

**A Columbus Day Retrospective: Roger McGrath's "Atrocities Azteca"; Royal Family Honor Code: Principles of Aristocracy 1-10, Rom 12:3-4, 9-15**

**"Cortés, Hernán," *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 15 ed., 5:194-95:**

Hernán Cortés, the Spaniard who conquered Mexico early in the 16th century, was the greatest of the Spanish conquistadors. Cortés was 33 years old when he set out in February 1519 to colonize the mainland of America. By 1521 the Aztec Empire in Mexico had been destroyed; the Aztec priest-king Montezuma (Moctezuma II) was dead; the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán (tā-noch'-tēt-lān) was in ruins; and Cortés had founded New Spain. His conquest, achieved initially with barely 400 Spanish soldiers, represented the peak of his extraordinary career.

**The expedition to Mexico.** When he finally sailed for the coast of Yucatán on February 18, 1519, he had 11 ships, 508 soldiers, about 100 sailors, and—most importantly—16 horses. On the mainland Cortés did what no other expedition leader had done: he exercised and disciplined his army, wielding it into a cohesive force. But the ultimate expression of his determination to deal with disaffection was when he burned his ships. By that single action he committed himself and his entire force to survival only through conquest.

The key to that conquest lay in the political crisis within the Aztec Empire. The ability of Cortés as a leader is nowhere more apparent than in his quick grasp of the situation—a grasp that was ultimately to give him more than 200,000 Indian allies. He was also fortunate in being presented at the outset with a captured princess who spoke Nahuatl (nā'-wā-tel), the language of the Aztecs. She became his "tongue," his adviser on Indian affairs, and, later, his mistress. It was she who worked on the complicated enigmatic mind of Montezuma so subtly that he finally became the voluntary prisoner of her master. Any assessment of Cortés' two campaigns against the Aztecs must take account of his ability to attract and retain the loyalty of this extraordinary woman. She was given the title Doña Marina by the Spaniards.

**McGrath, Roger D. "Atrocities Azteca," *Chronicles*, Oct. 2006, 13:**

Nearly every celebration of Mexican heritage by Mexicans in the United States now features references to the Aztecs and some form of traditional Aztec dance, called *La Danza Azteca*. Few Mexicans today, on either side of the border are descendants of the Aztecs; their ancestors are the people the Aztecs conquered, enslaved, tortured, and sacrificed.

The Aztecs arrived in the Valley of Mexico sometime during the 13th century. Legend says they came from the north, a place they called Aztlan, which could have been New Mexico or Arizona. Suffering a series of droughts and having exhausted the natural resources of Aztlan, they fought their way south, through tribe after tribe, finally arriving in the Valley of Mexico as a well-organized military aristocracy.

Generation by generation, the Aztecs reduced the relatively advanced city-states they found in the valley, until, by the middle of the 15th century, they had become the predominant tribe, governing from their capital of Tenochtitlan (tā-noch'-tēt-lān), an island city in Lake Texcoco (tās-kō'-kō).

They enslaved other tribes or reduced them to vassals, collecting from the latter tribute in food, women, and victims for sacrifice. Although the Aztecs did not introduce human sacrifice to Mesoamerica—Toltecs and Mayans were infamous for their bloodletting—they certainly practiced it on an unprecedented scale. The numbers of people—often girls entering puberty—sacrificed annually were in the thousands. Most anthropologists argue at least 20,000 humans were sacrificed each year.

Early Spanish accounts say 20,000 were sacrificed annually in the capital city alone. The Aztecs claimed that, when they dedicated the great pyramid at Tenochtitlan, they sacrificed more than 80,000 people in four days. In four lines that stretched for two miles, the victims were marched to the top of the pyramid and there dispatched by Aztec priests working in shifts. The numbers may have been Aztec hyperbole, but early Spanish chroniclers offer supporting evidence. Gonzalo de Umbria reckoned the number of skulls on the great rack in the center of Tenochtitlan at 136,000. Bernal Diaz said that, upon entering the central plaza of Xocotlan \sō-cōt-lān\, “there were piles of human skulls so regularly arranged that one could count them, and I estimated them at more than a hundred thousand.” Andres de Tapia described two immense towers made entirely of skulls held together by lime. There may have been more than 100,000 skulls in the towers. In account after account, in central plaza after central plaza, the number of skulls astonished the Spanish.

Aztec gods demanded flesh and blood, and flesh and blood is what the Aztecs gave them. Propitiation of the sun god was especially important. His life-giving light would fade forever without the hearts of humans. But the Aztecs also butchered people simply for food. Production of food became an ever-more-demanding problem during the 15th century, as the population of the Valley of Mexico swelled.

Maize, beans, and squashes were grown in greater quantities by reclamation of land from marshes and lakes, but animal protein, supplied chiefly by wild game and by domesticated dogs and turkeys, was hard to come by. Human beings were a handy substitute. Most sacrificial victims—for the gods and for cannibalism—came from conquered tribes or from vassals as part of their regular tribute. Slaves were less commonly used. Aztecs themselves were never sacrificed.

The sacrifices began with *La Danza Azteca*. To the beat of drums and the wail of horns, splendidly feathered warriors moved their limbs and pranced about while sacrificial victims were prodded by spears or dragged by their hair up the pyramid steps. Once on top, they were immediately spread-eagle on their backs and Aztec priests, using obsidian knives, sliced open the victims' chests and cut out their hearts. The priests then held the still-palpitating hearts to the sun and threw blood into the air. The bodies were quickly removed—to make room for the next set of victims—and allowed to tumble down the steep sides of the well-designed pyramid. Upon reaching the bottom, the corpses were carried off and butchered.

Three limbs of a corpse were the property of the warrior who had captured the victim in battle. Heads were reserved for Aztec priests who cracked open the skulls to eat the brains. The skulls then joined thousands of others on racks or poles in the central plazas. The remaining limb and other body parts were stewed with peppers and tomatoes and eaten by hungry Aztec warriors and their families. Some meat was saved for the carnivorous animals at the Aztec royal zoo.

The Spaniards were surprised to learn that the Aztecs had no desire to create a unified empire by conquering and assimilating surrounding tribes. Better to allow the tribes to remain as vassals or enemies who could then be forced to deliver sacrificial victims as tribute or suffer capture in war. The territory occupied by vassals or enemies amounted to human stockyards with no manpower or administrative costs to the Aztecs.

For those who present the Spanish conquest of Mesoamerica as the ignominious white man *versus* noble red man, the Aztecs present a problem. So, too, does the thought of Cortez and a few hundred soldiers conquering the all-powerful Aztecs. The Spaniards had the horse, weapons of iron, diseases not native to Mexico, and centuries of fighting the Moors, but they also had as allies the tribes who suffered unspeakable torture and mayhem at the hands of the Aztecs for a century—something those tribes' descendants should consider the next time the colorful *Danza Azteca* groups perform.

24. Here are some Honor Code principles found in Romans which for the purpose of emphasizing our present study we will refer to as “principles of aristocracy”:

**Romans 12:3** - I say through the grace that has been given to me, to everyone who is among you, stop thinking of yourself in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but rather think in terms of objectivity for the purpose of being rational as God has assigned to each one a standard of thinking from the source of doctrine.

**Principle of aristocracy #1:** Stop being self-centered. Arrogance always condemns others but never self. Think objectively about yourself and others.

**Romans 12:4** - For just as we have many parts in one body [ **the body of Christ; royal family** ] and all the parts do not have the same function,

**v. 5** - so we the many are one body in Christ, and individually parts one of another.

**Principle of Aristocracy #2:** Spiritual freedom allows all of us to function within our own spiritual gift. Never encourage a person to function beyond his own norms and standards especially in the area of spiritual gifts.

**Romans 12:9** - Your love should be nonhypocritical. Detest evil. Cling to the good.

**Principle of Aristocracy #3:** Unconditional love toward all men does not require you to sacrifice principle or compromise truth. Remember the formula: Doctrine produces integrity which when put under pressure requires probity in order for integrity to be manifest as honor.

$$D \quad \rightarrow \quad \frac{Pr}{IS} \quad + \quad P \rightarrow D \quad = \quad H$$

*Doctrine (D)* resident in the stream of consciousness *produces* ( $\rightarrow$ ) *Integrity of Soul (IS)*. When *Integrity of Soul (IS)* is placed *under Pressure (Pr)* and the believer expresses *Probity toward Doctrine (P→D)* then he is a person of *Honor (H)* which is how *Integrity of Soul (IS)* is manifest to the world.

(Note: See *Integrity, Probity, and Honor*, points 8-10, pp. 2375-77.)

**Romans 12:10** - With reference to your unconditional love be devoted to each other; with reference to honor, let each one of you esteem others more highly than yourself.

**Principle of Aristocracy #4:** Respect fellow believers as you would those of your own family members by recognizing imputed righteousness as the common bond and the privacy of the priesthood as a matter of honor.

**Romans 12:11** - With reference to your due diligence, do not be negligent; with reference to the Holy Spirit, be zealous when serving the Lord.

**Principle of Aristocracy #5:** Failure to remain consistent in one's spiritual growth has a negative impact on application of the honor code. Through the filling of the Holy Spirit, consistent service to the Lord is maintained.

**Romans 12:12** - With reference to confidence in the eternal future, have esprit de corps; with reference to undeserved suffering, stand fast. Be persistent in prayer.

**Principle of Aristocracy #6:** Through confidence in your eternal future and with esprit de corps, stand fast in the face of undeserved suffering. Prayer is the divinely provided instantaneous extradimensional communications network.

**Romans 12:13** - Contribute to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

**Principle of Aristocracy #7:** Be willing to assist where possible a fellow believer in need.

**Principle of Aristocracy #8:** Be courteous to strangers and show them kindness.

**Romans 14:14 -** Speak well of those who persecute you, keep on speaking well and do not curse them.

**Principle of Aristocracy #9:** Maintain poise and objectivity when fellow believers malign you. Never make excuses. Never retaliate.

- (1) This verse deals with persecution among believers. The believer must remain gracious, relaxed, and detached from the criticism.
- (2) The offended party is not required to say anything but if he does it must be expressed from the source of doctrine.
- (3) Doctrinal thinking must precede doctrinal speaking, minus emotion.
- (4) If response, thought, and speech are motivated by reactor factors rather than wise analysis then the situation only worsens.
- (5) Good manners complement the response which must also be accompanied by poise and grace.
- (6) A disposition of poise and grace when persecuted always leaves the matter in the Lord's hands so the justice of God can deal with the matter directly.
- (7) Therefore, when being criticized, maligned, persecuted, or treated unfairly the believer must learn to leave it alone and let the Lord prosecute the case.
- (8) Any response to the assailant must not intrude upon this principle but rather emphasize an attitude of esprit-de-corps love.

**Romans 12:15 -** Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.

**Principle of Aristocracy #10:** Respond with happiness for those who are prospered or blessed by the Lord. Respond with compassion for those who are suffering.

**NOTE:** This requires the sympathizer to have more stability at the moment than the one who is saddened. It only adds to the problem if the sympathizer says things that create or add to self-pity or stokes bitterness into anger. It is doctrine that comforts but it must be related from a disposition that has genuine rapport with the one suffering.