

The requerimiento essay example

[Religion](#), [Bible](#)



As the Spanish continued to explore the world and its resources, it desired to cement its control over the greatest resource and arguably greatest hurdle to controlling it, its people. In other wars, such as those against Muslim countries, it was easy to justify action against the enemies because the enemies had heard of Christianity but decided to reject it, and therefore acts against these evil people were justified by Spain. However, in The New World, Spain encountered the indigenous peoples who had never been exposed to any information about Catholicism or any form of Christianity. This presented a new challenge.

In response to this new situation, Spain came up with the Requerimiento. Today, the Requerimiento is seen as “ a proclamation in which the Spanish spelled out, quite bluntly, the deal they had in mind for the natives of the Americas: Convert to Christianity or be attacked” (Wilson). However, the Spanish mindset at the time would be more complex. The idea was that the Requerimiento be read to the American natives at the first opportunity. If the natives they accepted the document, Spain could look forward to that many more people to be on their side in future battles to control this new land, but if they did not accept, the people could be considered like the Muslim people that knew of the Christian beliefs and rejected them. This document showed : the desire of the sixteenth century Spaniards to open up the new continent by methods derived from their religious and cultural heritage and which would be justifiable to their own consciences” (Hanke 34).

The Spanish were early to visit America and knew the value of cementing their control over it before other powerful nations would, such as their historical enemy, England. It mattered little what other nations thought of it,

the idea was to assuage the Spanish conscience in doing whatever they needed to do in order to control America. Although it sounds ruthless and indeed from a modern perspective, is ruthless, at the time it appeared the best and most just way to spread Spanish influence. Though this mandate was effective for less than a century, the Requerimiento shows an interesting perspective on why and how the Spanish handled the discovery, investigation, and conquering of the New World.

Works Cited

Hanke, Lewis. "The " Requerimiento" and Its Interpreters." *Revista de Historica de América* 1 (Mar. 1938): 25-34. Print.

Wilson, Samuel M. "Reading Guide: Spanish Conquest." National Humanities Center (2006). Web. <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/contact/text7/text7read.htm>