

Essential Question: *Did the Age of Exploration do more harm than good?*

I believe explorers did more good than bad during the Age of Discovery because the Europeans exposed the natives to Christianity. A journal entry by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who was with Hernando Cortez on his voyage to Central America in the early 1500's, stated that Montezuma changed his views on life after being exposed to Christ by Spaniards. The following excerpt is pulled from Castillo's journal after Cortez explained the origins and principles of the Christian faith to Montezuma. The journal stated, "that after what he [Montezuma] had now heard [the word of God] he would put a stop to it and they would no longer adore Idols or sacrifice Indian men and women to them, for we were all brethren, nor should they commit sodomy or thefts." From this statement we can see that Montezuma stopped worshipping multiple gods and also would not make any human sacrifices for them. This is definitely a good thing because the Aztecs are no longer killing innocent human lives for their previous polytheistic faith. By the Spanish exposing the Aztecs to Christianity they started to live better and more moral lives as mentioned above in the quote.

Another reason why explorers did more good is.....use evidence from source #2.

Citation:

Schwartz, Stuart B. *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*.
Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.

Citation for primary source #2 would be here.

Citation for primary source #3 would be here.

Primary Source:

CORTES SPEAKS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY WITH MONTEZUMA

The next day Cortés decided to go to Montezuma's palace, and he first sent to find out what he intended doing and to let him know that we were coming. He took with him four captains, namely Pedro de Alvarado, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Diego de Ordás, and Gonzalo de Sandoval, and five of us soldiers also went with him. . .The favour he [Cortez] now begged of him was his attention to the words that he now wished to tell him; then he explained to him very clearly about the creation of the world, and how we are all brothers, sons of one father and one mother who were called Adam and Eve, and how such a brother as our great Emperor, grieving for the perdition of so many souls, such as those which their idols were leading to Hell, where they burn in living flames, had sent us, so **that after what he [Montezuma] had now heard he would put a stop to it and they would no longer adore these Idols or sacrifice Indian men and women to them, for we were all brethren, nor should they commit sodomy or thefts.** He also told them that, in course of time, our Lord and King would send some men who among us lead very holy lives, much better than we do, who will explain to them all about it, for at present we merely came to give them due warning, and so he prayed him to do what he was asked and carry it into effect. . .As Montezuma appeared to wish to reply, Cortés broke off his argument, and to all of us who were with him he said: —with this we have done our duty considering it is the first attempt. Montezuma replied - Senor Malinche, I have understood your words and arguments very well before now, from what you said to my servants at the sand dunes, this about three Gods and the Cross, and all those things that you have preached in the towns through which you have come. We have not made any answer to it because here throughout all time we have worshipped our own gods, and thought they were good, as no doubt yours are, so do not trouble to speak to us any more about them at present. Regarding the creation of the world, we have held the same belief for ages past, and for this reason we take it for certain that you are those whom our ancestors predicted would come from the direction of the sunrise. As for your great King, I feel that I am indebted to him, and I will give him of what I possess, for as I have already said, two years ago I heard of the Captains who came in ships from the direction in which you came, and they said that they were the servants of this your great King, and I wish to know if you are all one and the same.