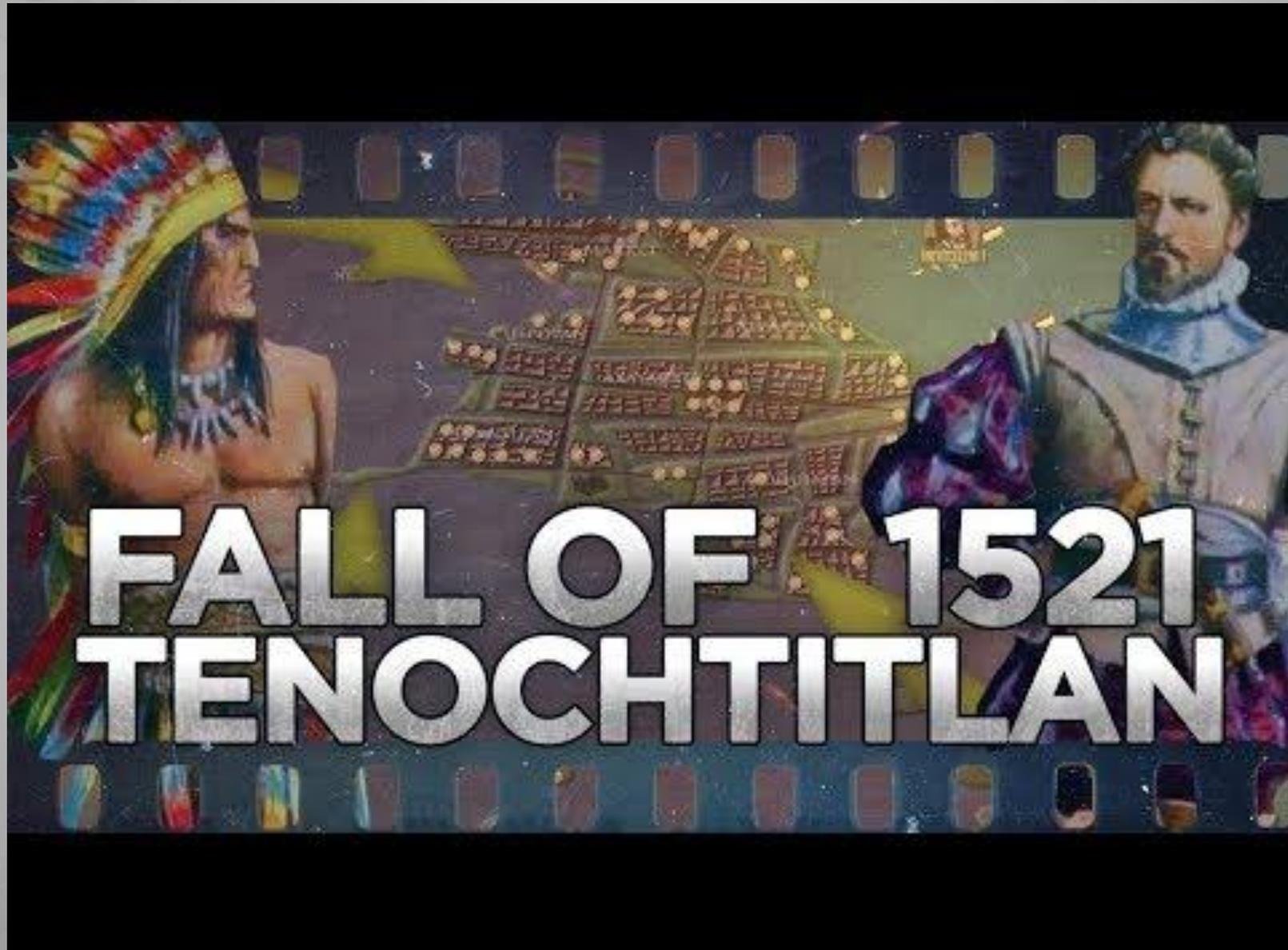


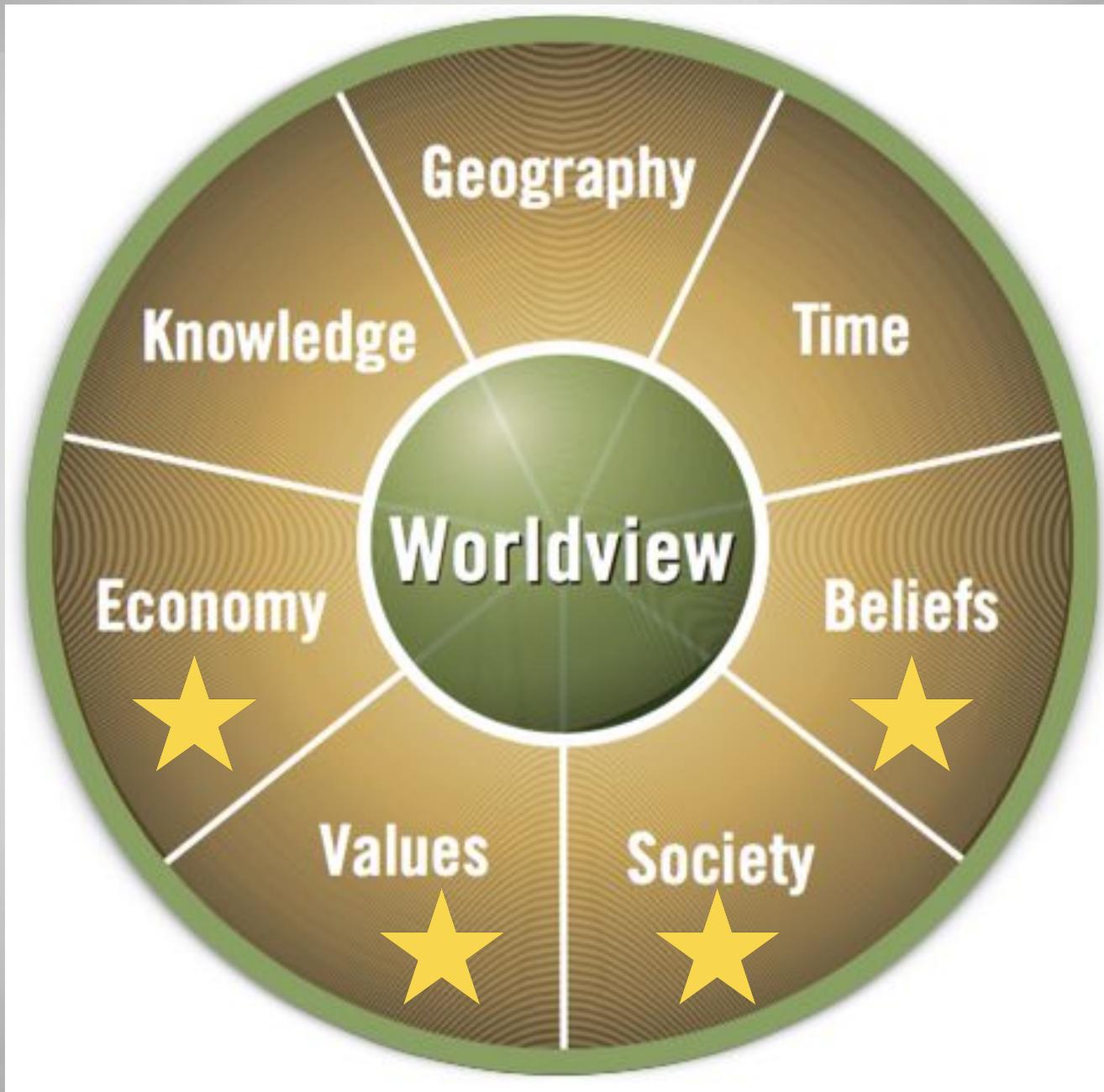
Worldviews in Conflict

WORLDVIEW INQUIRY

How does cultural contact between two societies affect their identity and worldview?



FALL OF 1521 TENOCHTITLAN



Big Idea

The catastrophe that the Aztecs experienced caused a radical shift in their way of life and how they looked at the world.

Changing a Worldview

How can losing a war affect a conquered people's worldview?



This is part of the
Aztec ruins in
Mexico City
today

Changing a Worldview

Do you think a single event can completely change someone's worldview? What sorts of events could change an entire societies worldview?

The black plague in the Renaissance

The Spanish conquest was a **catastrophe**, or disaster for the Aztecs. It affected almost every aspect of their way of life, forcing them to rethink the way they looked at the world.

New Religion

During the final siege of Tenochtitlan, Aztec priests kept telling their leaders that if the Aztecs continued their **sacrifices** and **prayers**, the gods would lead them to victory.

Afterwards, when the Aztecs looked at their suffering during the war and the famine that followed, many felt their gods had **abandoned** them.

Can you think of another unit we explored where the people began to doubt their faith?

New Religion

Cortes wrote to King Carlos, asking him to send “religious persons of goodly life and character.” Three years after the conquest, priests dressed in plain grey robes came off a ship. **Franciscan** priests vowed to live in the poorest conditions, never to get married, and always obey their superiors. Thin from fasting, and barefoot, they started walking through the jungles and over the mountains to Mexico City (formerly Tenochtitlan).

When they arrived Cortes **kissed their feet**. The Aztecs were shocked, as they had never seen the Conquistador treat someone with such **respect**.

New Religion

- ❁ The missionaries gradually converted many of the surviving Aztecs to the Catholic Faith
- ❁ They destroyed Aztec temples and burned all the Aztec codices.

Why?

New Economy

In addition to changing their religion, the Aztecs were also forced to become part of a completely new economic system. Earlier we saw how the Aztecs based their economic system on:

- ✿ farming
- ✿ trade
- ✿ war
- ✿ tribute.

This increased the Aztecs wealth.

New Economy

Aztec Flaw:

Demanded more and more tribute



Angered the peoples of the other tribes



Grew to hate the Aztecs



Spanish used these cracks in the system to recruit them in their war against the Aztecs

Encomienda System

This is the system in all the Spanish colonies



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graph TD; A[This is the system in all the Spanish colonies] --> B[In theory]; B --> C[Each piece of land the settlers were allotted a number of Aztec workers]; C --> D[They did not pay these workers – they had some legal rights]; D --> E[Landowners were supposed to treat them well and educate them in Christian religion];
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In theory

Each piece of land the settlers were allotted a number of Aztec workers

They did not pay these workers – they had some legal rights

Landowners were supposed to treat them well and educate them in Christian religion



In Practice

The economy in Mexico now resembled the ladder with the Spanish at the top and the Aztecs at the bottom



Colonies were too far away and so they had a little effect



Takes the King's fifth," 20 percent of all gold and other valuables found in New Spain.



Collects taxes that support himself, the colonial government, and the Spanish Crown.



Given *encomiendas* with Aztec workers. After paying taxes, they keep the remaining profits.



Do all the actual work on the farms and in the mines in return for little more than basic necessities: food, clothing, and shelter.

A New Worldview Emerges

*How can intercultural contact produce
a new society that combines aspects of
both original societies?*

New Worldview

To better understand what happened in Mexico after the conquest we must think about the worldviews within our own country.

Do you think that the English-speaking people of Toronto have the same worldview as the English-speaking people in Vancouver?

What about the Francophone people in Quebec vs. Alberta? Would they have the exact same worldview? Or is their worldview different and unique?

Plundered Gold

Cortes was exactly where he wanted to be once the Aztecs surrendered. But something unexpected occurred:

❁ Cortes' men threatened to rebel.

Cortes had promised to make them rich beyond their wildest dreams.

In Tenochtitlan, they had seen Moctezuma's **treasure rooms**, loaded with gold and silver, and heard rumors of much more. During the siege of of the city, however, most of this treasure was sent back to Spain.



Plundered Gold

The Spaniards had been fighting for years with no pay except what they could take in battle from the Aztecs. Cortes agreed that they deserved more and wrote to Spain asking for payment.

Cortes' goal was to stay in Mexico and make it a colony of the powerful Spanish Empire. He needed his fighting men to help him in this mission. He needed a solution to keep this men from leaving.

Cortes' Solution

Cortes put two policies in place to solve this problem.

1. The encomienda system
2. Cortes also passed a "marriage law"

Marriage Law

Every Spaniard in New Spain had to bring his wife over from Spain or marry an indigenous woman. Any man who did not have a wife within six months would be granted an encomienda.

Remember, the encomienda was a Spanish system that gave Spanish settlers land grants when they arrived in a colony.

Changing Worldview

What did Cortes achieve by giving his soldiers land grants and forcing them to get married?

He shifted their focus from short term goals – gold – to the long term goal of colonizing New Spain!

He also knew that if men married Indigenous women they would have close ties to the colony.

Children with Indigenous women as mothers, and Spanish fathers were known as Mestizo, which form the largest part of Mexico's population!

Independence Movement

Just as Cortes thought he had made a successful plan to colonize New Spain, King Carlos of Spain took it away from him. He gave the job to one of his most trusted councilors, Don Antonio de Mendoza.

He became the **viceroys**, the representative of the King for all of New Spain .

Modern scholars believe that perhaps the King took this privilege away from Cortes because he was scared that:

- ❁ Cortes was too good at what he did, and feared Cortes would declare himself King and separate his new colony from Spain.



FIGURE 11-12 Don Antonio de Mendoza deliberately limited Cortés's power and kept him away from Mexico City. Based on what you know about Cortés, make an educated guess about his reaction to having his power undermined.

Discontent in New Spain

By having a viceroy govern New Spain, King Carlos made it very clear that they were under direct control of the Spanish Crown.

Spain began to get rich, and New Spain suffered. There was a shortage of good roads, schools, and housing. Discontent arose among every class of society, and in 1821, Mexico became independent from Spain.

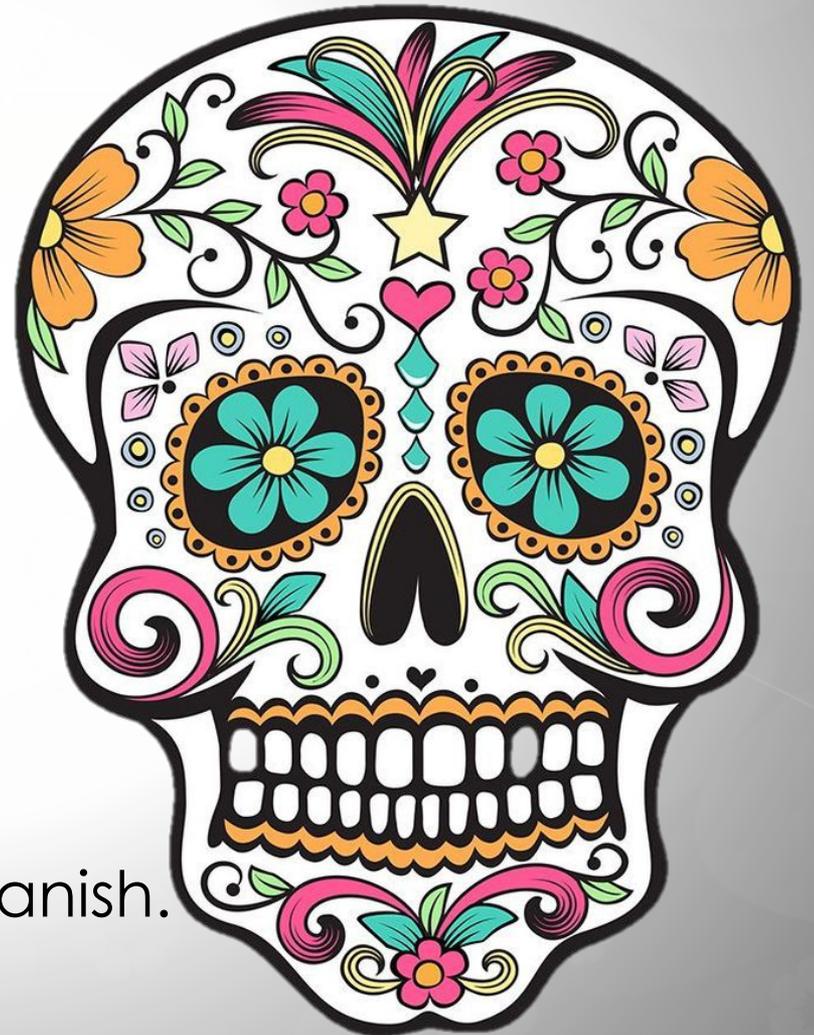
Spain under his control, King Carlos made it very clear that there was a steady flow of silver and farm products to pay for European wars.

Spain, even the Spanish government believed that what was good for Spain was necessarily good for them.

Mexican Culture Today

Modern Mexico today is a mixture of Indigenous, Mestizo, and Spanish traditions.

It is through the Catholic churches that one can still see many of the Aztec beliefs and traditions. Church festivals today include Aztec traditions that were developed long before the arrival of the Spanish.



Mexican Culture Today

Nearly 500 years have passed since the conquest of Mexico in 1521 by Spanish forces. Crusading friars, anxious to promote Christianity and to spread the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, tried hard to crush all native forms of worship. Human sacrifice was eradicated; the construction of temples and pyramids ceased.

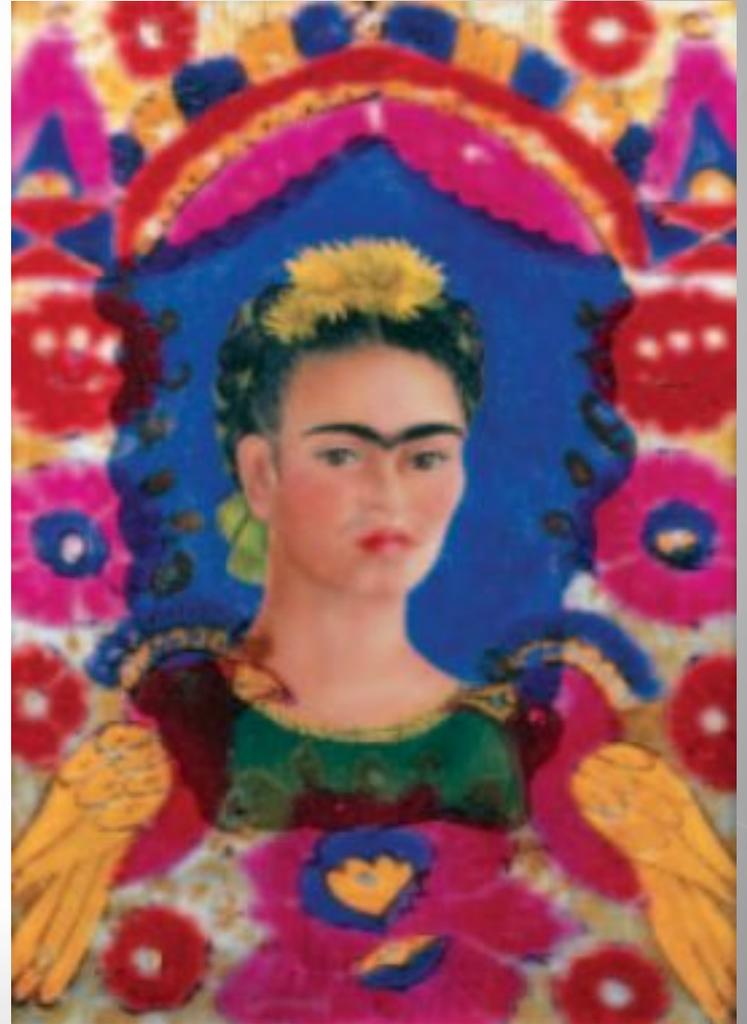
Today Christianity is the prevailing religion in modern Mexico. Most Mexicans, whether they live in large towns or small villages, celebrate Christian holidays such as Christmas, Carnival and Holy Week.

Mexican Culture Today

Christianity has not wiped out all traces of the pre-conquest religions, however. In many indigenous communities, ancient beliefs and customs co-exist with those of Christianity. This blending of religions is known as 'syncretism'. Today the descendants of the Aztecs are referred to as the Nahua. More than one-and-a-half million Nahua live in small communities dotted across large areas of rural Mexico, earning a living as farmers and sometimes selling craft work. Most Nahua worship in the local church and take part in church festivities. Yet aspects from the distant past linger on. Many Christian saints have fused with pre-conquest deities. When they are ill or unhappy, some Nahua visit traditional healers who promise to cure their patients with herbs, incantations, offerings of incense and food, and sometimes with the blood of sacrificed chickens.

Frida Kahlo

The daughter of a Mestizo mother and German father, Frida Kahlo was a skilled and influential painter. From a young age, she was fascinated by Mexican folk art and the sculpture and architecture of the country's Indigenous people. As a teacher, she often took her art students to the ruins of Aztec temples. She did this so they would appreciate what magnificent builders their great ancestors were.



Conclusion

The catastrophe that the Aztecs experienced caused a radical shift in their way of life and how they looked at the world.



**What aspects of the
Aztecs worldview
changed and how?**