal Church. British Baptists sent missionaries to the islands to what is now Belize around 1846. Work grew slowly until around 1905 when a revival occurred. However, the work suffered due to the impact of World War I and natural disasters. The Central American Mission and Seventh Day Adventists arrived in the 1890's and began several successful mission stations.

Most Pentecostal work began in the 1970's and 1980's. By the end of the 20th century, Pentecostal churches were growing significantly.

<http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/cam/hon/honduras.html> *World Christian Encyclopedia Volume I*

Religion

Unless otherwise noted, all information is gleaned from *World Christian Encyclopedia Volume I* and *Operation World*.

Non Christian

Buddhism—About .03% of the people are Buddhists. Many of these are Chinese.

Baha'i—The Baha'i faith first came to Honduras in 1946 when a North American came to teach the people about his beliefs. Today there are devotional meetings throughout the country in *Atlantida, Copan, Comayagua, Cortes, and Francisco Morazan*. About .4% of the population has reported that they belong to this religious organization.

http://www.bahaihon.org/national_en.html

Catholic—The Roman Catholic Church was the strongest force in the religious life of most Hondurans for centuries. In 2009 there was an archdiocese located in *Tegucigalpa*. The archdiocese was elevated in 1916. In 2004, 75% of the population in that area was Catholic. There were 48 parishes and 165 priests.

There were seven other dioceses scattered throughout the country. One of the dioceses was called *Choluteca*. In 2006, about 86.6% of the population was Catholic. There were 14 parishes and 28 priests. The *Comayagua* diocese was erected in 1963. In 2006, 93.1% of the population was Catholic. There were 29 parishes and 44 priests. The *Juticalpa* diocese was erected in 1987. In 2006, 89.9% of the population was Catholic. There were 13 parishes and 21 priests. The *San Pedro Sula* was erected in 1963. In 2006, 66.7% of the population was Catholic. There were 23 parishes and 69 priests. The *Santa Rosa de Copán* was erected in 1916. In 2004, 90% of the population was Catholic. There were 39 parishes and 51 priests. The diocese of *Trujillo* was

erected in 1987. In 2004 there were 10 parishes and 19 priests. The Yoro diocese was erected in 2005. In 2006, 82% of the population of the area was Catholic. There were 10 parishes and 26 priests.

Iglesia Ortodoxas (P Jerusalem)—This Greek Orthodox Church formed around 1910. Its headquarters are located in San Pedro Sula. Many of the church attendees are descendants of Palestinian Arabs. In 1995, there were 3 churches and 1,650 members.

Iglesia Ortodoxa Siriana (Syrian Orthodox Church)—This church was formed by Palestinian Arabs who migrated from Syria and the Holy Land. In 1995 there were 2 congregations and 950 members.

Iglesia Reorganizada de Jesus Cristo de Los SUD—This ex-Mormon denomination started as a result of a schism. In 1995 there was 1 church with 50 members.

Islam—About .16% of the population is Muslim. There is an Islamic Center in *San Pedro Sula* and a *Comunidad de Honduras in Cortes*.

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Islam_in_Honduras

Jehovah's Witness—The first representative visited around 1930 and later intensive work began in 1945. In 2001 there were 163 groups and 12,002 members.

Jewish—The Jewish population represents about .01% of the population. Although the Jewish synagogue in Tegucigalpa sustained substantial damage due to Hurricane Mitch, it was restored due to efforts from the international community. Today there is a small but active group of Jews attending synagogue there.

<http://www.ujcl.org/honduras.html>

Non-religious—About 1.7% of the people are listed as non-religious. A higher percentage may be nominal Catholic while only attending mass occasionally.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)—This group started outreach efforts around 1950. In 2005 there were 293 churches and 60,000 members. This group decided to move the location of one of its main temples after controversy arose over the proposed temple's proximity to a historic Catholic church.

Spiritist—About 1% of the population practice this mixture of indigenous religious rites and Catholicism. People involved with this religion may practice witchcraft and participate in other forms of occult rituals.

<http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/316.htm>

Christian/Evangelical

Asambleas de Dios (Assemblies of God)—This denomination was begun around 1937 by missionaries from the United States. In 2005 there were 800 churches and 79,740 members.

Asambleas Locales—This group is associated with the Little Flock Churches that originated in China in 1922. Work began in Honduras around 1980. In 1995 there were 4 churches and 292 members.

Asociacion Bautista de Mosquito (Baptist Association of Mosquito)—This group formed around 1967. In 2001 there were 90 churches and 4,500 members.

Asociacion Bautista Islas Bay (Bay Islands Baptist Association)—This denomination started in 1846. In 1995 there were 56 churches and 7,900 members.

Centro de Formacion Cristiana (Center for Christian Formation)—This group formed around 1973. In 1995 there were 10 churches and 3,500 members.

Consejo de Iglesias Luteranas en Central America and Panama—This group was originally a mission of the LCMS. It started around 1964. In 1995 there were 11 churches and 105 members.

Convencion Nac Bautista Hondurena—This group of churches was originally started by SBC missionaries in 1954. In 2008 there were 300 churches and 20,000 members.

<http://www.bwanet.org/default.aspx?pid=437>

Gran Comision (Great Commission Church)—This organization started work in 1979. In 1995 there were 9 churches and 4,000 members.

Hermanos en Cristo (Brethren in Christ)—This group began work around 1989. In 1995 there were 16 churches and 500 members.

Hermanos Libres (Christian Brethren, Plymouth Open Brethren)—This group began work around 1898. In 1995 there were 225 churches and 20,500 members.

Iglesias Adventista del Septimo Dia (Seventh Day Adventists)—This denomination sent missionaries around 1891. There are three divisions of Adventist Churches today. In 2007, the Central Honduras Mission had 129 churches and 81,736 members. In the Bay Island Mission, there were 21 churches and 5,745 members. In the Northwest Honduras Conference, there were 243 churches and 86,752 members. The number of affiliates is unknown. The denomination runs a secondary school, a radio station, and a bookstore.

<http://www.adventistdirectory.org/>

Iglesia Biblio Bautista—This denomination began work around 1970. In 2005 there were 50 churches and 9,000 members.

Iglesia Centroamericana (Central American Church)—This group began work around 1896. In 2005 there were 400 churches and 14,000 members.

Iglesia Congregacionalista de Santidad (Congregational Holiness Church World Mission)—This denomination started around 1967. In 1995 there were 105 churches and 2,100 members.

Iglesia Cristiana Reformada (Christian Reformed Church)—This church formed around 1970. In 1995 there were 33 churches and 500 members.

Iglesias de Cristo (Churches of Christ)—In 1995 there were 29 churches and 700 members.

Iglesia de Dios de la Profecia (Church of God of Prophecy)—This group began work around 1952. In 2005 there were 189 churches and 10,714 members. There were an additional 20,000 affiliates. They are holiness Pentecostals.

Iglesias de Dios (Anderson)—In 1995 there were 15 churches and 900 members. There were an additional 2,730 affiliates. The denomination supports at least one primary educational endeavor.

Iglesias de Dios (Cleveland)—This denomination started work in 1944. In 1995 there were approximately 463 churches and 14,564 members. At this time, 17 of the congregations were English speaking. In 2005 there were 735 churches and 39,187 members.

Iglesias de Dios Pentecostal—These churches began around 1978. In 1995 there were 105 churches and 2,510 members.

Iglesia de los Hermanos Unidos en Cristo—The denomination formed around 1944 and has its headquarters in La Ceiba. In 1995 there were 43 churches and 1,775 members.

Iglesias del Evangelio Cuadrangular (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel)—This Pentecostal denomination started work in 1952. In 2005 there were 132 churches and 14,000 members.

Iglesias del Nazareno (Church of the Nazarene)—This denomination began work in 1969. In 1995 there were 23 churches and 1,101 members.

<http://www.nazarene.org/>

Iglesia del Principe de Paz (Prince of Peace Church)—This denomination formed around 1960. In 2005 there were 300 churches and 25,000 members.

Iglesia Episcopal Hondurena—This group started work around 1900. In 1995 there were 41 churches and 2,880 members. About 90% of the membership is of African descent.

Iglesia Evangelica Bautista Independente (Independent Evangelical Baptist Church)—No information is available as to when this denomination formed. In 1995 there were 34 churches and 2,660 congregants.

Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama—This group started around 1954. In 1995 there were 4 churches and 100 members.

Iglesia Evangelica Menonita (Honduras Mennonite Church)—This group began work around 1950. In 2006 there were 109 congregations and 9,000 members.

Iglesia Evangelista Bautista (Baptist Mid-Missions)—This group formed about 1955. In 1995 there were 16 congregations and 350 members.

Iglesia Filadelfia (Philadelphia Church)—This Pentecostal group started work in 1967. In 1995 there were 84 churches and 4,200 members.

Iglesia Independente (Independent Church)—This is a small indigenous body formed in Honduras. In 1995 there were 2 churches and 600 members.

Iglesia Maranatha—This group formed around 1984. In 1995 there was one church and 40 members.

Iglesia Menonita Balvarte de la Verdad (Mennonite Church of the Truth)—This group started around 1986. In 1995 there were 2 churches and 100 congregants.

Iglesia Menonita—This group began around 1982. In 1995 there were 3 churches and 40 members.

Iglesia Morava (Provincia de Honduras)—This group, which operates primarily among the Bay Islanders, formed around 1930. In 2005 there were 145 churches 5, 200 congregants.

Iglesia Nueva Apostolica (New Apostolic Church)—This group formed around 1985. In 1995 there were 10 churches and 400 members.

Iglesia Pentecostal Unida (United Pentecostal Church)—This group began around 1977. In 1995 there were 95 churches and 5,700 members.

Iglesia Puerto al Cielo (Door to Heaven)—In 1995 there was one church with 1,200 members.

Iglesia Unida de Cristo (United Churches of Christ)—This group was formerly a mission of the ERC but is now associated with the UCBWM. It formed around 1920 and has established churches in the northeastern sectors of Honduras. This group also supports some schools. In 1995 there were 68 churches and 1,700 members.

Iglesia Wesleyana—This group formed around 1957. In 1995 there were 2 churches and 34 members. Many of the members are English speakers of Afro-Honduran descent.

Iglesias de Cristo (Discipulos)—In 1995 this Church of Christ group had 6 churches and 134 members.

Iglesias Evangelicas Amigos de Centroamerica—This group started around 1902. In 1995 there were 45 churches and 2,700 members.

Mision Bautista Conservador—This group formed around 1951. In 1995 there were 130 churches and 2,600 members. In 2005, there were 145 churches and 5,500 members.

Mision Biblica Pioneira (Pioneer Bible Mission)—This group started around 1949. They are involved in starting medical and dental endeavors. In 1995 there were 5 churches and 200 members.

Mision Cristiana Elim de Guatemala (Elim Christian Mission of Guatemala)—In 1995 there were 37 churches and 2,800 members.

Mision Evangelico Mundial (World Gospel Holiness Church)—This mission was founded by missionaries from the United States in 1943. In 1995 there were 90 churches and 7,000 members.

Org. Cristiana El Amor Viviente (Living Love Christian Organization)—This cell-based group began in 1976. In 2005 there were 60 churches and 7,800 members.

Sinodo Evangelico y Reformada (Evangelical and Reformed Synod)—This group formed around 1934. Its headquarters are in San Pedro Sula. In 1995 there were 73 churches and 1,100 members.

Union de los Hermanos (Unity of the Brethren)—This is a small group that formed as a result of a split from the Moravian Church. In 1995 there was one church and 100 members.

People Groups

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Americans, U.S. (14,000)

The Americans live throughout the country although most probably choose urban areas. Most are familiar with English and Spanish. About 87% are affiliated with some type of religious organization. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Christian resources are available to them.

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Amerindian, Detribalized (294,000)

Detribalized Amerindians have largely been absorbed into the predominant Honduran culture and speak Spanish. About 89% of the population is affiliated with some type of religious organization. About 8.9% are evangelical Christians. Since most speak Spanish, many Christian resources are available.

00000

Armenian (1,400)

The Armenians speak Armenian, but may also be familiar with Spanish. About 90% have some type of religious beliefs. Many are Orthodox. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Several Christian resources exist in their language.

24757

Bay Island Anglos (12,185)

The Bay Island Anglos live primarily on the islands of *Guanaja*, *Roatán*, and *Utila*. They speak a form of English, which has been influenced by Creole dialects. The people predominantly practice a syncretistic mixture of traditional religious practices and Christianity. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Since they speak English, many Christian resources are available to them.

Islanders come from very diverse backgrounds. Traditional islanders are often the descendents of escaped slaves, English pirates, and other indigenous groups. Of late, many may have come in search of work due to an economic boom in the late 1980's and early 1990's with the increase in tourism activities. Recently, there has been an economic downturn due to the effects of environmental problems. Different groups are working to solve this issue so that the islands will once again attract larger numbers of tourists.

<http://srdis.ciesin.columbia.edu/cases/honduras-006.html>

00000

British (900)

The British living in Honduras is largely expatriates who have moved there for business or government purposes. They speak English, but many are probably also familiar with Spanish. About 70% are part of some type of religious group. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Since they speak English, many Christian resources are accessible to them.

00000

Chorotega (100)

The Chorotega people speak Spanish. About 30% have some type ore religious belief. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Since they speak Spanish, many Christian resources are available to them.

Chinese

Chinese began to migrate to Honduras during the late 1800's. Often two different classes of Chinese people would emigrate. One class was the poorest of the poor, who because of their desperation, were often duped by potential employers into signing unfair work contracts that made them virtually the property of the employers. These immigrants faced extreme hardships when they reached Honduras.

Another class of Chinese that emigrated was merchants who sought new business opportunities. While these merchants were not extremely wealthy, they were better off and thus had a somewhat easier experience.

Today Chinese immigrants may continue to choose to use either the Cantonese or Mandarin dialects; however, they may also speak Spanish. Some intermarriage has occurred so people of

Chinese descent could have Spanish surnames. The Chinese live in many different areas, but most likely congregate in larger cities. People are often Buddhist or Christian.

24760

Chinese (Cantonese) (5,858)

Since the people are often familiar with Cantonese and Spanish, many Christian resources are available to them. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

24761

Chinese (Mandarin) (597)

Since the people are often familiar with Mandarin and Spanish, many Christian resources are available to them. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

24762

Chorti (60,724)

The Chorti people live in the *Copan* Department which lies along the Guatemala border. They are descendants of the Mayan Indians. They speak a language called Chorti, but some others may be somewhat familiar with Spanish.

Most of the people are very poor. The average family earns less than three hundred dollars in a year's time. They live in adobe houses with straw roofs and dirt floors. Healthcare is woefully inadequate, and nutritional needs are not met. For example, children may not have any access to milk after they are weaned at age two. Most meals consist only of beans and corn with some occasional supplements of regionally grown fruits. Many women have between seven to ten children; however, several may die in childbirth due to unsanitary conditions.

The people may practice a syncretistic mix of Christianity and indigenous religions. About 90% of the people hold to some type of religious belief. Only 3.15% are evangelical Christian.

Some Christian resources are available to them. Portions of the Bible have been translated into Chorti and some audio recordings exist. The Jesus film is not available in Chorti, but can be viewed in Spanish.

<http://www.lifetolifehonduras.org/pag/mayachorti.htm>

<http://agwired.com/category/corn/page/2/>

<http://www.utexas.edu/courses/stross/chorti/> (dictionary from 1950)

24763

Garifuna (239,020)

The Garifuna people live in 37 villages. They have settlements on the north coast between *Masca*, *Cortés* Department and *Plaplaya*, *Gracias a Dios* Department. They speak a language called Garifuna. Many speakers are also familiar with Creole or Spanish. Some alternate names for this people group include Caribe, Black Carib, Central American Carib, or "Moreno."

The Garifuna people are the proud descendants of African slaves who intermarried with indigenous Indian groups who lived on St. Vincent. Two slave ships sank off the island between 1635 and 1670. The survivors made it to the island where, over time, they formed their own society.

When the British assumed control of the island around the end of the 1700's, they forced the Garifuna people to move to the island of *Roatan*, which lies off the coast of Honduras. The Garifuna managed to move to the Honduran mainland and form an important enclave where they could preserve their unique culture and history. Slowly, they spread to other countries like Belize and Nicaragua.

The Garifuna have many important different cultural traditions. They generally hold land communally. Dancing and music are ways that people express their feelings about life. In fact, one Garifuna has developed a music called Punta Rock.

Many of the Garifuna attempt to continue to live lives similar to their ancestors. They may work as fishermen or in banana cultivation. They often live in huts made of cement blocks or from sugar cane with roofs of hay. The people do not have easy access to good health care facilities, but rather depend upon the services of *cuadernos*, medicine men who offer herbal remedies.

About 85% of the Garifuna people adhere to some type of religious belief. Many of them practice a syncretistic mixture of traditional African, Amerindian, and Catholic rites. The practice of *Gubida*, which involves possession rituals, is a key practice of this syncretistic mix. About 1.7% of the people are evangelical Christian.

There are several ministry tools available in their language. Portions of the Bible were available beginning around 1847. The entire Bible was completed by 2002. The Jesus film is accessible. Two audio recordings, *Words of Life* and *Faith Comes by Hearing*, also exist.

<http://www.garifuna.com/>

24772

Honduran (7,012,902)

The Hondurans speak Spanish. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. There are many Christian resources available to those who can afford to purchase them.

24774

Honduran Deaf (28,154)

The Honduran Deaf population lives throughout the country. Some have been trained to use Spanish Sign Language, but others do not have the opportunity to learn this official version and may just use basic hand gestures to communicate with family and friends. Because the deaf people live throughout the country, accurate statistics concerning their religious affiliation and the number of evangelical Christians is somewhat uncertain.

42459

Honduran Mestizo (5,776,282)

The Honduran Mestizos are descendents of Europeans and Amerindians. They speak Spanish. About 96.5% of the population has some type of religious affiliation. Approximately 17.08% of the population is evangelical Christian. There are many Christian resources available to those who can afford to purchase them.

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Jamaicans (35,000)

The Jamaicans speak English and Spanish. About 97% have some type of religious beliefs. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Christian resources are available.

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Jew (400)

Jewish migration began over 100 years ago. Today many of the Jews continue to adhere to Judaism. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Christian resources exist since most Jews speak Spanish.

<http://www.ujcl.org/honduras.html>

24788

Korean (2,987)

The Koreans living in Honduras may have emigrated during the 1960's. Honduras maintains diplomatic relations with Korea and allows Korean businesses to build factories within the borders of their country. At one time about 15% of the coffee being imported to Korea came from Honduras. The Koreans probably speak Korean, but are most likely familiar with Spanish.

The religious affiliation of the Koreans living in Honduras is uncertain. There were reports that some associates of the Korean Unification Church started by Sun Myung Moon began to live in Honduras. These associates, sometimes known as Moonies, offered to allow Hondurans to join their organization.

The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. There are Christian resources available in Korean and in Spanish.

http://www.hondurasthisweek.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=558%3Ahonduran-coffee-korean-market&Itemid=83

24789

Lenca (119,508)

The Lenca people live in the Western and Southern Highlands. They have basically lost many of their ancient customs including their language and have adopted the predominant Spanish language and customs.

About 93% of the Lenca people have some type of religious affiliation with many declaring to be Roman Catholic. About 0.69% of the people are evangelical Christian. Since most of the people use Spanish, a variety of Christian resources are available to them.

<http://sidewalkmystic.com/Indigenous.htm>

24790

Miskito (501,938)

The Miskito people live in the *Gracias a Dios* Department. They speak Miskito, English, and Spanish. About 1 to 10% can read and write in their primary language while 5 to 25% can read and write in a secondary language. Some alternate names for this people group include Mísquito, Marquito, Mískitu, or Mosquito.

The ancestors of the Miskito people were Bawihka Indians who intermarried with peoples of African descent who had managed to escape the bondage of their British or Spanish captors. As their society developed influence over other groups of Indians, different ethnicities added to the diversity of the Miskito people.

The Miskito people had a kingship and a well developed society which mimicked certain customs of the British, with whom they had frequent interaction. Their culture was also heavily influenced by Moravian missionaries who arrived in 1849 to evangelize.

Due to the influence of the Moravian church, many people consider themselves to be nominally Christian. About 87% of the people are associated with some type of religious system. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

There are several resources in their language. Bible translation began in 1889. The entire Bible has now been translated. Additionally, the Jesus film and the *Father's Love Letter* film are accessible. Audio recordings also exist.

http://www.native-languages.org/miskito_words.htm (Basic Vocabulary List)

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/mesoamerica/miskito.html>

<http://miskitocoast.org/indians.htm>

24786

Palestinian Arab (29,877)

The first Arabs began to arrive in the late 1800's. Some were Muslim while many were Christians who were fleeing persecution in their homelands. They settled in different parts of the country and established businesses.

About 40% today are associated with some type of European religious organization while others follow Islam. About .14% of the Arabs are evangelical Christian. Since most speak Spanish or some form of Arabic, a variety of Christian resources are available to them.

24791

Paya-Pech (143,000)

The Paya-Pech people live along the North Central Coast. They speak a language called Pech, but many younger people also use Spanish. People are interested in reviving the use of Pech as a way of preserving their cultural heritage. An alternate name for this people is Seco.

The Paya-Pech people practice animism and Christianity or a mixture of both. About 70% of the population has some type of religious beliefs. About .46% of the people are evangelical Christian. Those who have become evangelical Christians must use Christian resources in Spanish since none are available in their own language.

24792

Tawahka (1,195)

The Tawahka people live along the banks of the Patuca River. They speak a language called Sumo Tawahka. Many are becoming more culturally affiliated with the Miskito people. About 10 to 30% of the Tawahka people can read and write in their own language while 25 to 50% can read and write in a second language. Some alternate names for this people include Sumo, Sumu, Soumo, or Sumoo.

The Tawahka people either practice animism, Christianity, or a mixture of the two. About 87% of the people are part of some type of religious organization, but only .87% of the people are evangelical Christian.

Few Christian resources exist in their language. The Bible was translated by 1999. Those familiar with the Miskito language have access to the Jesus film and audio recordings. Those familiar with Spanish have access to several different printed materials.

25028

Tolupanes (19,300)

The Tolupanes people live in northern *Francisco Morazán* Department. Some live in Yoro, too. They speak a language called Tol. The literacy rate in their own language is approximately 5 to 10% while about 5 to 15% can read and write in Spanish. Adult male speakers will be more familiar with Spanish than females. Children will most likely use Tol unless they have used Spanish in school. Some alternate names for this people group include Tolpan, Jicaque, or Xicaque.

The Tolupanes people predominantly practice animism or are nominal Roman Catholics. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Few Christian resources exist in their own language. Portions of the Bible were translated between 1977 and 1981. The New Testament was published in 1993. The Jesus film is inaccessible and audio recordings do not exist. Resources exist for those who are familiar with Spanish.

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Turk (1,400)

The Turks living in Honduras speak Turkish, but many may be familiar with Spanish. The people are predominantly Muslim. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Christian resources are available in Turkish or Spanish.

24758

Western Caribbean Creole (11,950)

The Western Caribbean Creole people speak a form of Bay Islands English. Their predominant religion and the number of evangelical Christians are unknown. Since the people speak English, many Christian resources are available to them.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop and train local believers to use means of sharing the Good News with Roman Catholics. These methods should especially be directed toward the many nominal Catholics and those who follow a syncretized version of Catholicism and Traditional Religion.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop and train local believers to use means of sharing the Good News with followers of Traditional Religions and those who follow some form of mixture of the Traditional Religions and Catholicism.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop and train local believers to use means to evangelize and start churches for those influenced by spiritism and other movements.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to increase evangelism and church starting among the Chinese, Paya-Pech, Miskito, Lenca, Jamaicans, Garifuna, and Chorti. These people groups have large numbers and are Catholic, follow Traditional Religions, or some syncretistic religious expression. In all probability, evangelism will be most effective if approaches for each group are developed in their heart languages.
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should introduce Bible Storying and small group methods to the peoples who work in Honduras.
6. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways to meet the special needs of disadvantaged children in Honduras.

7. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways to contribute to the economic development of the country. Of special help would be efforts to help local Christians start their own businesses.
8. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek means to train leaders for the churches in Honduras. The training needs to be both on the career level and the lay leader level.
9. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways to reach and minister to the thousands of street children who have no homes and who often suffer from serious diseases.
10. Evangelical Christians and churches should consider some evangelistic efforts for the 30.000 Muslims and the thousands of Chinese who are in Honduras.

Pictures



Links

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ho.html>
- <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/hntoc.html>
- <http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108530.htm>