

# RICHARD BYERS

## Latin America: A New Civilization

- Beginning in the early 1500s, Europeans began to colonize the Americas. In Central & South America and the West Indies, Spanish efforts to follow exploration with outright conquest began early in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

2 motives: ① God and ② Gold

① As the most powerful European Catholic state, soon heavily influenced by the active Jesuit Order, Spain hoped to win new converts to Christianity. These efforts would soon come into conflict with more earthly motives in the Americas.

② As we have seen, the newly created Spanish monarchy sought access to new sources of wealth. Initial contacts with Americans seemed to confirm the region as an area of enormous riches.

- Expeditions began in 1512, when many West Indian islands, including Cuba, became part of the Spanish Colonial System.

- In Mexico, a small army under the leadership of Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire, while in 1531 a similar force under Francisco Pizarro conquered the Inca.