

## One take on Honduras

Peter Feuerherd | Jul. 9, 2009 NCR Today

OK, I've been to Honduras once in my life, on a church mission trip a few summers ago (church missions, by the way, are one of that country's biggest imports, usually American evangelicals but also including Catholics as well). I'd be reluctant to portray myself as an expert.

Not that I can make a great deal of sense about the current coup situation. But we did travel the country extensively at the time, and I do remember seeing all the posters promoting President Manuel Zelaya, and I asked for reaction about him. From the humble parishes and top-level church officials we talked to, an unflattering picture of Zelaya, "Presidente Mel," emerged.

His administration was seen, at best, as incompetent, at worst, as hopelessly corrupt. I never heard a good word about him. His appeal, it was said, was bought by his family's massive ranching wealth. Those with long memories noted how, in the 1970s, his family took the side of the local aristocracy against church labor activists, some of whom were killed well before North Americans ever heard much about nearby El Salvador.

It is more than ironic that, in some circles, President Mel is now portrayed as a fighter for democracy and good government against the forces of authoritarian rule.

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Source URL (retrieved on 07/25/2017 - 05:39): <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/one-take-honduras>