



Are We Buying Too Much?

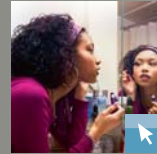


## Are We Buying Too Much?

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## TEENAGERS

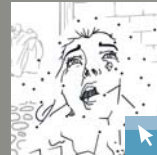


### YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . . **AM I OBSESSED WITH MY APPEARANCE?**

"Every time I look in the mirror, I think that I see an obese, hideous figure," says a teenager named Serena. "I've even starved myself in an effort to lose weight." If you have a problem with your body image, how can you gain a balanced view?

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS)

## CHILDREN



Read illustrated Bible stories. Use the activity pages to help your children improve their knowledge of Bible characters and moral principles.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > CHILDREN)

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## WORLD

The World Health Organization has concluded that **exposure to diesel engine exhaust** “is associated with an increased risk for lung cancer” and possibly also for bladder cancer.

## IRELAND

A report published in 2012 by **Ireland’s Association of Catholic Priests** indicates that 87 percent of Catholics surveyed in this country believe that priests should be allowed to marry; 77 percent believe that women should be allowed to enter the priesthood.

## EL SALVADOR

In mid-April 2012, government officials heralded El Salvador’s **first murder-free day in almost three years**. Plagued by drug-related violence, in 2011 the country had a homicide rate of 69 per 100,000—one of the worst in the world.



## ANTARCTICA

Fossilized pollen and spores recovered from seabed sediment reveal that the **Antarctic once supported palms** and near-tropical forests. During the so-called “Eocene greenhouse period,” winters were mild and “essentially frost-free” and temperatures at the poles were not vastly different from those at the equator.



## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Analysis of antimalarial drugs revealed that in some areas the **medicines were often sub-standard** or fake, leading to inadequate or failed treatment. In Southeast Asia, 36 percent of the drug samples tested were judged to be counterfeit, as were 20 percent of the drug samples in sub-Saharan Africa.





## How to End the Silent Treatment



### THE CHALLENGE

How do two people who have vowed to love each other get to the point where they refuse to talk for hours—or even days? ‘At least we stopped fighting,’ they tell themselves. Still, the issue has not been resolved, and they both feel uncomfortable.



### WHY IT HAPPENS

**Retaliation.** Some spouses use silence as a form of revenge. For example, suppose a husband makes weekend plans without consulting his wife. When she finds out, she is angry and calls him inconsiderate. He responds by calling her oversensitive. The wife storms off and stewes in silence. In effect, she is saying, “You hurt me, so I am going to hurt you back.”

**Manipulation.** Some use the silent treatment as a means to get what they want. For example, imagine that a husband and wife plan a trip and the wife would like to take her parents along. The husband objects. “You’re married to me, not to your parents,” he says. He then gives his wife the silent treatment, shunning her in the hope that she will break down and concede to his wishes.

Of course, a temporary time-out can give a couple the opportunity to let emotions cool when an argument is getting out of hand. *That* type of silence can be beneficial. The Bible says that there is “a time to keep quiet.” (Ecclesiastes 3:7) But when it is used as a means to retaliate or manipulate, the silent treatment not only prolongs conflict but also erodes the respect the couple have for each other. How can you prevent that from happening to you?



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

The first step to ending the silent treatment is to recognize it for what it is—a tactic that, at best, works only short-term. True, not talking may quench your thirst for retaliation or compel your spouse to give in to your wishes. But is that really how you want to treat someone whom you have vowed to love? There are better ways to resolve conflicts.

**Be discerning.** The Bible says that love “does not become provoked.” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5) So don’t over-react to such emotionally charged statements as “You never listen” or “You are always late.” Instead, discern the intent behind the words. For instance, “You never listen” might really mean “I feel as if you don’t take my viewpoint seriously.”—*Bible principle: Proverbs 14:29.*

## Think of your spouse as your teammate rather than an opponent

**Lower your voice.** Arguments tend to escalate as they continue. On the other hand, you *can* change the direction of a heated discussion. How? The book *Fighting for Your Marriage* says: “Softening your tone and acknowledging your partner’s point of view are potent tools you can employ to diffuse tension and end escalation. Often that’s all it takes.”—*Bible principle: Proverbs 26:20.*

**Think of “we” instead of “me.”** The Bible says: “Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.” (1 Corinthians 10:24) If you think of your spouse as your teammate rather than your opponent, you will be less likely to take offense, argue, and then refuse to talk to your spouse.—*Bible principle: Ecclesiastes 7:9.*

The silent treatment runs counter to the Bible’s admonition: “Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband.” (Ephesians 5:33) Why not make an agreement with your spouse that the silent treatment is unacceptable in your marriage? ■

## KEY SCRIPTURES

“He that is slow to anger is abundant in discernment.”  
—Proverbs 14:29.

“Where there is no wood the fire goes out.”—Proverbs 26:20.

“Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended.”  
—Ecclesiastes 7:9.

## THROW THE BALL GENTLY

The Bible states: “Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one.” (Colossians 4:6) This certainly applies in marriage! To illustrate: In a game of catch, you toss the ball so that it can be caught easily. You do not fling it with such force that you injure your partner. Apply the same principle when speaking with your spouse. Hurling bitter remarks will only cause harm. Instead, speak gently—with graciousness—so that your mate can catch your point.—From *Awake!* January 8, 2001.



# SATAN

## Is Satan a real person?

*“The original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, . . . is misleading the entire inhabited earth.”—Revelation 12:9.*

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY** Some believe that Satan the Devil is not a person but, rather, the abstract quality of evil that exists inside each person.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** Satan is a real person. He is a rebel angel, a spirit creature who opposes God. The Bible calls Satan “the ruler of this world.” (John 12:31) He uses “lying signs” and “deception” to accomplish his aims.—2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.

The Bible records a conversation in heaven between Satan and God. If Satan were a mere symbol of the evil that exists inside each person, how could God, who is perfect and morally unblemished, have been talking to an evil part of himself? (Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 2:1-6) Clearly, Satan is a real person and not merely a personification of evil.

**WHY SHOULD IT MATTER TO YOU?** Satan’s reasons for wanting you to believe that he is fictitious are similar to those of a criminal who hides his identity so that he may continue to break the law undetected. To protect yourself against Satan, you first need to acknowledge that he exists.



## Where does Satan live?

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY** Many believe that Satan resides in a fiery hell at the center of the earth. Others feel that he exists inside bad people.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** Satan is a spirit creature, so he lives in an invisible realm. For a time, Satan was allowed to move about at will where God and the faithful angels reside. (Job 1:6) Now, however, he has been evicted from God's presence and, along with other wicked spirit creatures, is confined to the vicinity of the earth.—Revelation 12:12.

*“Woe for the earth . . . because the Devil has come down to you.”*

*—Revelation 12:12.*

Does this mean that Satan is limited to one specific place on earth? For example, you may have read that the ancient city of Pergamum was said to be “where Satan is dwelling.” (Revelation 2:13) Actually, that expression alluded to the concentration of satanic worship there. Satan does not call any one physical place on earth home. Instead, the Bible says that “all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth” are his.—Luke 4:5, 6.

## Can Satan harm or control people?

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** Most of mankind have yielded to Satan's misleading influence and have thus come under his power. (2 Corinthians 11:14) This fact helps explain why humans have been unable to improve world conditions.

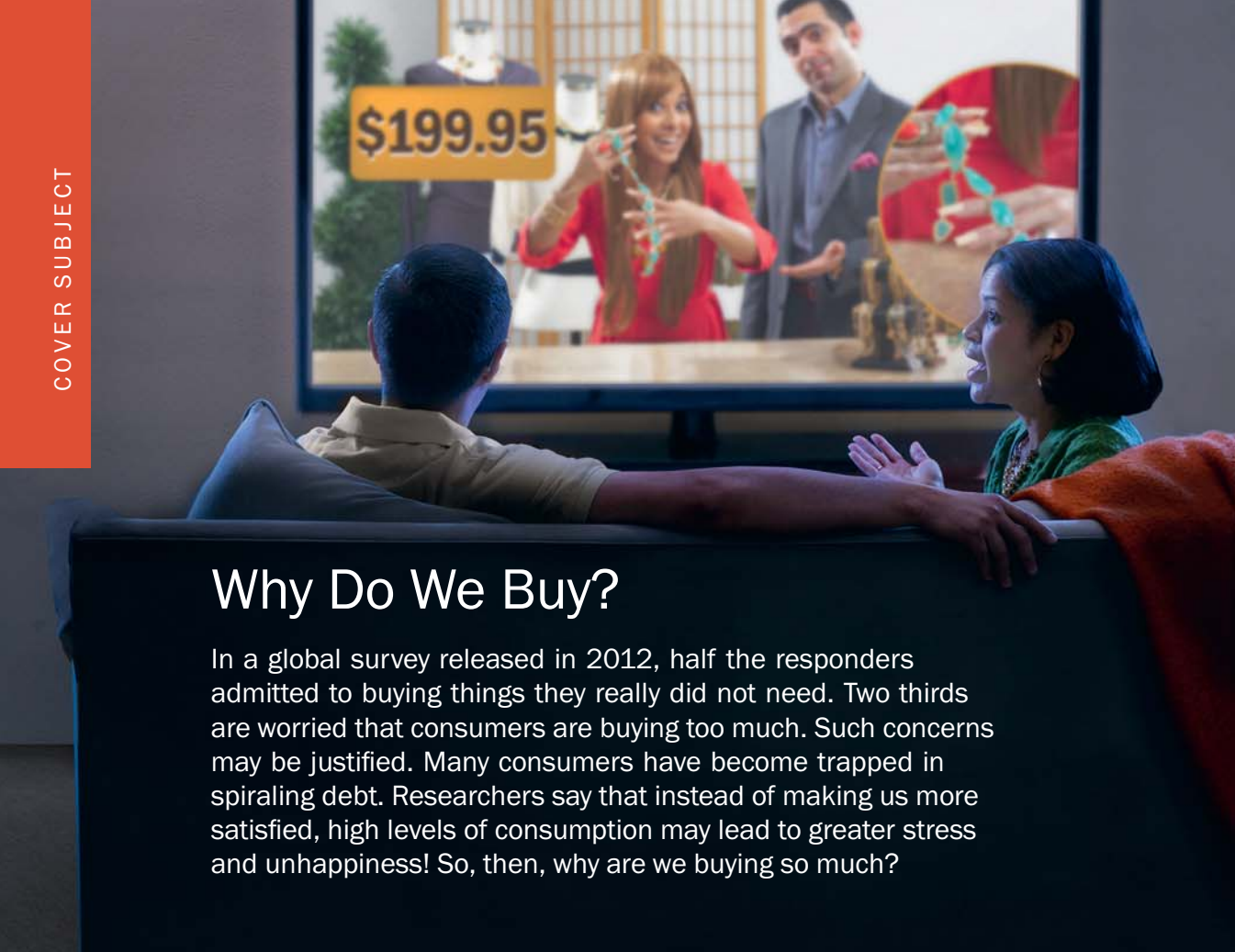
The Bible also records more extreme cases, in which Satan or other rebel angels have taken control of people and caused them physical harm.—Matthew 12:22; 17:15-18; Mark 5:2-5.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO** You need not dread Satan's power. To avoid coming under Satan's influence or control, you need to learn how he manipulates people, so that you are “not ignorant of his designs.” (2 Corinthians 2:11) By reading the Bible, you can obtain vital knowledge of Satan's tactics and thus avoid becoming a victim.

*“The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.”—1 John 5:19.*

Get rid of any paraphernalia associated with demon activity. (Acts 19:19) That includes amulets, printed matter, videos, music, and computer applications that promote spiritism or divination.

“Oppose the Devil,” says the Bible, “and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) By obeying the Bible's wise counsel, you can protect yourself against Satan's evil machinations.—Ephesians 6:11-18. ■



## Why Do We Buy?

In a global survey released in 2012, half the responders admitted to buying things they really did not need. Two thirds are worried that consumers are buying too much. Such concerns may be justified. Many consumers have become trapped in spiraling debt. Researchers say that instead of making us more satisfied, high levels of consumption may lead to greater stress and unhappiness! So, then, why are we buying so much?

AS CONSUMERS, we are subjected to a relentless barrage of marketing. What is the goal of marketers? To turn wants into needs. Marketers know that consumer behavior is driven largely by emotion. So advertisements and the shopping experience itself are designed for maximum emotional appeal.

The book *Why People Buy Things They Don't Need* says: "In planning a new purchase, a consumer often develops elaborate fantasies surrounding search for an item, finding it, and making it their own."

Some experts suspect that buyers can get so excited while shopping that they may actually experience a rush of adrenaline. Marketing expert Jim Pooler explains: "If the retailer can sense this emotional state he can tap into it and take advantage of the customer's elevated arousal level and weakened defenses."

How can you protect yourself from becoming a victim of clever marketers? Put emotion aside, and compare marketing promises with reality.



### THE PROMISE: “**Improve Your Quality of Life**”

It is natural to want a better life. Advertisers bombard us with messages that all of our desires—better health, security, relief from stress, and closer relationships—can be achieved by making the right purchases.

**REALITY CHECK:** As our number of possessions increases, our quality of life can actually

**As our number of possessions increases, our quality of life can actually decrease**

decrease. Additional time and money are needed to care for more material things. Stress levels rise because of pressure from debt, and there is less time for family and friends.

**Principle:** *“Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses.”—Luke 12:15.*

### THE PROMISE: “**Gain Status and Prestige**”

Few people will admit that they make purchases to impress others. However, Jim Pooler notes: “When people shop, a very important aspect of their behavior is that they are competing with friends, neighbors, coworkers and relatives.” For this reason, ads often show products being enjoyed by successful, affluent

people. The message such ads send to consumers is: “This can be you!”

**REALITY CHECK:** Defining our self-worth through comparison with others creates a never-ending cycle of dissatisfaction. When one level of aspiration is achieved, the next level immediately becomes desirable.

**Principle:** *“A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver.”—Ecclesiastes 5:10.*

### THE PROMISE: “**Define Your Identity**”

The book *Shiny Objects* explains: “A common way we tell others who we are (or would like to be) is through our use and display of material possessions.” Marketers know this and work to associate product brands—especially luxury brands—with specific lifestyles and values.

How do you see yourself, and how do you want others to see you? As stylish? As athletic? No matter what image you want, marketing promises that if you simply buy the right brand, you can adopt the brand’s identity as part of your own.

**REALITY CHECK:** No product purchase can change who we really are or give us admirable qualities, such as honesty and personal integrity.

**Principle:** *“Do not let your adornment be . . . the putting on of gold ornaments or the wearing of outer garments, but let it be the secret person of the heart.”—1 Peter 3:3, 4.*

## A Balanced View of Possessions

Marketing promises rarely match reality. However, there is a reliable guide to living a balanced, happy life. All the principles cited in this article are found in the Bible, the Word of God. The Bible does not condemn owning material things but teaches that greater happiness comes from a way of life that is “free of the love of money.”—Hebrews 13:5.





# How to Control Your Spending

In addition to the external pressure we face from marketing, our own feelings and habits can contribute to excessive spending. Here are six suggestions to help you keep spending under control.

**1. Resist impulse buying.** Do you enjoy the excitement of shopping and finding a bargain? If so, you may tend to purchase on impulse. To resist, slow down and think realistically about the long-term consequences of buying, owning, and maintaining what you are planning to buy. Stop and remember past impulse purchases that you later regretted. Give yourself a “cooldown” period before making your final decision.

**2. Avoid shopping to alter your mood.** Shopping can temporarily lift you out of a bad mood. But when negative feelings return, you may feel even stronger pressure to seek relief through spending. Instead of shopping to improve your mood, seek out supportive friends or engage in some physical activity, such as taking a walk.

## Modern Marketing Methods

In addition to television, printed material, and Internet advertising, modern marketers use a growing number of sophisticated methods.

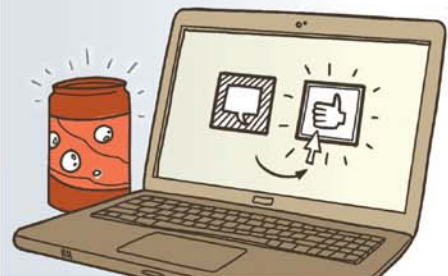
**PRODUCT PLACEMENT:** Products and brand names are subtly displayed in television shows, movies, and video games.



**STEALTH MARKETING:** Paid representatives enthusiastically use and talk to others about products in everyday settings without appearing to be sponsored to do so.



**WORD-OF-MOUTH MARKETING:** Advertising agents are encouraged to make comments about products to their friends and on social media networks. These agents may be given product samples or other rewards to motivate their participation.



**3. Do not shop for recreation.** Lavish shopping malls have turned shopping into entertainment. Although you may visit a mall or browse the Internet simply for enjoyment, much of what you see is designed to stimulate your desire to buy. Shop only when you have a specific purchase in mind, and stick to your plan.

**4. Choose your associations carefully.** The lifestyle and conversation of your friends greatly influence your desires. If you are overspending to keep pace with your friends, then choose friends who place less emphasis on money and material things.

**5. Use credit cards wisely.** Credit cards make it easy for you to buy while ignoring the consequences. Try to pay credit card balances in full each month. Know your credit card's interest rates and fees, and compare credit offers to find the most affordable cards. Be wary of premium cards that have higher borrowing costs and offer benefits that you do not need. Instead of purchasing on credit, save for larger purchases and pay cash.

**6. Know your financial status.** It is easier to spend excessively if you are not sure about your financial status. Keep up-to-date records, and know your total financial situation. Create a realistic monthly spending plan based on your income and past expenses. Track your spending, and compare it with your plan. Ask a trusted friend for help in understanding financial matters that are unfamiliar to you. ■



## Protecting Children From Consumer Culture

Children are a special target of advertisers, and understandably so. Young people are shopping and spending more than ever before. In the United States, teenagers represent a multibillion-dollar annual market.

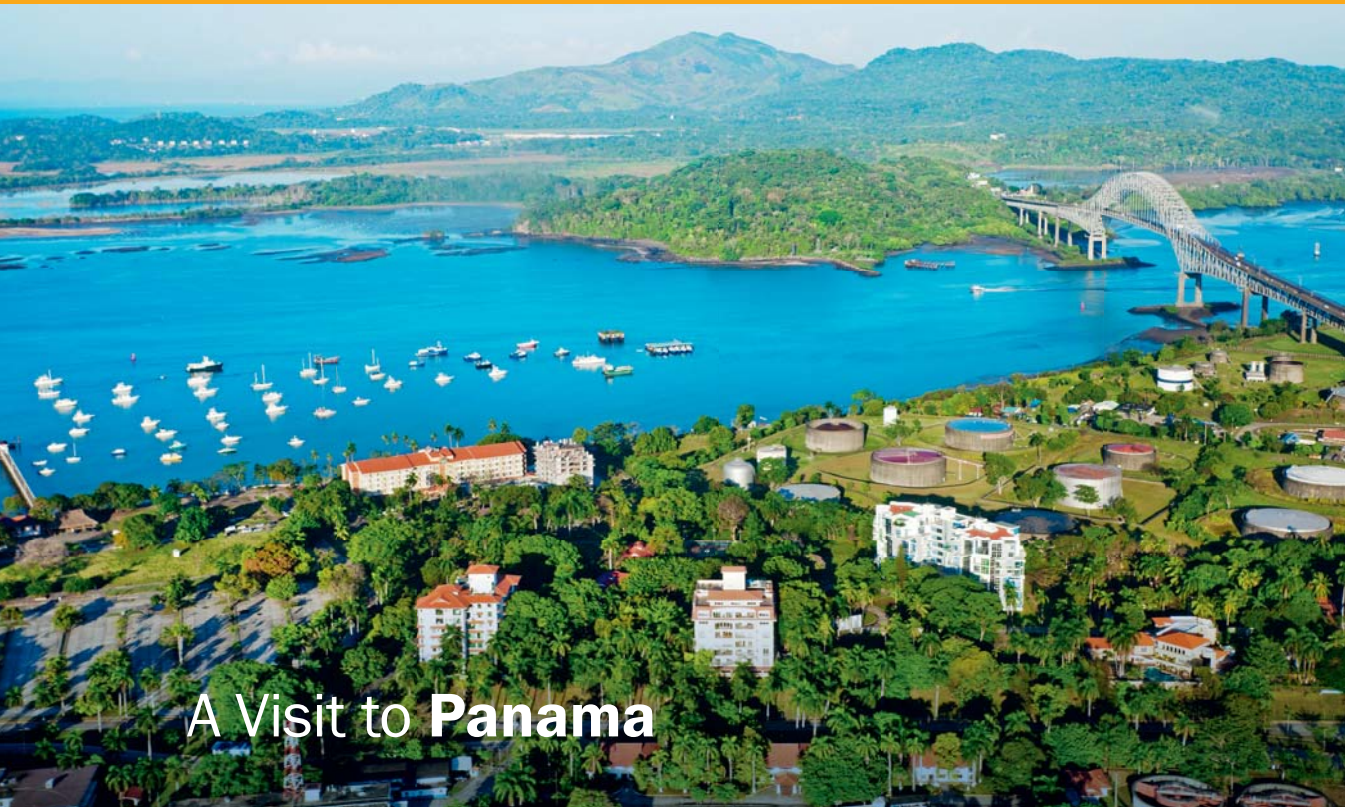
However, researcher Juliet Schor suggests that children who are highly involved in consumer culture are more prone to childhood depression and anxiety and have worse relationships with their parents. How can you protect your children? Consider the practical ways some parents have endeavored to protect their children.

**EDUCATE:** "You cannot totally protect kids from advertising because it is everywhere. So we explain to our girls that advertisers have an agenda and that the companies that hire them want money. They don't have our best interests in mind."—James and Jessica.

**STAY IN CONTROL:** "Kids put pressure on you to buy, and they really try to break you down. But it is important not to give in. Eventually they learn that they won't get everything. As we were raising our daughter, we often talked together as parents about how to be balanced and what limits to set."—Scott and Kelli.

**LIMIT EXPOSURE:** "Our family watches very little television. It's just not a part of our family routine. We fill time that could be spent watching TV with other activities. We cook and eat together, and our boys are avid readers."—John and Jennifer.





## A Visit to Panama



PANAMA is perhaps best known for its canal—a waterway that links the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. But because it connects North and South America, Panama also links people. It is home to a variety of races and cultures. A large percentage of the population come from a mix of indigenous and European ancestry.

In 1501, when Spanish explorers arrived in Panama, they found numerous indigenous societies, some of which still exist. One of these is the Guna (previously called Kuna). Many of the Guna live in the indigenous sector of the San Blas Archipelago and along the Caribbean Coast near the border between





A Guna woman wearing a *mola*, a brightly colored blouse with multilayered patterns, and holding a pet marmoset

**DID YOU KNOW?** The Panamanian golden frog (*Atelopus zeteki*) “waves” its limbs to attract prospective mates and warn rivals



Panama and Colombia. There, they hunt, fish in dugout canoes, and grow their own food.

In Guna society, when a man marries, he goes to live with his wife’s extended family and works for them. If in time his wife gives birth to a daughter, he and his family will be able to move away from his in-laws and establish a household of their own.

There are about 300 congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Panama. Besides Spanish, meetings are held in Chinese, English, Gujarati, Guna, Haitian Creole, Ngabere, and Panamanian Sign Language. ■

## FAST FACTS

**Population:** 3,629,000

**Capital:** Panama City

**Official language:** Spanish

**Government:** Constitutional democracy

**Climate:** Tropical

**Land:** Cool mountain woodlands, savannas, and humid rain forests. More than 1,600 islands are scattered along both coasts



## An Ultimatum IN GOD'S NAME?

*"If you do not do this, . . . with God's aid, I shall enter with power among you, and shall make war on you on all sides and in every way I can, and subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of his Majesty; and I shall take your wives and children and make them slaves, . . . and I shall take your property and shall do you all the harm I can. . . . The deaths and harm which shall thereby come, will be by your fault, and not that of his Majesty, nor ours."*

### QUICK FACTS

- ▶ The Requirement was an ultimatum delivered by Spanish conquistadores when they arrived in the Americas during the 16th century.
- ▶ Indigenous people were "required" to acknowledge the authority of the Catholic Church.
- ▶ The text of the ultimatum was read aloud in Spanish or Latin to local people who did not understand either language.
- ▶ This was one of the most disturbing proclamations in the history of the Americas.

AS OFFICIAL declarations go, this may be one of the most bizarre. It is part of a proclamation known as the Requirement, *el Requerimiento* in Spanish, that during part of the 16th century, Spanish conquistadores had to read aloud when they landed in the Americas for the purpose of conquest.

What exactly did the conquistadores proclaim to the local people, and why?

### Forced Conversion to Catholicism

Soon after Columbus set foot in the Americas in 1492, Spain and Portugal each claimed sovereignty over the new lands. Since both nations considered the pope to be Christ's representative on earth, they called on him to settle their dispute. Under the pope's direction, the church apportioned the newly found lands between Spain and Portugal—on the condition that these two countries send missionaries to convert the natives.

As the conquest progressed, the Spanish monarchy sought to legitimize the exploits of the conquistadores. The Spanish asserted that since the pope was acting in God's behalf when he granted the lands to them, the conquistadores were free to dispose of the indigenous people and their goods and curtail their liberty.

“Violence was excusable in a just cause, so the reasoning went. Spain, therefore, had to concoct just causes.”—Francis Sullivan, Jesuit professor of theology

The Spanish drafted a document to inform the local inhabitants of the pope's decision. The natives were required to accept Christianity and become subjects of the king of Spain. If they resisted, the Spanish felt entitled to wage a “just” war against the locals in God's name.

### “Unjust, Impious, Scandalous”

The Spanish Crown had the Requirement read to ease its conscience and justify the colonial conquests. The conquistadores often read the proclamation on board their ship prior to a raid or on land to the inhabitants who did not understand European languages. Sometimes the document was read to the empty huts abandoned by terrified natives.

This attempted forced conversion resulted in bloodbaths. For example, about 2,000 Araucanians were slaughtered in a battle in Chile in 1550. Concerning those left remaining, conquistador Pedro de Valdivia told the king: “Two hundred had their hands and noses cut off for their contumacy, inasmuch as I had many times sent them messengers and given them commands [the Requirement] as ordered by Your Majesty.”\*

The reading of the Requirement may have salved the conscience of the invaders. However, it did little to promote the religion of the Spanish. Sixteenth-century missionary friar Bartolomé de las Casas, an eyewitness to the Requirement's effects, wrote: “How unjust, impious, scandalous, irrational and absurd this injunction was! I will not speak of the infamy it caused the Christian religion.” Chronicler Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo lamented that the atrocities committed against the indigenous peoples of the Americas gave them a very poor first impression of Christianity.

Is God to blame for such atrocities committed by political and ecclesiastical powers, purportedly in his name? The Bible states: “Far be it from the true God to act wickedly, and the Almighty to act unjustly!”—Job 34:10. ■

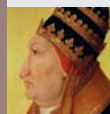
\* According to some sources, the Requirement was abolished in 1573.

## TIME LINE OF EVENTS

1492 ► Columbus arrives in the New World

About  
1493 ►

Pope Alexander VI grants the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies dominion over their claims in the New World



1513 ► The Requirement goes into effect



1550 ► About 2,000 Araucanians are killed in Chile

1573 ► The Spanish Crown officially abolishes the Requirement





## The Flipper of the Humpback Whale



**T**HE adult humpback whale is bigger and heavier than a city bus. Still, this colossal mammal is remarkably agile when diving and turning. How can the humpback whale be so nimble? Part of the secret lies in the bumps on its flippers.

**Consider:** Most whales and other cetaceans have flippers with smooth leading edges. However, the humpback whale is different. It has uniquely large bumps (called tubercles) on the leading edge of its flippers. As the humpback swims, water flows over the bumps and breaks up into a multitude of vortices. The bumps channel the water flow and create turbulence. This “tubercle effect” provides the whale with more lift, allowing it to tilt its flippers at a high angle without stalling. At high angles these bumps also reduce drag—an important benefit for the humpback’s long flippers, each being about one third of the whale’s body length.

Researchers are applying this concept to make more-efficient boat rudders, water turbines, windmills, and helicopter rotor blades.

**What do you think?** Did the flipper of the humpback whale come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

