

# When bad things happen to good people

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Requiem Guatemala reflects the affects of spreading Catholicism during a time of war. The novel, by Marshall Bennett Connelly, creates an image of the horrific killings of the five boys during the time of the civil war in Guatemala. The priest that survived to retell the tragic stories of the killings was explained as they occurred in Penny Lernoux's People of God, which differs than that of Connelly's story. The theme of his story is how good people get punished for doing great things.

The five boys, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty-five years old, were doing God's work. They were simply "teaching the campesinos how to read" the bible. The priest that had come to "the little village of San Martin Comitan" to spread Catholicism had taught these young men to read, starting with the bible. The boys then took it upon themselves to be a good person and spread the word of God to fellow friends and neighbors. While trying to be good people the boys are accused of being "communist" and the Colonel orders them to be killed.

The mayor of the village is forced by the Colonel to inform the boys and their families they must be killed for their actions. The good people, the five boys, in this situation, the Guatemalan civil war, are going to be punished for spreading what they were taught by the priest, who has now abandoned them. During the parents time of horror the priest has left in fear of his own life: "The parents exchanged looks of terror and anger. The women began to moan and wail. "That's what the colonel said to me, your alcalde!" cried Don Lazaro, choking on his own tears. "And that is the message I must bring to you!" So, once again another punishment the village must face due to the five boys being good people. The village will face a lifetime of punishment

since they are faced with the decision of killing the five boys or risk having the entire existence of the village wiped off the map.

Spreading religion and teaching others certain skills, such as reading, is very influential and beneficial to communities everywhere. The simple fact that these boys could pick it up and then begin to teach and preach it to others is amazing. To themselves and the village it was looked at as a great thing, but during a civil war was not the right timing, according to the colonel. Luckily, for the boys, they were able to accomplish some great things in their short lived lives. This continued to help Guatemala find faith and courage.

Unfortunately, for the families of the boys and people of the village, they suffered greatly. But they know their sons died for something great. And the priest helped them in their missionary lifestyle. The sons knew they must give up their lives in order to save others. There were no other choices. Although the boys were punished for their honorable actions everyone was still upset and had much anger, but they knew it was the most logical solution.