

# PRECARIOUS PEACE

## *God and Guatemala*

### DISCUSSION GUIDE



*"Excellent for study groups."*

- Sojourners  
"Culture Watch"



**What does it take to end a war?**

Part I (40 min.)

**What does it take to ensure a peace?**

Part II (32 min.)

Introduced by Martin E. Marty

***A case study of violence and hope.***

# WELCOME TO GUATEMALA

*PRECARIOUS PEACE* has been designed as more than a self-contained documentary. It is meant as a stimulus to discussion. For the serious viewer there is a lot to absorb, all of it complex and much of it controversial. For some, the questions that arise from the stories will be disturbing. Our intent has been to present a variety of opinions, with people speaking for themselves. There is no overriding script. No one religious organization is behind the project. Over ten denominations and faith groups are represented among the participants and advisors. We encourage an atmosphere congenial to free exchange and dialogue.

## WHY GUATEMALA? (And where is it, anyway?)

For many of us in the U.S., Guatemala blends with "all those little countries down there" in Central and South America, where there always seem to be revolutions, guerrillas and assassinations. But, first of all, Guatemala is closer than we're apt to think. It's just a commuter flight from Miami. It's a do-able drive down through Mexico. In fact, you could even walk there, if you dared. It's close to us in other ways, too. For more than a century now our country and our churches have been deeply involved in Guatemala, as a commercial resource (think bananas and coffee), as a political presence, and as a mission field. Its stories provide a mirror that forces us to see ourselves in a spectrum of relationships with another culture—and as such it acts as a case study of our interaction with other developing countries in the world, as well.



The light this sheds can be helpful as we seek out what it means to be part of the global scene in this next century—as a nation and as people of faith. We thank you for joining us in this adventure.

Shirley and Rudy Nelson, Project Directors  
Dennis Smith, Co-director, Guatemala

*"The church of Christ has an altogether different face and an altogether different shape as a result of the events of the twentieth century."*

*"From Christendom to World Christianity" — Andrew Walls*

## THOUGHTS BEFORE VIEWING

“¡La violencia!” This video is about violence.

Part I: “What does it take to end a war?” is about physical violence.

Part II: “What does it take to ensure a peace?” is about more insidious forms of violence. Both are part of a “culture of violence.”

**BUT WHAT IS A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE?**

**HERE IS ONE ASSESSMENT TO CONSIDER \***

### Characteristics of a Culture of Violence:

1. An enemy, real or imagined
2. Authoritarian governance (enforced obedience; limited choices)
3. Control of information (secrecy)
4. State-propagated fear
5. Enforced poverty (economic domination)
6. Social and religious marginalization
7. Male domination

*We suggest those points as a background for discussion, whether you watch the video straight through or one part at a time.*

For multiple sessions with discussion, recommended 3-part breakdown:

(1) First 22 min. of Part I (2) Remainder of Part I, 18 min. (3) Part II, 32 min.

### CONSIDER, TOO, SOME FACTS ABOUT GUATEMALA

- Population: 12 million, over 50% Mayan indigenous.
- National language Spanish, with over 22 indigenous language groups.
- 85% live well below the poverty line; 3% receive 60% of the annual income.

For three hundred years the country was a colony of Spain. Dictators ruled for the next century and a half. From 1944 to 1954 Guatemala experienced its only period of democracy. When that regime was overthrown, unrest led to civil war.



### WHO WAS DOING THE FIGHTING?

The war began sporadically in the sixties when one faction of guerrillas, some of them Marxists, protested military dictatorship. In the 1970s the guerrillas united and began a campaign to involve the rural Maya. In response, the military, backed by Guatemala's economic elite, mounted a massive counter-insurgency to wipe out suspected support of the guerrillas in Mayan communities. As a result, thousands of innocent people were forced to take sides.

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\* Adapted from "Moving from a Culture of War to a Culture of Peace," by David Adams, in *FELLOWSHIP* magazine of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, September/October, 2002. Used by permission. Adams is the former director of UNESCO's Unit for the International Year for the Culture of Peace. See his website: [WWW.UNESCO.ORG/CP](http://WWW.UNESCO.ORG/CP)

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO END A WAR?

OTHER THAN OVERT ACTS OF WAR, WHAT ASPECTS OF A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE, AS LISTED ON PAGE ONE, DO YOU SEE DEMONSTRATED IN THE FOLLOWING MOMENTS FROM THE VIDEO?

"I think one of the undercurrents of Guatemalan history is the great fear that the indigenous people would rise up."

– Virginia Garrard Burnett



"Fear of the unknown Mayan other! "  
– Dennis Smith



Señor Atz, who was a Roman Catholic lay leader, a catechist, thinks they may have been under siege because the village cooperative was mistaken by the military as a communist enterprise....The progressive sector of the Catholic Church was identified as being part of the guerrilla movement.... Many priests were killed, but catechists died by the hundreds.



"The problem with the Catholic Church is that it made the mistake of getting directly involved in politics and set aside its spiritual ministry. " – Juan Par, Primitive Methodist educator



President Ephraín Ríos Montt offered endangered peasants safety, shelter and food if they proved to be on the side of government. If they appeared to back the guerrillas, they could expect to meet with violence. Since Montt claimed to be "born again," many Christians backed his policies. Some spied for the government, which led to massacres.

*"Evangelical Christians tend to be apolitical."*

– Steve Sywulka, Central American Mission

Sywulka quotes Romans 13 as a rationale for obeying any government. *"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed."*



**FACED WITH ANY OF THESE DILEMMAS,  
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

## NEUTRAL OR ACTIVE?

Non-citizens faced hard decisions, too. When Juan and Grace Par, directors of a Primitive Methodist school in the western highlands, were urged to get out by the American Embassy, they refused. Though politically conservative, they publicly declared themselves neutral in order to protect the school and the children. Throughout the war, they were not molested by either side.



Another story, not part of the video, takes a different approach. Tom and Marjorie (Sister Marian Peter) Melville, were sent to Guatemala individually as missionaries under the Maryknoll order. In time, each grew disillusioned with the Catholic hierarchy "as the moral bulwark of the unjust social and political status quo," a system that marginalized and mistreated the Mayan people, as Tom Melville has since explained it. The two grew to know each other as part of a nucleus of nuns and priests seeking a means of symbolic protest. Their plan was to join the guerrillas, not as armed combatants, but as spiritual guides, until they were betrayed and were forced to escape.\*

*Each couple faced very different circumstances, but each held the belief that they were countering war and violence in their choices.*

### COMPARE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS AS YOU GIVE THOUGHT TO THAT:

"By 1979 I knew clearly that there was a war... I desired, from my impure sense of justice, that the guerrillas would give the army a good lashing. This is what the army had done for years to the indigenous people. But around 1983 I realized that war is not the way." – Julia Esquivel, Guatemalan poet

"Sometimes the church is called on to do more than warn those in danger of being crushed under the wheels. Sometimes we are called to jam a stick in the spokes." – Attributed to Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"For religion and politics, whether the individual choice be neutrality or activism, the result is equally political: neutrality in effect commits one to work within the status quo." – Daniel Levine, as quoted by Anthony Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar*.

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\* From Whose Heaven, Whose Earth? by Tom and Marjorie Melville, and from comments by the Melvilles to the video producers. (Regrettably, the Melville story became available too late to include it in the video.)

## CARVING A SPACE

"War had become a way of life. Both the army and the guerrillas were living in some way off the war."

– Paul Jeffrey, United Methodist Journalist



A step toward peace occurred in August of 1987, when the Central American presidents met to sign an agreement. This led to peace in Nicaragua, and eventually in El Salvador, but not in Guatemala. The military was holding out for the defeat of the guerrillas. The guerrillas, who had no hope of winning militarily, were holding out for a voice in a democratic government.



"The guerrillas...did not want simply peace. They wanted change in the agrarian, the judicial, economic, political life of the country." – Paul Wee, Lutheran clergyman

***IS IT JUSTIFIABLE TO CONTINUE A WAR  
FOR ALLEGEDLY GOOD REASONS?***

The Catholic Church "carved out a space" where people could talk freely at a time when speaking your mind meant risking your life. In 1990, Paul Wee, working for the Lutheran World Federation, also "carved out a space" when he persuaded leaders to come together in a neutral place to simply talk about the possibility of peace.

### ***WHAT CAN "SPACE" ACCOMPLISH WITHIN A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE?***

Throughout the war, many people worked for peace, publicly and behind the scenes—Christians, Jews, Mayan traditionalists, as well as those who had lost husbands and other family members in the conflict. One was GAM, a mutual support group, women seeking information about disappeared and detained relatives. Another was CONAVIGUA, the National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows—Mayan women cooperating in economic self-sustainment.



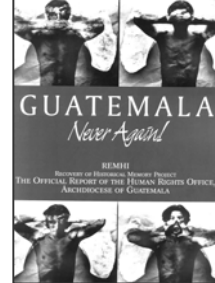
In 1982, Rigoberta Menchú, a young K'che' Mayan, won the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts in peace-making. See her autobiography, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.

***LOOK BACK AGAIN AT PAGE 1 AT THE CHARACTERISTICS  
OF A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE. WHAT ASPECTS OF THAT  
DID THESE WOMEN CHALLENGE?***

*Keep in mind that Guatemalan women were not encouraged to speak for their rights in any case, and often forbidden to do so.*

## FEAR AND SILENCE

The state condoned terror as a weapon to guarantee protection for those who carried out crimes of war. Two truth commissions were created to break that silence. The first, under the aegis of the United Nations, was limited to revealing only "general responsibility" for atrocities, without naming individuals. REMHI, the Recovery of Historical Memory Project, was planned by an inter-diocesan group to address that omission. A crew of 800 people recorded 6,000 testimonies from victims and witnesses, which were then published as a book, Guatemala: Never Again!



One similar story was told many times. Women would speak of knowing who had killed their husbands or some other kin, and of knowing that the killer, who lived close by, knew that they knew. Not only did the women fear for their safety, but living with such secrecy was an unbearable burden, what anthropologist David Stoll refers to as a public secret—"what everyone knows but cannot talk about because of the prevailing distribution of power...a way of remasking the truth in order to avoid confrontation and reprisal."

### ***WHAT SHOULD THEY DO? EXPOSE THE KILLERS? FORGIVE AND FORGET? COMPARE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS BY GUATEMALANS:***

"REMHI is a bad idea. There needs to be genuine pardon and that means forgetting."

"REMHI doesn't deal just with indemnification, but with how to take measures so that the past doesn't repeat itself."

"The only kind of amnesty that's acceptable is one where the criminals ask publicly for forgiveness for what they've done."

"You can only forgive what you don't forget. We should be offering forgiveness as a path to healing, but not to obligate a person to forgive."



"We assumed the task of breaking the silence that thousands of victims have maintained for years...We have made it possible for them to speak, to find their voices...so they might feel liberated from the burden that has been weighing them down for so long."

Bishop Juan Gerardi, the major force behind REMHI, presenting the completed project to the world.

Two days later, on April 24, 1998, Gerardi was murdered. Death threats and intimidation, as well as lynchings, have continued in the wake of this truth commission, but so have confessions and reconciliation.

### ***WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE? SILENCE OR DISCLOSURE?***

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO ENSURE A PEACE?

### THE SILENCE OF GUNS IS NOT A GUARANTEE

The 1996 accords that brought an official political end to the war and promised "a firm and lasting peace" have not been ratified by the Guatemalan legislature, so they have no legal foundation—that is, there is no force of law to back them. A national constitutional reform referendum in 1999 failed when well-financed opposition raised the threat of an indigenous take-over and cluttered the referendum with dozens of proposals that obscured its original purpose and confused the voters.

"So the root causes of the war have never been addressed." – Paul Jeffrey

As a result the violence goes on.

"Violence is a sorcerer. It wears many faces. War is only the most obvious face." – Dennis Smith

" We need to shut the doors to those conditions that gave rise to the war and unfortunately are still with us today – poverty, exclusion, racism."

– Edgar Gutiérrez, Guatemala's Foreign Minister

### *HOW COULD A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE BE REPLACED WITH A CULTURE OF PEACE? COMPARE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:\**

<b>VIOLENCE</b>	<b>PEACE</b>
Instead of:	Cultivate:
an enemy, real or imagined.....	understanding and respect
enforced obedience (authoritarian govt).....	democratic participation
control of information (secrecy).....	free flow of information
enforced poverty (economic domination).....	sustainable development
social and religious marginalization.....	celebration of differences
male domination.....	equality between the sexes
state-condoned terror (silence).....	freedom from fear

### *WHAT ARE YOUR OWN IDEAS ABOUT A CULTURE OF PEACE? APPLY THEM AS WE RECALL SCENES FROM PART II OF THE VIDEO.*

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\* Adapted from David Adams, "Fellowship," Sept, Oct 2002. Used by permission.



## REALITIES OF PEACE

PEACE DOES NOT MEAN THAT EVERYTHING IS "NICE,"  
OR THE ABSENCE OF TENSION AND STRUGGLE

"People are hanging on by their fingernails. There's a precariousness to life itself." – Dennis Smith



"One of the obstacles (to peace) is the unequal distribution of economic and political power."

– Edgar Gutiérrez, Guatemala's Foreign Minister

More than 65% of the land in Guatemala is owned by 3% of the population. In fact, huge portions of the best land are owned by foreign companies, including the United States, much of it acquired from Mayan citizens by questionable means. Measures to correct this inequality have failed repeatedly over the years.

"Peacebuilding is about the construction of a vision and developing the design that guides the construction. Both must be built with tools and materials that come out of the realities and relationships that people know and experience in their daily lives. *This is building the house of peace –from the ground up.*"

– John Paul Lederach, Mennonite peace advocate

### A CHURCH TAKES ON RISK

The Iglesia Cristiana Samaria pentecostal church has chosen to stand with their neighbors in an adjacent barrio, the result of an illegal land invasion seven years ago. To date the barrio has not received the legalization it has requested to ensure its continued existence.



Residents (and the Church) could be forced to evacuate at any time, as has happened repeatedly in land occupations throughout the country.

***WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF A CHURCH  
SUPPORTING AN ACT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE  
AS PART OF ITS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY?  
CAN SUCH ACTION BE TAKEN WITHOUT  
PARTICIPATING IN THE VERY VIOLENCE  
THE CHURCH IS TRYING TO OVERCOME?***

## NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

*"SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT" (ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL)  
IS LISTED ON P. 7 AS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF  
A CULTURE OF PEACE. WITH THAT IN MIND, COMPARE  
THE GOALS OF THE TWO FAITH GROUPS BELOW.*



**El Shaddai:** Large prosperous "Health and Wealth" congregation in an upscale section of Guatemala City.

"God is a God of blessing who desires your health and prosperity...God always answers prayer. If we do not see the manifestation of the answer, the responsibility is not God's...Now, the responsibility rests upon us, to whom God has given authority over all forces of the enemy."

— Harold Caballeros, Pastor of El Shaddai

"God doesn't force us to do anything. He simply says, 'If you want blessings, I'll leave you some rules and you will have blessings. If you don't follow them you will be cursed.'" — Francisco Bianchi, church member

*WHAT DOES THE HEALTH AND WEALTH GOSPEL MEAN IF  
YOU ARE ONE OF THE POOR LIVING IN AN URBAN BARRIO?  
WHAT DOES IT SAY TO THE POOR OF THE WORLD?*

**Colegio Utatlán:** Primitive Methodist school in the western highlands, with 1200 students, 75% of them indigenous.



"Students come to us and they say, 'Thank you for giving us the opportunity for a better life.'" — Juan Par

"That's the fun part--to see students, some of whose parents cannot read or write, get out into the world and get good jobs." — Grace Par

*IN THE CHOICES FACED BY UTATLAN'S INDIGENOUS  
STUDENTS, WHAT MIGHT BE SOME OF THE TRADE-OFFS?*

*IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE  
STUDENTS IN THE SECRETARIAL CLASS SINGING  
"AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL"?*

## THE MAYA: KEY TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE



"The 1996 peace accord envisioned a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and plura-lingual society. Those things are not going to happen until the indigenous population and its place within the Guatemalan society is recognized, accepting the Maya as real citizens, not as expendable, and not as museum pieces, but as a respected living force." — Matt Samson, cultural anthropologist

The roadblocks to this acceptance are not just political and economic, but cultural as well. They include religious exclusivism.

"What are we told by both Catholics and Protestants? That there is a God who automatically condemns us for being pagans. Violence is generated by this distinction. Violence can cause a separation between the body and the spirit of life....My grandparents called this 'disincarnation.'" — Antonio Otzoy, Christian-Mayan scholar

### *HOW WOULD YOU UNWRAP THE TERM "DISINCARNATION"?*

In the video, persons from various faith groups offer widely differing views on the relation of Christianity and Mayan spirituality.

"If you believe in a heaven and hell, these people are not going to heaven."

"In the Mayan cosmivision, they principally speak of God as Father and Creator. The Christology is not there."

### *IN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, HOW CAN WE BE GENUINELY OPEN AND STILL KEEP THE INTEGRITY OF OUR OWN FAITH?*



"There is also the birth of an indigenous Christian theology—a cosmivision which is Mayan and a Christian vision as well."

"There are important areas where Mayan thought and Christian thought can converge."

"God has no limits nor does God belong to any religion or culture."

*Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me."*

### *HOW SHOULD THIS CLAIM BY JESUS INFLUENCE CHRISTIANITY'S ENCOUNTER WITH OTHER RELIGIONS?*

## HOW DO THINGS LOOK TODAY?

After 500 years of oppression and racism, 36 years of brutal armed conflict, and 6 years of struggle among competing interests, perhaps we should not be surprised that the "firm and lasting peace" promised in 1996 has not yet become a reality.

Nevertheless, according to the Spring 2003 report of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission, the present time is "a particularly complex and difficult moment."

- Human rights violations are increasing
- Death threats and intimidation have resurfaced
- War crimes go unpunished by the judicial system
- The military retains dominance over civil society
- International trade agreements adversely affect the poor

All of these--and more--will be contentious factors in the November 2003 presidential election, when General Efraín Ríos Montt, who has been charged with genocide for his role in the massacres of the early 80s, plans to be a candidate, although prohibited by the constitution.

### FINAL QUESTIONS

IN HIS INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS, MARTIN MARTY REFERRED TO GUATEMALA "AS AN IDEAL LABORATORY OR CASE STUDY."

*AS YOU WATCHED THE VIDEO AND VICARIOUSLY EXPERIENCED LIFE IN THAT TROUBLED COUNTRY--WITH ITS DEEPLY INGRAINED CULTURE OF VIOLENCE AND THE EFFORTS TO NURTURE A CULTURE OF PEACE--WHAT CORRESPONDENCE DID YOU NOTE BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND OTHER SPOTS IN THE WORLD?*

*WHAT ABOUT YOUR OWN COUNTRY? YOUR OWN COMMUNITY? CHURCH? FAMILY?*

## MORE QUOTES TO FEED DISCUSSION

"We have internalized the values of violence at a deep spiritual level. "

— Julia Esquivel, interview, "The Other Side," Sept/Oct 1999

"I have come to see that the ecumenical movement of our day is not simply a game played by ecumenical bureaucrats filled with sound and fury, signifying nothing. It's a drama worked out in the spirit of God where unity is a matter of life and death." — Paul Wee, extended interview for "*Precarious Peace*"

"The basis of interreligious dialogue is the commitment of all partners to their respective faiths and their openness to the insights of others. The objective of dialogue is not a superficial consensus. It should not lead to the dilution of all convictions for the sake of false harmony. It must lead to the enrichment of all in the discovery of Truth." — Stanley J. Samartha, *Between Two Cultures: Ecumenical Ministry in a Pluralistic World*

"And then we begin to see Jesus as a man who dialogues. A man who has the right words for the precise moment. He is a man who sees and feels the needs of widows and orphans, those who are discriminated against, of the disenfranchised, including the needs of those powerful people who lived during his time."



— Antonio Otzoy, Christian-Mayan scholar

"I would argue that...a conflict resolver...needs to be someone who understands Otherness in a deep, existential way. That Otherness need not be based on her ethnicity or religion, but it must be a self-conscious awareness of that which makes all human beings, beginning with oneself, Other in some way. — Rabbi Marc Gopin in *From the Ground Up*.

"Various large churches in Guatemala are carrying out what they call spiritual warfare. They have prayer warriors. Martial songs speak of going to battle in the name of God. True, it is a metaphor, but deep down those churches are preparing theologically for war."

— Mario Higueros, extended interview for "*Precarious Peace*."

"We have many problems in Guatemala. Change may not come overnight, but there is always hope."

— Marta Atz, extended interview for "*Precarious Peace*."



## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY: BOOKS

- Appleby, R. Scott. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.
- Berryman, Philip. *The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American Revolutions*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984.
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- Carmack, Robert M., ed. *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1988.
- Cleary, Edward L. *The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America*. Westport, CT: Praeger Books, 1997.
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- Guatemala: Never Again. Report on the Discovery of Historical Memory Project*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Gutierrez, Benjamin and Dennis Smith, eds. *In the Power of the Spirit: The Pentecostal Challenge to Historic Churches in Latin America*. Louisville, KY: PCUSA, 1996.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998.
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- Melville, Thomas & Marjorie. *Whose Heaven, Whose Earth?* NY: Knopf, 1971.
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- Stoll, David. *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Walls, Andrew. *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996.
- Wilkinson, Daniel. *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY: ORGANIZATIONS

- Adams, David [www.unesco.org/cp](http://www.unesco.org/cp)
- Borderlinks [www.borderlinks.org](http://www.borderlinks.org)
- EPICA (Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean) [www.epica.org](http://www.epica.org)
- Fellowship of Reconciliation [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)
- Guatemala Human Rights Commission [www.ghrc-usa.org](http://www.ghrc-usa.org)
- Guatemala Scholars Network [www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/Anthro/GSN/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/Anthro/GSN/)
- Guatemala Watch of Vermont e-mail: [imlusa@sover.net](mailto:imlusa@sover.net)
- Maryknoll Productions [www.maryknoll.org](http://www.maryknoll.org)
- MINUGUA (United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala) [www.minugua.guate.net.gt](http://www.minugua.guate.net.gt)
- NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala) [www.nisgua.org](http://www.nisgua.org)
- Overseas Ministries Study Center [www.omsc.org](http://www.omsc.org)
- Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico [www.rtfcam.org](http://www.rtfcam.org)
- SOA Watch/ NE, 6367 Overbrook Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19151
- United States Institute of Peace [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)
- Witness for Peace [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org)

### **CEDEPCA** (Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pastorales en América Central)

For more than 20 years CEDEPCA has offered church leaders a unique conceptual space for biblical, pastoral, and human rights training, rooted in a widely ecumenical Central American context.

CEDEPCA  
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**[www.precariouspeace.com](http://www.precariouspeace.com)**

## CERTAINTY

"They can cut all the flowers  
But Spring will always return."  
Guatemala you will bloom

Every drop of blood  
every tear,  
every sob extinguished by bullets,  
every cry of horror,  
every shred of skin  
torn away in hatred  
by the anti-humans--  
will bloom.

The sweat that broke out  
of our anguish  
fleeing from the police  
and the sigh concealed  
in our most secret of fears  
will bloom

We have lived a thousand years of death  
in a Homeland  
that will be altogether  
"An eternal Spring."

-- Julia Esquivel



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