

# Stirrings



Clifford Harper

A Basilian Peace & Justice Newsletter

Spring 2014

## Mexico Then and Now

By Paul English CSB

**MEXICO  
REFLECTION**

1

**SUBVERSIVE  
BEGINNINGS**

3

**ISRAEL FROM  
WITHIN**

4

**A CHAPTER  
PROPOSAL**

5

**LESSONS IN  
FORGIVENESS**

6

**MORAL  
MONDAYS**

7

**MOVIE  
PROPAGANDA**

8

Thirty-two years ago, I moved to Mexico City to take up my second year of studies in Theology as a Basilian in temporary vows. I lived with several other Basilians in formation in a very poor section of Mexico City called San Juan de Aragón. It was my first time to travel to Mexico, but I was inspired by my hero, Fr. Bob Power, CSB – a dynamic priest who spoke near-perfect Spanish and who pastored the parish of Sainte Anne de Detroit by calling forth leadership from among the people. Bob had studied his full degree in Theology in Mexico and I wanted to do the same. In their wisdom, the members of the General Council saw fit, after my pushing and pushing, to allow me to spend my second year there. What a year!

The other Basilians were wonderful men. They were tremendously clean and their clothing was immaculate, but unlike the guy from the north who (characteristically, even today) overpacked, they did not worry about what they were to wear. Great challenge to one of my North American assumptions about the necessities of life! Food was always delicious but never in abundance.

We studied together at the Jesuit university there, the Iberoamericana, home to the children of the wealthiest, the socialites, the politicians, and to a poor band of religious men and women who studied together at a fine Faculty of Theology (Facultad de Ciencias Religiosas), learning 1980s-brand Latin American theology,

reading primary sources, having long discussions of how the Bible and the Revelation of God seem to make the most sense from the point of view of those considered “throw-aways” in society, people living on the margins who, in polite, capitalist society, “don’t count.” Another assumption severely challenged.



News about my home country, the United States of America in the time of the Reagan presidency was very different in Mexico and across Latin America than it was in the US. In fact, that last sentence can be changed to present tense and maintain its truth value. Other countries see us differently, of

course, but they also are allowed to see and read and talk about things that are just not available to us who live in this country. In my idealistic young man’s mind, I thought that if I translated articles I was reading in the Mexican press and sent them to friends in “the North” and to the U.S. government, they would see what the American press had not shown them. Then things would get better. It took me some months, but it finally dawned on me that what I had presumed, that the government was unaware of and needed to be told, was tragically naïve, that the assassinations in Guatemala and El Salvador, the massacres and oppression were not only known by the government of my country, but bankrolled, trained and often led by members of my country’s government. All my life – and no continued on page 2

## “I still loved my country, but now the blinders had come off”

continued from page 1

doubt all Americans' lives – we have heard and assumed that ours is “the greatest country in the world.” I knew that not to be true after several months living outside of it. I still loved my country, but now the blinders had come off and I could see how such an assumption was not only naïve, but actually dangerous in that it left us Americans unable even to conceive of such great evil being done in our name and with our consent – and tax dollars. This one hurt – a lot. In fact, it probably shook my core foundations so much that I would deal with bouts of depression both in Mexico and when I returned.

All of my illusions, my assumptions, the things they taught me (us) as a kid as true and necessary and God-ordained... shaken to their bases.

While all this was rumbling through my soul, two more long-standing prejudices were also being challenged by lived experience. One was that poor people (poorer than I had ever experienced) were not joyful people. I, in my North American vision, presumed that poverty deprived people of the possibility of joy, but it turns out that relationships and small moments of grace, sharing prayer with the community, falling in love, turning 15, buying a bicycle, finding a job – all were moments of immense joy. Joyful poor people. Who knew?

I also learned a huge lesson about being human. Yes, that basic. I learned that we humans have a small amount of food that we actually need not only to survive but to thrive – and it's much less than I presumed. We are

strong and smart and able to do many, many things with the merest basics.

What I'm saying here is that the poor people who lived in our neighborhood, as much as the Jesuits and their collaborators at the Universidad Iberoamericana, were my teachers. The Jesuits in Theology. The people in Humanity, their humanity and my own, and understanding that there is so little difference in who we are at the base. It's what we load on that separates us, and it makes us less joyful, less able, weaker and tending toward an addiction to “stuff.” I'd like to say that I transplanted this insight into my life once that year was over and I returned to one of the largest, most wealthy cities in North America, Toronto. It took me several years to come to a sort of peace, though not entirely, with living in North America. I still feel deep in my soul that as long as there is one sister or brother suffering from the evils of poverty, injustice and war, I can't sit back and say, “Everything's alright and I'm satisfied.” The Jesuits have a saying that I wish I had come up with. They say that once people have experienced life in some other poor country in their Volunteer Corps, they're “ruined for life.” But it's not a destructive “ruin.” It's also called “solidarity.”

Anyway, I was blessed with a chance this past week to visit Mexico City again, as well as Tehuacán in the state of Puebla, both of which places Basilians live and work. My Basilian brothers continue to amaze me by their simple lifestyle, their joy, their sense of solidarity not only among themselves but with the people of God in their charge and across the world. Wherever there are people suffering, our brothers know something about them and often pray for them in Mass or community prayer. There is a sense among them all that what they do means something, that in real and tangible ways God is being shared through their apostolic activity, their loving presence, their prayer and example. I come back so grateful for the gift of a year among the people of Mexico and among my Basilian brothers – and grateful for this week in which they showed me deep hospitality, fraternal love and humble honesty.

May the Lord Jesus and his blessed mother, the Virgin of Guadalupe watch over you all and share heavenly peace with you and all God's children

*Paul is pastor at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish in Rochester, New York and a member of the Basilian General Council.*



## Stirrings

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## Subversive Beginnings of Basilians



Lapierre

During the turmoil and persecution of the Catholic Church during the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror, a clandestine school was

established in Saint Symphorien de Mahun

in the department of Ardèche, in the south-central part of France.

Among the founding priests were:

**Joseph Lapierre**, a priest who fled persecution during the Revolution and secretly celebrated Mass and provided clandestine Christian education; **Pierre Tourvielle** who received covert education during the French Revolution from his older brother, a priest; **Jacques Duray** who was born in Annonay, the son of a physician, studied in Paris and was a classmate of the revolutionary enemy of the Catholic Church, Maximilien Robespierre; **Augustin Payan** who attended the clandestine seminary college at Saint Symphorien de Mahun, and became a teacher; **Jean-Baptiste Polly** who was mayor of Saint Symphorien de Mahun, hid priests to protect them, attended the clandestine seminary college, and was secretly ordained.

Because the local church was dedicated to St. Basil, they became known as the priests of St. Basil. After several years they were able to move their operation above ground and open schools in and around Annonay, a town of about 5,000 at the time. On November 21, 1822, during the feast of the Presentation of our Lady, the ten founders chose Joseph Lapierre as the first Superior General and St. Basil as the patron for the order.

Bishop Armand de Charbonnel, named the Bishop of Toronto in 1850, was a Basilian student in Annonay from 1811 to 1819. He turned to

the Basilians to assist him in his work with the largely Irish Catholic community in Toronto. The order decided to send four of its members and established St. Michael's College in 1852, quickly followed by St. Basil's parish in 1856.

This effort was a large investment, risk and sacrifice for the congregation as it represented a significant percentage of the total number of available Basilian priests. The community in North America grew while the founding community in France faced further challenges.

The local bishop who was prepared to suppress the congregation, died the night before signing a decree. During the 3rd French Republic, Catholic schools were again a target, this time of the Socialists who were determined to secularize education. The decrees of 1880 targeted Jesuits but affected all teaching orders including the Basilians, and as a result of the persecution they were forced to close one of their schools in 1881 and one of their houses. The French government finally suppressed all religious orders in 1903. The Basilian confreres were dispersed and their property was sold at auction. The religious life of the Basilian Fathers in France was suspended for twenty years.

Discussion between the Congregation in France and North America resulted in the amicable Decree of Separation in June of 1922 creating two separate religious congregations, each with their own constitutions. The French and North American branches were reunited in 1955.

*This report is adapted from from the Wikipedia article on the Basilian Fathers.*



Tourvielle



An immersion experience which will deepen your understanding of this conflicted zone and move your heart as we reflect and pray in places where Jesus was born, lived, taught, died and rose



### *Basilian Peace & Justice Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*

22 July - 5 August 2014  
justpeace@basilian.org



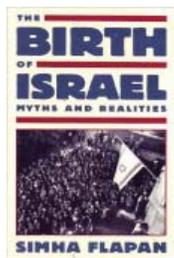
A journey of faith and hope in search of beatitude people - Christians, Muslims and Jews - who nonviolently pursue a just peace in this holy land

*All these books are written by Israeli Jews. Together they make a sobering read if one truly wishes to understand the ongoing powder keg in Israel/Palestine. These are the "new historians," Israeli academics who have shattered forever the myth of their country's innocence.*

These revisionist Israeli historians are a small group which has challenged the standard Zionist version of the causes and courses of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

What occasioned the new historiography was the 1980s release of thousands of documents regarding the birth of Israel and the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The results have been devastating for the Israeli cause.

The official Israeli position, embraced uncritically by the West, concerned the Palestinian voluntary exodus of 1948. It now is acknowledged that Ben Gurion and the Israeli leadership was always in the latter's own words for "compulsory transfer."



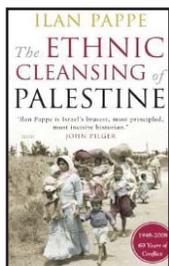
Simha Flapan's book *The Birth of Israel* examines what he sees as seven historical myths, one of which is the Israeli agreement to partition Palestine. Flapan shows that Ben Gurion stated flatly that this was only "the beginning of full redemption and the most powerful lever for the gradual conquest of all Palestine." The agreement was in Flapan's words "tactical...a vital step in the right direction...a springboard for expansion when circumstances proved more judicious."

The most egregious myth burned into Israeli consciousness was that Palestinians fled voluntarily from their homes intending to return. No "direct orders" for expulsion were issued, but "the goal and spirit" of real policy were understood and accepted by the army. The military campaign was set forth in the Hagana's Plan "Dalet."

## Israel from Within

Reviewed by Ted Schmidt

*"After the Holocaust it has become impossible to conceal large-scale crimes against humanity...our electronic media no longer allows catastrophes to remain hidden...and yet one crime has been erased almost totally from the global public memory: the dispossession of the Palestinians in 1948." Ilan Pappé*



Ilan Pappé's book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* is the most exhaustive and detailed analysis of the catastrophic expulsion.

He writes in his preface: "On March 10, 1948 in Tel Aviv a

group of eleven men, veteran Zionist leaders... put the final touches on a plan for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine...The orders came with a detailed description of the methods to be employed to forcibly evict the people; large scale intimidation, laying siege to and bombarding villages and population centres, setting fire to homes, properties and goods; expulsions, demolitions, and finally planting mines among the rubble to prevent any of the expelled inhabitants from returning...it took six months to complete the mission. When it was over, more than half of Palestine's native population, close to 800,000 people had been uprooted, 531 villages had been destroyed."

To bring readers up to speed on Israel in the last thirty years, one must go to the work of Avi Shlaim. Like Ilan Pappé, Shlaim has had to leave Israel. It is always dangerous to destroy national myths and refute the massive propaganda of your own country. But what's a historian for?

*The Iron Wall* takes the reader from the emergence of Israel (1947-1949) up the year 1998. The title is instructive and sets the table for Shlaim's ruminations.

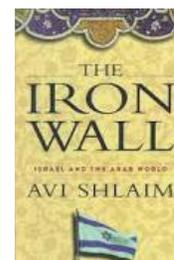
The Iron Wall is the fundamental metaphor of the brilliant Russian Jewish Zionist Ze'ev Jabotinsky, He was a clear thinking realist who understood

recognizing that Arabs would never accept Israel's conversion of their country to a Jewish state. An iron wall of Jewish military power was needed to disabuse the Arabs from ever considering a military victory. His "revisionist Zionism" broke with the predominant gradualist approach.

Shlaim clearly underlines the clash of two movements for national liberation. However "Israel's War of Independence was the Palestinian Catastrophe, (*al Nakba* in Arabic). There is no denying that the establishment of the state of Israel involved a massive injustice for Palestinians.

The author in the end savages Netanyahu, "the destroyer of dreams, the man of the undivided Land of Israel but not of peaceful co-existence, the underminer of the Oslo accords, the man who gave the right wing settlers free rein to harm, harass and heap humiliations on on the long-suffering population of the occupied territories, a man whose ideological makeup militated against trading land for peace, and finally the man who betrayed the legacy of the founder of the movement by spurning the offer of peace with the Palestinians..." (p.606)

History owes a great deal to these brave historians who in the end teach us how to separate propaganda from truth.



*Ted Schmidt pioneered Holocaust education in Canada beginning in 1968 at Neil McNeil High School.*

## A Chapter Proposal

# A Basilian Volunteer Teacher Project



### The Vision

To establish a Basilian volunteer program servicing the urgent need for teachers committed to the education of disadvantaged urban youth. This project would prepare and support teachers for a year of volunteer service in inner city schools. It would provide them with a gospel-based program where the volunteers would live communally in the area in which their students live. Other religious communities such as the Jesuits, Capuchins and Mercy Sisters have similar volunteer projects already in place.

### History of the Proposal

In 2010 a Basilian Working Group charged with designing a Basilian Service Learning program brought forward the proposal for a Basilian volunteer program geared to preparing and supporting young women and men wanting to teach the poor in city schools such as Cristo Rey. The General Council chose not act on the proposal at that time. The working group suggests that now is the time!

### The Program

Volunteers, both male and female, would be recruited from Teachers Colleges in the United States and Canada. The program would be Catholic sponsored but ecumenical in scope. The volunteers would live together in a house rented in the area where they teach – a maximum of five volunteers per group. Their community life would include shared cooking and chores, weekly shared reflection and prayer and retreats at the beginning, mid-term and end of the program.

### Preparation and Placement

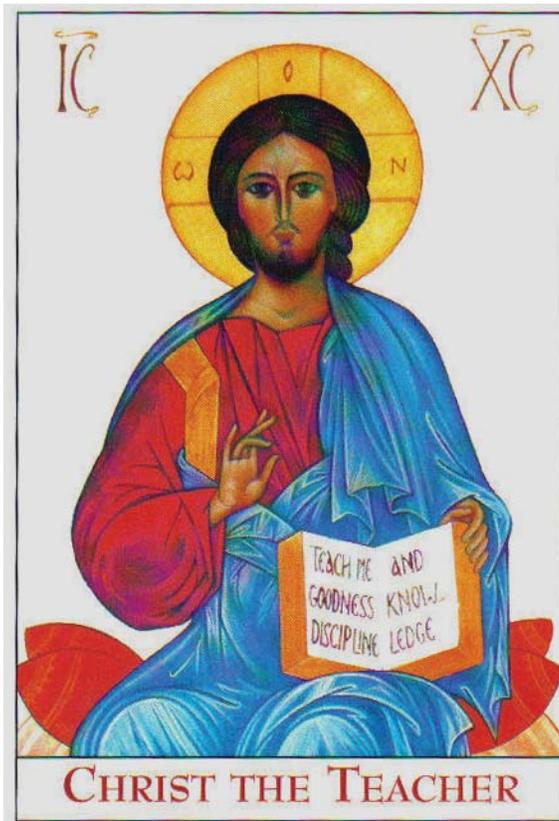
There would be a preparation period of five weeks, living in the area, getting to know the people and location, learning the program and being introduced to the spirituality and practice of teaching students oppressed by poverty. Placements would be sought in Cristo Rey style secondary schools or local elementary schools.

### Economics

The major source of communal funding would be the stipends from the school placements. This would cover the costs of food, rent and monthly stipends for the volunteers. Basilian involvement would be a Basilian cost and there would be start-up Basilian costs as well.

### Basilian Commitments

There would need to be a Basilian Project Committee appointed to plan and coordinate the program, a Basilian Program Director to live-in during the five week preparation period and be available during the year, and local Basilians who would welcome the volunteers with some regularity.



### Pilot Project

Begin in Detroit near Detroit Cristo Rey and Holy Redeemer Elementary schools in June 2015 preparing for the 2015-16 school year. End in May 2016.

*Members of the working group are Jose Del Toro, Bob Holmes, Terry Kersch, Jim Murphy and Vicki Koivu/Rybicki.*



Dominique Green

If I ever had a doubt about my work to abolish the death penalty, that doubt came to a crashing halt when the State of Texas executed Dominique Green, a young African-American man from Houston on October 26, 2004.

Dominique was one of four boys who robbed Andrew Lastrape in Houston in October of 1992. He was the youngest of the four boys and the three older boys pointed the finger at him as the person who shot Lastrape during the robbery. Dominique always maintained that he was not the shooter. What I found most disturbing about the legal proceedings was that Dominique was the only one to get the death penalty. Two of the other African-American boys in the gang got prison sentences and the one white boy in the gang did not go to prison at all although he was involved in the robbery. It appeared to me that Dominique's legal representation had been very poor and he had been railroaded to death row.

I had been visiting Dominique on Texas Death Row for many years. When I first visited him, he was an angry young man – angry at his mother and father, angry at society, and angry at the criminal justice system that sent him to death row. But over the years, I saw him change. He forgave his mother who had abused him as a child and caused him to leave home and live on the streets of Houston. He forgave the gang members who had pointed to him as

# Dominique: Lessons in Forgiveness

by  
David  
Atwood

the person who had pulled the trigger that sent Andrew Lastrape to his grave during a robbery in Houston. He forgave everyone in his life whom he felt had failed him in some way.

Dominique became educated and grew to be a man in prison. His interest in forgiveness came in part from reading Archbishop Desmond Tutu's book *No Future Without Forgiveness*. He wanted to meet Tutu and this was made possible by well-known author, Thomas Cahill, who knew the Archbishop. After Tutu visited Dominique on death row, he spoke to the press and stated that Dominique was a "wonderful advertisement for God ... He is a remarkable young man and it would be the greatest of tragedies if someone like Dominique was executed."

Dominique not only forgave the people who had hurt him, he also taught other prisoners on death row that they should forgive the people who had hurt them. This extraordinary transformation caused Thomas Cahill to write a book about Dominique that he titled *A Saint on Death Row*.

As Dominique's execution approached, his appeals attorney, Sheila Murphy of Chicago, asked if I could locate the family of Andrew Lastrape in Houston and ask them if they wanted Dominique to be executed. When I located the family, Bernatte Lastrape and her two sons Andre and Andrew, they all gave a resounding "no" to the question of the execution. They wanted to give Dominique a second chance at life. Bernatte actually wrote to Governor Rick Perry and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles and asked them to spare Dominique's life. Bernatte wrote, "All of us have forgiven Dominique for what happened and we want to give him another chance at life. Everyone deserves another chance." Perry and the Board refused

to do so, showing the hard-heartedness of the politicized Texas criminal justice system. As the execution date got closer, Andre and Andrew traveled to death row with me to meet and reconcile with Dominique. Andre and Andrew also attended the vigil outside the execution chamber at the Walls Unit in Huntsville, Texas to protest Dominique's execution. I was inside the prison attending the execution of a man who had transformed his life and had a lot of wisdom to share with society. It was very painful experience to see Dominique die before my very eyes. Before the execution, Dominique made me promise that I would fight against the death penalty until it was abolished.

Through my years visiting Dominique and other men on death row, I have learned many things about how the death penalty is applied in Texas.

First of all, our criminal justice system is imperfect. Several innocent people have been sentenced to death. Poor people are at a great disadvantage because they simply do not have the funds to hire the best defense attorneys.

Second, I learned that rehabilitation in prison often occurs, but means nothing to the politicians who run the system.

Third, many families of victims do not want the death penalty for someone convicted of capital murder. The Lastrape Family is a wonderful example. They know that an execution will not bring back their loved one nor bring them the healing that they desperately want and need.

Fourth, the death penalty does not deter others from committing violent



David Atwood is the founder of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

crime.

# North Carolina's Moral Monday

By Ari Berman

On February 1, 1960, four black students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University kicked off the 1960s civil rights movement by trying to eat at a segregated lunch counter at Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro. Two months later, young activists founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at Shaw University in Raleigh, which would transform the South through sit-ins, Freedom Rides and voter registration drives.

So it was fitting that North Carolina's Moral Monday movement held a massive "Moral March" in Raleigh which began at Shaw University, exactly fifty-four years after North Carolina's trailblazing role in the civil rights movement. Tens of thousands of activists—from all backgrounds, races and causes—marched from Shaw to the North Carolina State Capitol, where they held an exuberant rally protesting the right-wing policies of the North Carolina government and commemorating the eighth anniversary of the HKonJ coalition (the acronym stands for Historic Thousands on Jones Street, where the NC legislature sits).

The day began cold and cloudy, a



fitting metaphor for politics in North Carolina last year. Since taking over the legislature in 2010 and the governor's mansion in 2012, controlling state government for the first time in over a century, North Carolina Republicans eliminated the earned-income tax credit for 900,000 North Carolinians; refused Medicaid coverage for 500,000; ended federal unemployment benefits for 170,000; cut pre-K for



30,000 kids while shifting \$90 million from public education to voucher schools; slashed taxes for the top 5 percent while raising taxes on the bottom 95 percent; axed public financing of judicial races; prohibited death row inmates from challenging racially discriminatory verdicts; passed one of the country's most draconian anti-choice laws; and enacted the country's worst voter suppression law, which mandates strict voter ID, cuts early voting and eliminates same-day registration, among other things.

The fierce reaction against these policies led to the Moral Monday movement, when nearly 1,000 activists were arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience inside the North Carolina General Assembly. Rallies were held in more than thirty cities across the



state and the approval ratings of North Carolina Republicans fell into the toilet. Sample signs at today's rally: "It's 2014, not 1954!!!" "Welcome to North Carolina. Turn Your Watch Back 50 Years!"

The Moral Monday protests transformed North Carolina politics in 2013, building a multiracial, multi-issue movement centered around social justice such as the South hadn't seen since the 1960s. "We have come to say to the extremists, who ignore the common good and have chosen the low road, your actions have worked in reverse," said Reverend William Barber II, president of the North Carolina NAACP and the leader of the Moral Monday movement, in his boisterous keynote speech. "You may have thought you were going to discourage us, but instead you have encouraged us. The more you push us back, the more we will fight to go forward. The more you try to oppress us, the more you will inspire us."

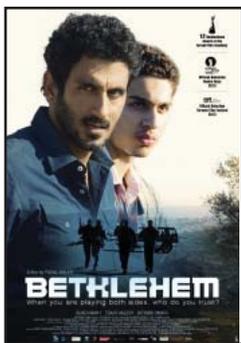
If today's rally was any indication, the Moral Monday movement will be bigger and broader in 2014. An estimated 15,000 activists attended the HKonJ rally last year, bringing thirty buses; this year, the NC NAACP estimated that 80,000 to 100,000 people rallied in Raleigh, with 100 buses converging from all over the state and country. It was the largest civil rights rally in the South since tens of thousands of voting rights activists marched from Selma to Montgomery in support of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

*Ari Berman is a contributing writer for The Nation magazine who has written extensively about American politics, foreign policy and the intersection of money and politics.*

Stirring: (adjective) exciting, arousing, awakening, animating, quickening

## The Movies: “Pravda,” Propaganda, Male Bonding, Fathers/Sons

By Neil Hibberd CSB



*Bethlehem* Is an Israeli film which has garnered acclaim and prizes for its superb acting and tightly wound, thrilling plot. It’s first-time director, Yuval Adler, is reported to have told his co-writer, Ali Waked, an Arab journalist, “Lets make a movie that won’t deal with the political conflict.” His ambition is unrealized. He has, instead, created

an Israeli propaganda film. Once again, the Israelis are the good guys, the Arabs the bad guys. It is impossible to successfully avoid the lack of context. It is also disturbing and unsettling. This a powerful film nonetheless, centering on the relationship between a teenaged Palestinian boy, Sanfur, recruited by an Israeli counter-terrorist. The boy is strangling from within, caught between loyalty to the Palestinian cause and his attachment to his Israeli mentor. It is a paralyzing and combustible dilemma – the misery of the collaborator, the humanity of the agent. Violent incident after violent incident rushes the story to its surprizingly shocking ending. One is drawn to Sanfur’s desperate need for validation; the mentor relationship is well portrayed and convincing, and it is still propaganda. Palestinians are portrayed as power-hungry fighters; cynical, corrupt, lying Palestinian Authority figures abound. There’s no occupation, no oppression. The Israeli characters are all pure of heart, merciful and misunderstood. Some critics have judged that *Bethlehem* is a response to a Palestinian film, *Omar*, recently nominated for an Oscar. If possible, try to see both movies.

### *Heaven is for Real* -

Maybe so, but it’s a stretch to accept it from the mouth of a 4-year old, who visited Heaven during life-saving surgery – a nice, cute kid, whose father just happens to be a pastor named Tod Burpo (author of the best-selling book). Greg Kinnear (Burpo) actually comes close to pulling it off. Still, I give him no marks for father/son or male bonding. Without him, viewers would stampede for the exits.



There seems to be a growing market for this kind of religious saccharine. It saddens me, a died-in-the-wool romantic sentimentalist, except for religious, especially commercial, Christian productions. It will probably touch hearts; not so sure about minds. Pravda? “Will they believe, even if one were to rise from the dead?” Propaganda, tawdry, cute, cheap, unsubstantial.



*Noah* is a boring movie crammed full of gratuitous violence, with occasional attention to the familiar, biblical story. Noah is a nasty bag of goods, God-mission-driven warrior, convinced he is God’s scourge to save the innocent, the animals, and destroy wicked humankind, even his soon-to-be-born grandchild – lovely, just peachy. He could easily defeat Captain

America; in fact does kill thousands, with the assistance of some fallen angels (Watchers), beings of light, but trapped inside granite boulders for annoying God. Remember Transformers? Remember the Ents, moving, fighting trees from Lord of the Rings? Mostly they kill folks who would like to get a steerage ticket on the Ark (which is a giant rectangle, not an ark at all). The steerage seekers’ leader stows away on the Ark and wins over Noah’s disgruntled son (failure of the father/son bond & triumph of impressive mentor). Guess who wins? Not the viewer. When the “rectangle/Ark” hits land, there’s a sudden, inexplicable scene inserted, in which Noah drinks too much grape juice and ends up lying naked on the beach. Do his sons hide their eyes from this shocking spectacle? You can’t tell without a ticket. This movie is more darn fun than a barrel of monkeys, or ibises, gnus or meercats. But, it ain’t Noah. Not biblical propaganda, not ‘pravda’ either

*God’s Not Dead* - So, if you want to pass this First-year college course in Philosophy, the prof insists you sign a paper proclaiming that God is dead. But you’re the only devout Christian in the class; you just can’t sign. A deal with the prof ensues. You try to convince the class that God is not dead in 3 sessions of 20 minutes. If you do; you pass. Added to the mix are an array of other struggles involving personal beliefs. I so very much wanted this film to have weight and conviction. It is deadly earnest and awkwardly sincere; not all bad, but it leaves one squirming. Possibly innocently contrived, it tries too hard, has too many skeins, is, ultimately, somewhat embarrassing. Again, not all floppy. It stretches the legitimate limits of warm, religious, Christian propaganda too far. It has, surprisingly enough, been rather well received, and largely by young high school and college viewers. All in the audience on the day I watched it, excluding myself, were young folks. A kind of anti-mentor, the prof, experiences a near-death conversion. There are other hoakinesses.



Stirring: (noun) the act of moving or putting into motion, activity