

When analyzing *Teaching the True Religion* regarding the nature of global encounters in an early modern era, we can see the general belief that Europeans held themselves as superior or the divine regarding the indigenous, native, and foreign populations. Despite this being the central belief that had led to the overall European enablement of global pagan devastation, some believed that the treatment of the said pagans was not an efficient method to gain their conversion to Christianity, nor was it morally correct.

Bartolomé de Las Casas was previously a militant but converted to pacifism and Dominican Priesthood by the tragedies of war in the New World, and he believed that as “An ill-tempered man stirs up strife, how many enemies will not such bitter words and works make?”¹ Bartolomé believed firmly that war would lead to more war and pleaded with Spanish and Portuguese conquerors and slave masters that a gentler approach should be used in their conquests and that “the pagans should first be subjected, whether they wished to be or not, to the rule of Christian people, and that once they were subjected, organized preaching would follow...”² The conquerors and slave masters completely disregarded Bartolomé’s and Pope Paul III’s papal bull for a gentler approach as they had often dismissed any religious recommendation or guidance that did not fit their agenda.

From this, we can make two observations: one of the general population’s feelings about the conquests against the pagan world, and two, the elite conqueror’s feelings and overall goal globally. Regarding the general population, like Bartolomé, he left home believing he would be liberating people from themselves while seeing the world. Still, after he had arrived and witnessed atrocities in the measures Europeans would take to gain the conversion of locals while

¹ Las Casas, *Teaching the True Religion* (1530s)

² Las Casas, *Teaching the True Religion* (1530s)

taking their land and family captive and slaughtering many more, he realized that there was nothing Divine in the means utilized. He believed that the natives should be treated like any other European population in attempting conversion and done so humanely and empathetically. Bartolomé was genuinely concerned for the native population and desired their peaceful conversion to Christianity. We can safely assume that a large part of the European population would have agreed with Bartolomé.

Conversely, when we look at the actions of the conquerors and slave masters, it seems as though religion was merely a vehicle for the execution of their primary agenda, which was to gain loot, slaves, land, and global control and oppression of indigenous populations. Much of their actions were carried out with greed as the primary force. The conquerors and slave masters, often supported by the global elites, marched to the beat of their drum, which, I believe, was vastly different than the will of most of the European population. Many non-elites were sold a different narrative and, until experienced first-hand, had a very different perspective of the global agenda.

Personally, this is the same scenario as where we are today. I, like the general population, went to Iraq willingly because I thought I, too, would liberate a people. Still, then, through first-hand experience, I realized I was the oppressor doing the bidding of the global elite. As highlighted in *Teaching the True Religion*, the lust for greed and power contributes to dictating corrupt and harsh global activities.