The religious aspect of Colonial America went through massive changes, from conquistadores overtaking lands and attempting to convert the natives using rudimentary and possibly barbaric methods to the new Spanish settlers attempting conversion in many new ways. Some of the more interesting methods and practices were actually quite shocking, while other attempts instill fear to accomplish a goal. It also seemed shocking that the number of persecuted people was as high as it was due to nonconformance.

When the Spanish first arrived, the natives basically had two options, to convert to Christianity or be killed. These initial steps were effective, but only due to fear, and a true conversion in my opinion was never actually made. As times passed and the lands were occupied more and more by new Spanish settlements, the thought process changed. They essentially created handbooks that guided people to convert the natives in a manner in which they would feel most comfortable –or attempted to do so; but also offered physical pressure to convert if they wouldn’t. This same process seemed to give the Christians unnecessary freedom where they could get away with crimes as long as they were acting in favor of Catholicism. The most shocking thing to me was the mention of witches, who could from my understanding, be used to create religious conformance through their work. I didn’t know this was a thing, seeing as though the witches of the later years in history were killed in unimaginable ways because of what they claimed to be.

Finally, one of the most interesting pieces was how Christianity in the new world was allowed to turn into hundreds of smaller more customized versions of Christianity. The followers molded it to suit their needs and beliefs to a degree. I would have thought that the Spanish would have struck this down and insured that subdividing was not possible. It makes me wonder why they were allowed to alter it at all, seeing as though the Indians own religions were destroyed and new pre-existing Christian literature and teachings brought to them and taught.