

# Spain Looks Westward

## **WORLDVIEW INQUIRY**

*What elements of a society's worldview might lead to a desire to create an empire?*



# Big Idea

The worldview of Spain was influenced by four important factors: geography, God, gold, and glory. As a result, the Spanish monarchy supported the idea of creating an overseas empire.

Columbus was wearing new clothes and riding a fine horse, but there was little joy in his heart. The Spanish monarchs had once again refused to support his plan to sail westward across the Atlantic Ocean to Asia.

Columbus knew his chances of getting support elsewhere were slim. Already, the kings of Portugal, England, and France had turned him down. He was 40 years old and he had run out of options. His dreams of fame and fortune were in tatters. Maybe he would just return to his hometown in Italy and live out his life as a map-maker.

A few kilometres out of town, Columbus heard hoof beats behind him. It was a royal messenger who had come to order him back to court at once. The king and queen had changed their minds.

Columbus turned his horse sharply and galloped back from where he had come. Luck was on his side at last! He would now have the opportunity to set out on the adventure of his life.



# Christopher Columbus



We already know how the Christopher Columbus story ends. He sets out to find Asia in 1492 and lands in the Americas.

# Geography and Religion

*How might the location of a country influence its religious experience?*

# Definitions

**Mosque** - a Muslim place of worship.

**Hadith** - collection of traditions containing sayings of guidance for Muslims from the prophet Muhammed.

**Caliph** - the chief Muslim civil and religious ruler.

**Caliphate** - the area ruled by a caliph.

**Martyr** - a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

**Reconquista** - “**reconquest**” The series of military campaigns by which Christian armies reclaimed control of Muslim dominated regions.

# Geography and Religion

The people of Spain have a saying: “La geographia manda, which means, **“Geography controls everything.”**”

- ❁ Spain’s location between Africa and Europe was to have a great influence on its religious history.

# Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East

The United States Government has not recognized the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Other boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

0 800 Kilometers  
0 800 Nautical Miles

Azimuthal Equal-Area Projection



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- Frankish Kingdom
- Byzantine Empire
- Kingdom of the Lombards
- Umayyad Caliphate

0 250 500 miles  
0 250 500 kilometers

# Muslim Spain

At the beginning of the Middle Ages (~475 AD), almost everyone in Spain, as the rest of Europe, was **Christian**.

Spain was ruled by the Visigoths, a people who invaded Spain from the north at the end of the **Roman Empire**.

Internal struggles and a series of **weak** rulers left the region vulnerable to attack.

# Muslim Spain

Eventually, in 711 AD, a **Muslim** force landed in Spain. The Muslims conquered almost all of **Spain & Portugal**.

To create a sense of **national identity**, they began construction of a large, beautiful **mosque** in Cordoba.

- ❁ In time, many (but not all) Christians converted to the **Islam** religion.



<https://www.greatbigstory.com/stories/mezquita-cordoba-history>

# Life and Society

For the next five hundred years, after the Middle Ages, Spain was a part of a vast empire. The Arab Islamic world was part of the **largest economic trade zone in the world.**

Muslim rulers and rich merchants supported the arts. Music, art, and architecture reflected Islamic values.

For example:

- ❁ Islam discourages showing human beings, animals, and other subjects realistically

They felt it may lead to people **worshipping** them (idolatry). Thus, their art reflected designs and written script.



# Centres of Learning

- ❁ Learning was greatly valued in Muslim society and many cities became centres of learning.
- ❁ The **world's** first university was established in Cairo in 971.

This was over **200 years** before the first university in Europe.

Scholars in the Islamic world knew much more about **natural sciences** than Europeans. They studied:

- ❁ medicine and science and translated books of the Ancient Greeks.

# Religious Tolerance

Most historians agree that Muslim Spain was a society that was relatively **tolerant** of religious minorities.

*Think about the other cultures we have explored. Were the Europeans open to new religions during the renaissance period?*

*What happened to the Catholic religion during the renaissance period?*

# Muslim Spain Falls

By the early 1000s the **caliphate** (areas of jurisdiction for Islamic rulers) began to decline. A series of ineffective rulers had led to civil unrest.

- ❁ Spain was no longer a unified Muslim state.

When the Muslims came to Spain, they had reduced the Christian-controlled area to a narrow strip along the north, but now they began to spread down south.

The **Reconquista** began as a result of this.

- ❁ The war was a way for Christian Kingdoms to expand power and influence
- ❁ It was also a war based on religious differences.

# Reconquista

The “Reconquista” is the Christian reconquest of Spain from the Muslims. This was a major war at the time. The Spanish developed a new way of fighting during this war. They would all use the same weapon and group together large numbers of soldiers. These formations became difficult to overrun. As a result, the Spanish became the deadliest fighting group in Europe. The Spanish brought this fighting style with them when they found the Americas.



# Creating a Christian Spain

*In what ways did King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella impose their religious worldview on Spanish society?*

# Definitions

**Monotheism** - “mono” means “one” and “theism” means “belief in the existence of a god or gods” So, belief in ONE god.

**Polytheism** - “poly” means “many” So, belief in many gods

**Expulsion** - the process of forcing someone to leave a place or organization

**Le Grand Derangement** - the forced removal by the British of the Acadian(French colonists) people from the present-day Canadian Maritime provinces

**Missionaries** - a person sent on a religious mission, especially one sent to promote Christianity in a foreign country.

# Creating a Christian Spain

In 1469, King Ferdinand II of Aragon (Northeastern Spain) marries Isabella of Castile (Central Spain), two very devoted Catholics who wish to unite Spain. The only part of Spain that was in Muslim hands was Granada. It was captured in 1492 after ten years of fighting. Spain was now officially Christian territory.



# The Spanish Inquisition

The Pope then announced that King Ferdinand and Queen Elizabeth would become **Catholic Monarchs** due to their devotion of their church.

The first step they took to unite Spain under one religion was to take over the Spanish Inquisition from the church.

The inquisition became a **state-run system** of courts where Church officials put **non-Catholics** on trial. After the Reconquista, Muslims and Jews were given a choice:

❁ **convert or be exiled.**

# Spanish Inquisition

The expulsion of Jews and Muslims had serious effects on Spain. For example, the Muslim and Jewish people made up a large part of the educated middle-class. The loss of their skills made it difficult to maintain economic growth at the end of the 1400s.

# Saving Souls

As the Catholic Monarchs pushed Jews and Muslims out of Spain, they began to think of other countries. They knew Muslims were spreading throughout the middle east and into Asia. King Ferdinand and Queen Elizabeth view this as a threat to Catholicism.

The King and Queen began to believe it was their:

**❁ religious duty to convert as many people as possible to the Catholic religion.**

This belief became a part of the Spanish worldview.

This is why they changed their minds to support Columbus' travelling adventure.

# Saving Souls

Columbus promised the King and Queen that he would find Asia and there would be millions of people to convert to the Catholic religion.



Starting with Columbus, all the Spanish explorers and conquistadors brought **missionaries** with them on their voyages and expeditions.

# Gold and Glory

*In what ways did the desire for gold and glory shape Spanish actions during the 1400s and 1500s?*

# Gold and Glory

In the Renaissance one of the key motivations for European explorers was the search for gold. They wanted to become wealthy themselves and the monarchs who supported their voyages needed gold to support their countries economies.

If a country had explorers finding gold and silver during these times it indicated that the country was rich.

They could then buy:

- ✿ ships
- ✿ resources
- ✿ fund wars for gain of power.

# Wealth for Spain

In 1492, Spain had used all of its gold and silver.

There was no more expensive activity for any nation than fighting a war. A nation at war has to pay and feed its soldiers, train new recruits, buy expensive weapons, and build hospitals.

The Christians had been fighting the Muslims for years and, by the time Granada surrendered in 1492, Spain's reserves of Gold and Silver were almost gone.

**❁ The King and Queen hoped Columbus' mission would bring back gold to support their economy.**



**FIGURE 9-17** The costs of fighting a war today are extremely high. In 2004, estimates of the hourly cost of the US war in Iraq was \$7.4 million. By 2006, economists were predicting that the total cost of the war could be more than \$2 trillion. How else might this money have been spent by the US government?

# Columbus

When Columbus arrived in the Americas he found only a small amount of gold on the island of Hispaniola. However, in his letters to the Queen and King, he wrote that the Americas were plentiful with resources.

This news was great for Spain. They approved a new voyage immediately. This time it would be a major expedition with more resources and supplies. For the next hundred years, Spain's desire for trade and income would drive its exploration of the American continents.

	<b>First Voyage October 1492</b>	<b>Second Voyage September 1493</b>
His Fleet	3 ships	17 ships
His Company	90 sailors	2500 sailors, soldiers, missionaries, settlers
His Instructions	Just explore.	Set up a colony on arrival, with a permanent settlement.

# Gaining Personal Wealth

Traditionally, Spanish nobles only had two ways to support themselves:

- ❁ war
- ❁ land.

Many nobles owned land and took **taxes** from the peasants that farmed on their land.

There became a shortage of good farmland in Spain and nobles could no longer support themselves.

- ❁ They began travelling to the Americas to seek their fortune.

# Taking a Risk for Glory

Not everyone was out to find gold. Some wanted to make a name for themselves, to earn respect in Spanish society.

## The Knightly Ideal

Tales of chivalry became popular during Spain's war with the Muslims. These stories celebrated the brave knight who sacrificed himself for his fellow soldiers, or overcame great obstacles in achieving his goal. Either way, the result was undying fame and glory. These epics and tales would inspire many generations of Spanish youths to follow the knightly ideal of winning fame on the battlefield.

## A Chivalric Epic: *The Poem of El Cid*

The 12th-century Spanish epic *The Poem of El Cid* celebrated the following aspects of El Cid's career and legend:

*military success*—A brilliant general, El Cid is never defeated in battle.

*loyalty*—El Cid remains faithful to his king, even after the king unjustly accuses him of treason.

*fairness*—He deals generously with defeated opponents.

*faith in God*—El Cid is a good Christian who tries to live a morally upright life.

All these qualities—skill in battle, loyalty, fairness, and faith in God—became part of the **code of chivalry**. This code was supposed to govern the behaviour of all Christian soldiers.

# Conclusion

The worldview of Spain was influenced by four factors: geography, God, gold, and glory. As a result, the Spanish monarchy supported the ideas of creating an overseas empire.

