

Lights

Jim

BLOOD

BROTHERS

CHARACTORS -

Elias Chacour-
As Boy
As Student
Father Chacour
Mother Chacour
Rudah
Chacour
Wardi
Musah
Atallah

*Take part in crowds
if possible.*

Commander
Soldier I
" II
" III
Villagers A
" B
" C
" D
Children
Old Man
Old Woman

Faraj
Student I
" II
Dr. Dupres
Pastor
Old Lady
First Lady
Second Lady
Man
His Wife

Raya
First Boy
Second Boy
Third Boy
Bishop
Girl
Middle aged Man
Young Man
Young Girl
Teen age girl
Elderly Man

Responsible
Woman I
" II
" III
M. Josephate
Habib
Macaire
Ghislaine
Nazarena

Woman with baby
Child
Abu.
His Brothers I
II
III

BLOOD BROTHERS

SPI. on

(Elias Speaking to Audience:) The Agonizing conflict in Isreal, One side of which we will experience tonight, has smoldered and burned over thousands of years. It has brought wars, devastation, massacres, revenge. Today many Palestinians fear and hate their Jewish brothers. This is returned in kind. Violence flares up first from one side, then from the other. Israelis fear Palestinians rapidly growing numbers, and Palestinians fear and resent the growing numbers, and Palestinians fear and resent the power of the Israeli government and its skillful armed forces.

The true enemy is the spirit of hatred and revenge that lurks in men's hearts on both sides, and which breeds violence. The hope of renewal has been blocked again and again by these intentions.

Where is there hope? My dream is of a world of peace, peace between Arab and Jew and Christian; beteewn all men, for we are brothers, yes, even blood brothers. We must stop seeing each other through set images-- the Palestinians as a bloody terrorist, the Jew as a narrow nationalist, the Moslem as as icy fanatic. We are brothers.

In seeking peace, should I use violence? A bomb can draw more attention in a minute that thousands of peaceful demonstators. But violence gives birth to violence. It leaves fear and destruction and ignorance behind it.

The way of Jesus is the only hope, and the only practical way. It isthe way of the Sermon on the Mount, the way and spirit of the Beatitudes. This is the hard way, one of suffering, one of repentance, one of surrender. I learned that early in life, right back where my story begins. It was in the hills of Galilee in 1947--
507 off & all L. on.

(Atallah and Elias appear from right hand stage.)

Elias - "A celebration?" "Why are we having a celebration? Who told you?"

Atallah - "I heard Mother say ---" (starts running ahead, he calls back!)-----that something big is happening in the village. And (he paused, his voice sinking to a hush.) Father is going to buy a lamb." (runs off.)

Elias - A Lamb! Then it must be a special occasion. But why? (I must find Father and ask him myself. (Runs off stage.)

(Curtain opens to Chacour home. Mother was stooping over her metal oven which stood on a low grate. Wardi my sister fed sticks to licking flames and on a grate a pot of grape leaves boil. Boys are hauling wood and water. Atallah sees me first.)

Atallah - (a smirk lit his face) "Mother, here is Elias now!

Mother - (a brightly coloured kerchief drew her hair up in a bun.)

She seems unusually distracted, her eyes clouded in thought.) Go help Musah carry the water. (waving me away.)

Musah - (was beside me in an instant, thrust an empty bucket at me) "Get busy! (he ordered with triumphant grin.)

Elias - "Mother, what's happening in Biram? Is Father buying a lamb? Is it a celebration?

Musah - (his grin fading) Take the bucket.

Elias - Mother, tell me. Everyone knows but me and -----

Mother - A celebration? Why yes, perhaps. Father wants to tell you himself. I said go help your brother. (sees Father coming a little way off.)

Father - Hello, Elias. I'm glad to see a happy helper. (enters, leading behind him on a short rope a yearling lamb.)

(Elias runs to Father and catches his hand, dying to ask a million questions, but a weary look on Father's face tells him not to, so he quietly stroked lambs dusty white face.)

Father - (turning to mother) Katoub, has the Lord sent us anything to feed these hungry children?

Mother - Come children - quickly. Musah you go to the stable to pen the lamb. (She mustered us in a cicle around the fire.)

Father - (after eating, set aside his plate) "Come here, children. I have something speacial to tell you." (motions for us to sit by him. Elias pressed close at his side..) In Europe (with sadness in his eyes) there was a man called Hitler. A Satan. For a long time he was killing Jewish people. Men and women, grandparents ---- even boys and girls like you. He killed them just becaude they were Jews. For no other reason.

Elias - (murmuring - the thought making my stomach uneasy) Someone killing Jews!

Father - Now this Hitler is dead. But our Jewish brothers and sisters have been badly hurt and frightened. They can't go back to their homes in Europe and they have not been welcomed by the rest of the world. So they are coming here to look for a home.

In a few days children, Jewish soldiers will be travelling through Biram. They are called Zionists. A few will stay in each home and some will stay right here with us for a few days --- maybe a week. Then they will move on. They have guns, but they don't kill. You have no reason to be afraid. We must be especially kind and make them feel at home. (Father saw the somber look on all our faces. With a sudden change of tone, he announced festively.) That's why I brought the lamb. We're going to prepare a feast. This year we'll celebrate the resurrection early --- for our Jewish brothers who were threatened with death, and are alive. And best of all (a child - like spark of fun in his eyes) the best news is that you will get to sleep up on the roof.

All - (excited) Sleep on the roof!

Rudah - We will have to bundle up, the nights are still cold.

Elias - But we will see the stars clear and bright. Will you and Mother sleep there with us.

Father - Yes! We well sleep there with you. (Boys cheers)

(As the excitement bubbles over, Elias crept up to his Father's lap.)

Elias - Father, why do the soldiers carry guns?

Father - Sometimes when people are afraid, they feel they have to carry guns. Their souls are weak because they have lost peace within.

Rudah - But how do we know the soldiers won't harm us?

Father - (smiling) Because Rudah, Jews and Pakestinians are brothers, blood brothers. We share the ssme father, Abraham, and the same God. We must never forget that. Come let us gather before we eat.

(Chacour family gathers around in a circle sitting on low stools or benches. they sing a song.)

Father - (praying) Father in Heaven, help us to show love to our Jewish brothers. Help us to show them the peace that quietens troubled hearts and give us peace, too and never let us forget that they are our brothers.

(Curtain to house closes and lights on main stage dim.)
(Villagers enter front stage. Atallah looks out of house through opening.)

XX Atallah - Look - What's happening over there?

(The commander has entered, bull horn in hand - soldiers move to his side and village men gather as announcement is made.)

Commander - Our intelligence sources say that Biram is in serious danger. Fortunately my men can protect you. But it would risk your safety to stay in your homes. You're going to have to move out into the hills for a few days. Lock everything. Leave the keys with us. I promise nothing will be disturbed.

(Women and children come onto stage during announcement.)

Commander - Travel light, take nothing with you. You must leave today - as soon as possible.

(Villagers look helpless, break into groups and prepare to leave. Give Soldiers the keys. Father and Mother Chacour gather in front of their house and give blankets to children.)

Father - (gives keys to the soldiers standing by house) I know God will protect our house and you'll be safe too.

Soldier - (smiles) Yes!

Mother - And where do we go now, Micheal?

Father - To the olive grove, Katoub. We'll camp out under the old twisted boughs of the olive trees.

Villager B - How will Grandmother live out there?

all L off SPL 1 on
Narrator - For nearly 2 weeks we lived as nomads relying solely on the land, eating nothing but the figs and olives. The old people suffered from the cold and rain. The men were nervous that they had left their homes under the protection of strangers. They kept up a vigil, watching for threatening activity. At last the elders decided to send a group of men back to Biram.

SPL 1 off all L on
(Enter group of men onto Biram village scene.)

Father - I don't believe it. I just don't believe it.

(Enter soldiers)

Soldier - What are you doing here? Get out!

Villager - Where is your commanding officer? We are the people of Biram, and we want to bring our wives and children home!

4

Soldier - (cooly) The commander is gone. He left us to protect the village. You have no business here anymore.

Villager C - Protect our village? You're destroying it! Intruders! Get out and leave us in peace.

Soldier - (leveling gun at them and growling) The land is ours get out now! Move!

(Another soldier or two enter and force villagers out. Village men exit with cries.)

Villagers - Oh no! This can't be.
I don't believe it.
Why, God why?

(Curtains close) *all off SP1 on*

Narrator - The betrayal cut like a knife. We had been tricked out of our village by those European men we had trusted. Our immediate need was for shelter and protection from the weather. It was decided that we climb the next hill to Gish our nearest neighbouring village where the people who were also Christians could put us up temporarily while we negotiated with the soldiers.

SP1 off M.L. on
(Curtains open as villagers move off stage through audience singing and around to front of stage again.)

M.L. Dir SP1 on
Narrator - After a long serhh through the empty village, we discovered a few elderly people who told us they had been left behind. From them we learned that these unarmed people had suffered a fate similar to ours.

SP1 off ~~all~~ on all L. on
Villager A - Friends, We are your neighbours from Biram... Soldiers have forced us to leave our houses and we come seeking shelter.

Villager B - But where are the people of Gish?

Old Man - The soldiers were here too. They arrived in trucks, with their guns leveled and ordered the people to get out.

Father - And you were left behind?

Old Man - Yes. I heard gunfire outside the village.

Villager C - Gunfire?

Old Man - Just to warn the people to move faster.

Old Woman - We do not know when they will return. We've not heard from anyone.

Old Man - You are welcome to stay in our village, though little is left here.

(Villagers take time to settle down before Elias enters.)

Elias - (rushing in sobbing) Father, Father!

Atallah - (running after) We were walking through an empty sandy lot, at the edge of the village.

Elias - I saw something like a twig sticking out of the sand. I bent down and pulled up the thing, it came up stiffly ---

Attalah - A blue-black hand --- and then an arm. The soldiers killed them, and buried them in the shallow sand!

Villager A - (whispers) The people of Gish!

(Minute of shocked silence as villagers stand in disbelief.)

Villagers reaction -

So, the gunfire that the old man heard has done its bitter work.

Are we going to sit around and wait till this happens to us?

All - No!

And they're supposed to be our brothers? You turn your back and you're shot like a dog.

Chacour, what do you say to this?

Father - forgive the soldiers oh God. Heal their pain. Remove their bitterness. Let us show them your peace.

Song -

all L. Dim. SP. 1 on
(Villagers stay on stage during Narration. But lights dim.)

Narrator - We settled in Gish. Month after month, in our cramped quarters we prayed for the news that we could return to our homes in Biram. During the next two years the elders heard that the Zionist were to possess the majority of Palestine. Our people were told to hand over more than half of our well cultivated lands. We heard of villsges blown up by barrel bombs, Thousands were uprooted living in the hills and arid wastelands.

The new nation of Israel was proclaimed under Zionist rule. During the next three months a million Palestinians were driven out of the newly proclaimed democracy.

As Spring 1949 pounced upon us, I could see little peace anywhere but in our home. We rose each morning with the fear that we might not lie down on our mats that evening. On a sultry night our lull was shattered.

SP. 1 off all L. on
(Sound effects of trucks, jeeps, slamming doors, serch lights etc.)

Commander - (entering with a group of soldiers) All men must show themselves at once. Young men and old men. Come outside with your hands on your heads, do not resist.

Rudah & Chaucour & Musah - What shall we do? The soldiers againn.

Commander - (growing impatient) All men are to appear at once.

Father - Come boys, it will be alright.

(Men and boys come to front of stage. Village women and children gather at the back.)

Commander - You are rebels. Tell us where your guns are hidden. We know you are fighters -- Palestinian terrorists.

Women - (gasp) Terrorists!

Villager A - We have no guns.

Villager C - We are not terrorists.

(Father eyes shut and lips moving, obviously praying, and looks at each child, blessing and praying for them one by one.)

(Sound effects -- trucks, guns, thudding of doors)

Commander - You men are leaving here at once.

Mother - (grasps Fathers arm) Micheal, what are they doing --- where.....

Father - Katoub, (draws her close) God is watching us. You have to be strong, (soldiers try to tear teh away) ---for the little ones. We'll go now.

(Soldiers hurry men and boys off at gunpoint. Women and children frightened in background. Headlights and flares --- sound effects)

Commander - We are taking your terrorists away. This is what happens to all terrorists, you will not see them again.

(~~Women~~ Women come forward weeping. Stage fairly darkens.)

(Mother gathers family around her. Her children look up to her for comfort, but she prays instead, as Micheal would have done)

Mother - (praying) We know that you watch the sparrows, Lord, and only you know where Micheal and the boys are this night. Will you watch them for us? Guide their steps! We give them into your hands to comfort the suffering. Let our lips bring the peace of your Spirit.

Song - All Mothers sing song

(During song Mother moves forward with children, several village women come forward weeping. Mother comforts them.)

(Curtains close)

Narrator - The morning after Mothers special prayer, I climbed alone to the top of a hill and sat beneath an olive tree. To the south somewhere beyond the hills, rocked the Sea of Galilee. I imagined Jesus my Champion striding toward me over the storm churned waves calming the waters with a word "Peace!" I thought of Him climbing the Mount of Beatitudes. There, as Mother taught me, He said. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

What did these words really mean? Almost without thinking I began innocently pouring out my heart.

SP. 1 off
(Elias is on front stage alone.)

Elias - (praying) Even though Father has been gone these three months, Oh God, Mother has your comfort. I can see that. But can't you just speak a word and make this trouble go away. Do you want us to be your lips and your hands and feet as Mother prays, to bring peace again? If that's true, you can use my hands and my feet. Yes Lord, even my tongue.

all L. on Dim SP. 2 off
(Curtain opens - Elias goes on stage to family. Mother lights a candle, settles Elias and Attalah down to sleep, also gets ready to settle down. She goes to lock doors, blows out candles and all is quiet. Lock rattles.)

Father - (lock rattles again, softly) Let us in Quickly. Open up.

Mother - (Bravely, but with shaking voice) Who is it?

Father - Let us in. Hurry!

Mother - (almost in tears) Go away!

Father - I say it is Micheal. Let us in, we're home.

Musah - Mother let us in!

all L. on Bell
Mother - (almost shrieking) Micheal?

(Father and brothers enter -- clothes dirty and ragged -- unkempt beards etc. Family joyfully greets the missing men & ad lib.)

Father - (throwing his arms around Elias' waist) Hello Elias.. I see you've taken care of everyone while I was away. (strokes Elias' hair)

Mother - (hurrying about getting food and water) How did you get back here? Where did the soldiers take you? Are the other men with you?

Father - (wearily) We came back on foot. A few other men came with us.

Rudah - The night we were driven off in trucks from Gish we headed south past the Sea of Galilee. At daybreak we neared the border of Jordan, and staggered off the trucks.

Chacour - The soldiers opened fire, aiming just above our heads, meaning to drive us from our homeland for good.

Father - my only plan was to get home as soon as possible, or die in the attempt. Our most frightening experience was the treatment we received from our brothers in Jordan.

Musah - They called us dirty Palestinians and shunned us like lepers. We were desperately hungry, groveling for insects in the dust.

Chacour - Bit by bit we made our way back, through Jordan and Syria, Lebanon and then into Galilee.

Father - (teasing) And then, after all our hardship we find we are refused entrance to our own house! And now, let us give thanks that we are safely together again. (praying now) Father, they are treating us badly because we are sons of Ishmael. But we are true sons of Abraham-and your children. We thank you, for we know you will bring justice to us.

Song- (Sung by family) Blessed are the.....

all off

CURTAINS CLOSE

SPL on

Narrator - Yes, we were together again as a family, but we were still exiled from our own village. Our elders had made repeated attempts in the following years to have the village restored back to us. Even the Supreme Court of Isreal had sent orders that we could return back to Biram but the commanding officer refused to listen even to these orders. After repeated appeals, the military finally notified us that we could return to our village on December 25, 1951. What an incredible Christmas gift for the village! Our Christmas Eve vigil became a celebration of thanksgiving and joyful praise.

On Christmas morning, the still air was crisp and cold. We gathered in the first light of day for the march to Biram. We were going home - home to Biram at last!

SPL off all on

(Curtain opens to scene on brow of hill. Villagers leave and walk through audience. Villagers are singing joyfully - a Christmas hymn - and spirit are high. At they walk they suddenly come to halt, their singing trails into silence. A cannon blast is heard, then another and another. Bright lights are seen as shells explode. For a time explosions rock Biram during which villagers call out.)

XX

20-27-30

Villagers - What is happening? Our Village! The soldiers are destroying our village! The church is gone! My home is burning! Oh God, Oh God!

(Then all is silent except for the weeping of women and the terrified screams of babies and children. Villagers walk back stage weeping.)

Father - Forgive them. Oh Father forgive them!

(Lights darkens. Curtains close.)

all off SPL on

Narrating - How could I forgive them? How could we ever find the peace we used to share with our Jewish neighbours? I was frightened by my thoughts. I did not know how to handle the anger. More than anger. Rage. I buried my feelings and in that moment a small gap began to widen inside me - an internal battle that I would one day have to reconcile.

(Enter Father and Elias , the boy in front of curtain)

SPL off SPL 2 on

Father - Mother and I have been talking and want to send you to a good school. The Bishop offered that you study with him in Haifa on the coast. This is a wonderful opportunity, Elias. You will never

have the chance in Gish. And there is another thing - (pause)- looks into Elias' eyes) You are not being sent away to be spoiled by privilege. Learn all you can from the Bishop. If you become a true man of God - you will know how to reconcile enemies - how to turn hatred into peace. Only a true servant of God can do that.

SPL 2 off SPL 1 on

Narrator)- I was homesick during my 2 years in Haifa. In my loneliest moment I was given the gift of a special friendship, a boy called Faraj. The Bishop made it possible for us to study together for 4 years in Nazareth and finally to go on to Paris for seminary.

SPL 1 off SPL 2 on

(Scene in Paris Seminary - Elias, Faraj and two students talking together - some lounge chairs and a table - students studying and talking together.)

Faraj - Elias, Isn't it hard to believe, we've been here in Paris for four months?

Elias - Yes, Faraj, and we've sure learned a lot of french in four months, haven't we?

(Faraj nods in agreement)

Student 1 - Are there a lot of Palestinians like you, who want to go to seminary?

Elias - Well, I think, Most simply dream of restoring their lives and village to how they were before the Zionists took over.

Student 2 - What do you mean "took over".

Faraj - Why, surely you've heard about the displacement of nearly one million Palestinians, the deaths, the destruction of all our homes, and the fear that it brought?

Student 2 - well, I suppose (nervously clearing his throat) that the Zionists had to do something to protect themselves from the terrorists?

Faraj - Terrorists?

Elias - (Blurting it out) But we just wanted to live in peace with them...to farm our land and be left alone.

Student 2 - Let's be completely honest... We've heard the reports about Arab terrorism. The Zionists knew they had to clean out those villages or there would be no peace.

Elias - (angrily) Is that your idea of peace, tht a group of foreigners should crush a whole country full of powerless people and take over their land?

Faraj - Elias (Grips Elias' arm, and gives him a cautioning glance.)

Elias - (calmer) All Palestinians are not fighters nor are we terrorists. We have been the terrorized. In French history your people rebelled against oppression. They became known as heroes just because they won. If they had lost, they would have been called rebels, traitors!

Besides you've known us now for a few months. ((Points to Faraj and himself) We're not terrorists, neither are our families. We don't

want to hurt anyone. The Jews are welcome in our country, but we don't want their military to take over our families and homes. Would you? All we want is peace for our people reconciliation between Jews and Palestinians.

Student 1 - That's because you're good Palestinians!

Student 2 - Well it's systematic theology class next, isn't it?
(Students leave)

Elias - (to Faraj) So that's what they think about us. No wonder we never could talk about home. It's not just a language barrier we need to break. It's their whole attitude towards Palestinians.

(A Professor saunters thru')

Elias - Oh, by the way Dr. Dupres, excuse me, sir, I was wondering why you failed my paper?

Dr. Dupres - (coldly) The one on the view of God in the atomic age?

Elias - Yes!

Dr. Dupres - First, you quoted the Bible far too often. Secondly, it's completely illogical, to say, "Look at the flower, you see God." or "Watch a bird's migration and you will see God." Can you make religion about a flower or a bird? I'm glad you've come here so we can teach you what we in Europe have found to be true. Perhaps you haven't studied enough science yet to know how everything runs and works. Thirdly, to say that God is the same as he was yesterday, today, and forever is false. God has been created by men to explain things they don't understand. You should have started your paper with man as a primate, searching for the "God idea!" And how did you end it?

Elias - That we have removed ourselves from God by our hate and violence toward each other.

Dr. Dupres - (laughing) Yes, I can understand a Palestinian nowad like you writing something like that. My dear boy, you have a lot to learn yet....(walks off)

Elias - (mouth agape) But, my word! He's a Dr. in a seminary? Excuse me, let me correct myself, a Professor of logic. Poor fellow. He has alienated himself from God with all his logic. I'm sorry sir! But I don't want to learn anymore about your religion.

Faraj- (comfortingly) I thought your paper was excellent, Elias. He was critical. I don't understand it....(they sit quiet for a while)

Elias - Faraj! You know that church by the river just a few blocks from here?

Faraj - Yes, what about it?

Elias - I noticed on our way to class this morning, they're having a service at noon today. Why don't we go there now. I think we'll still get there in time. Let's see for ourselves, if they really preach in church, what we're being taught in seminary!

Faraj - A good idea. Let's go! (Exit)

(Curtains close) *all off*

11

PARIS CHURCH

off/on
(Church doors open, churchgoers coming out of doors leaving the church. Pastor stands in the doorway and people shake hands as they leave. Two ladies leave and shake hands with the pastor.)

1ST LADY - Oh, don't you look charming in that new dress?

2ND LADY - Thank-you, I'm glad you think so. The pastors wife asked me over to their Christmas party this evening, and I do believe I shall wear this dress to that.

(Fade into background still talking. Meanwhile old lady has come out and is talking to pastor.)

PASTOR - So, how was it today, Madame.

OLD LADY - Hmm.... Not too bad, but I would have been glad if you had more feeling and gone on about our Heavenly Father's loving kindness, and expounded on the real meaning of Christmas and how we need to relive it each year in all our hearts.

PASTOR - I must say, you'll have to write my next sermon. But, of course, you understand, I had to keep it short so everyone could go home and watch the soccer tournament.

OLD LADY - Well, well what is this world coming to anyway. One would think.....

(Richly dressed couple appears and behind them Faraj and Elias)

MAN - Pastor that was quite some Christmas sermon.

WIFE - Yes, I could just about imagine myself in Bethlehem.

PASTOR - Oh thank you. (turns to greet Elias and Faraj) Oh, isn't this a coincidence. I'd like you to meet Elias Chacour and Faraj.

ELIAS - (extends hand) Pleased to meet you. I'm from the village of Bi-----

PASTOR - From Bethlehem. (clapping Elias on the back) Elias and Faraj are Jewish students at our Seminary. Can you imagine!

(Man is delighted. As Elias and Faraj fade into background the man shakes hand with the pastor, excuses himself about some appointment and rushes off. Elias and Faraj step up to the pastor.)

ELIAS - Was that some kind of mistake?

Pastor - To him you are Jewish....from Bethlehem, that's not such a big favour to ask, is it? You'll get along much better if you stop announcing to the world that you are a Palestinian. (shakes hand and walks off)

ELIAS - I am not ashamed to be a Palestinian. I can't stand being used as somebody's Christmas doll.

FARAJ - Calm down, it wasn't that bad.

ELIAS - Why are we studying here? What is this Seminary really preparing us for?

FARAJ - Elias, we've come to be trained to serve our church, don't forget that. BOTH EXIT

all off SPL on

ELIAS - (narrating) From that time on I felt my ordination as a Bishop would not be my Life's calling.

SPL off

CURTAINS CLOSE

ELIAS - (steps on front stage) "Jews and Palestinians are blood brothers," father had said. This truth did not let me go. How could men ignore God's plan for peace between divided brothers? How could I help to bring reconciliation between Jews and Palestinians? One of the first things Jesus did when He reconciled man to God was to restore human dignity. Suddenly I knew that the first step toward reconciling Jews and Palestinians was the restoration of human dignity. Justice and righteousness were what I had been hungering and thirsting for.

FRONT STAGE

Elias (narrating): The newly elected Bishop of Galilee, Bishop Raya, kindled my hopes. We hit upon a plan. We would assemble 1500 people for a peace gathering in Biram, representing the population of the village at the time of its destruction. Our goal was simply to show the government of Israel that Palestinians wanted only to return to their homes to live in peace.

SPL 1 off

all on

CURTAIN OPENS

(Young people gathered around fire, girls passing snack)

Elias and Raya talking quietly at side.

1st boy - (Picks up glass of orange juice and drinks from it) Hey this is great stuff! (sarcastically)

2nd boy - Tastes like dead sea water to me.

3rd boy - Hey guys, with this stuff lets give a toast to Prime minister Ben Gurion. May God bless him!

1st boy - And keep him far from us. (laughter)

Girl - Come on boys, that's going a bit to far.

(Someone picks up drum, and starts to beat out song. Everyone joins in spontaneously with hand clapping and other actions. Elias and Bishop join them for the singing.)

Elias - I want you to meet our new Bishop, Joseph Raya. He is an American and has come to help our people...

(Someone brings box for Bishop)

Raya (interrupting) - Please, I did not come here to be honored. I am only interested in helping the people of Galilee. Please tell me about yourselves, and why you're here.

1st boy - I am _____. Like many others here, my family was forced out of our village by the Zionists. We have never been able to return. What we're doing here gives me hope that one day we can return to our own homes and live in peace again.

Girl - I am Rebecca. my family lived in Ikrit, but we were driven out of the village. My father was taken by the Zionists and we never heard from him again. Bishop, I can't remember him, I was only a baby then. I am so happy about what is happening here. I've met so many good friends and we've had a wonderful time just living and working together. I have real hope for the future. It almost seems as if Biram is alive again.

Boy - Their story is my story. Many of us have lost our homes, our jobs, our dignity. We have nothing left. It is hard not to hate (pause) but we are Christians.

Another - What would you do? Can you help us? What have you experienced?

Raya - I believe that people can be reconciled! I came to know the plight of the blacks in America. They were hated and downtrodden for years, and suffered terrible injustice. They had lost any hope for themselves, until a young minister, Martin Luther King Jr., begin to preach and share his dreams about justice and equality. His message brought hope, courage and life to the black people. I knew him well, I prayed and sang and marched by his side. His fire and zeal

united the people in their fight for freedom and justice, and gave them a sense of dignity again.

Elias - Yes, that is what we need here; a spark, something to rally the people. I have tried several ways to involve them in some positive action, but it all seems to have little real effect on the whole situation! (said almost argumentatively)

A few voices - We're ready...We'll support... We're with you...

RAYA - Elias, ever since God created us we've been kneeling to pray. For to long though, we've thought of prayer as a hiding ourselves away with God in private, to talk about our own problems. But there is a time for setting aside our spiritual words and actually going to our brother who has something against us. This is prayer, too: real intercession. And it requires forgiveness, and the strong love of God.

ELIAS - (suspiciously) What are you getting at?

RAYA - (gesturing) Well, just look at all of us here. It's a first step, a step of hope. But the Jewish people need the hope of peace, too. (people lean forward and strain attentively to hear the Bishop) It's time to march on Jerusalem, time to give our Jewish brothers a chance to walk by our sides and show that we, together, are against all violence. That we march for human dignity.

(Young people respond)

ELIAS - (recoiling) Are...are you mad? Do you really believe that our Jewish brothers would openly support us in a peace march?

RAYA -(staring in the flames) I'm not going to lie to you. Elias. But this kind of intercession will definitely, be a risk.

ELIAS - (breathing deeply, then sighing) All right--we'll march together. You lead, and I'll follow! At least they'll have two of us to arrest.

YOUNG PEOPLE - No three... I'm ready to... We'll march with you.

RAYA - (with a sudden laugh) Oh, no. You've missed the point. I didn't say I would lead. I'll help organize, and I will march--(seriously, patting Chacour's shoulder):--- but a Palestinian must lead.

all dim

15 /

LIGHTS DIM AND BRIGHTEN. Others come on stage a few at a time. Stage slowly fills up with a buzzing noise level; people milling about. Some will have to exit from time to time to make room for the others to enter. A man walks up to Elias and hands him a megaphone, pats him on the shoulder and wishes him well on the march. Elias wanders through the crowd looking at his watch and craning his neck from time to time with a worried expression on his face. Bishop Raya enters front stage. He stands surveying the crowd and then spies Elias and walks over to greet him. Elias doesn't see him till Bishop Raya taps him on the shoulder and calls his name. Elias turns around and Bishop Raya looks him in the face, reading the worry there.

all on
ELIAS - Bishop' it is just 40 minutes till the march begins, but I only see Palestinians. Where are our Jewish friends who promised to march with us?

BISHOP RAYA - (with a smile) Trust, Elias. We have risked. Now it's in God's hands.

(Elias sighs and nods his head, then turns and continues walking slowly through the crowd. Elias' father and mother enter front stage. Elias pushes his way forward and greets them.

FATHER - You're worried Elias.

MOTHER - (taking Elias' arm) I've been worried for you, but only because you work too hard. (Elias shrugs his shoulders)

ELIAS - (mumbles something like) Don't worry about me, mother. It's not so bad.

MOTHER - (persisting) You do work too hard. But I didn't come all this way to tell you that.

FATHER - Elias, you wouldn't mind if we don't walk, will you? While you are out walking for peace in the streets, we are going to stay here and talk to someone who is more important than anyone in the government. We will pray here.

(Father and mother disappear through the crowd. Elias watches them out of sight and then catches sight of some professors from the Hebrew University entering- first a few from one side and then others from the back side and the other sides. Then some Moslems and Druze also enter in groups nodding and speaking to the Palestinians to show their support. A young Jewish man starts handing out placards that read: "JUSTICE FOR BIRAM AND IKRIT" "JUSTICE FOR PALESTINIANS" Bishop Raya is visible, first speaking with several priests and rabbis and then they bow their heads in prayer.)

ELIAS - (standing to one side and speaks into megaphone)
Attention please, everyone. Thank-you for joining with us in
this march for peace. Today Palestinians, Jews, Moslems, and
Druze will march together as brothers. Our goal is the
Knesset, the Jewish Parliament. We hope to speak with Golda
Meir, the Prime Minister, about reconciliation between
Israel and the Palestinian people. Please form lines 5
abreast.

(Crowd shuffles into formation some Christians, Jews,
Moslems, and Druze intermingle)

ELIAS - (through megaphone) We will now proceed.

SONG *DL Dim*

(Crowd moves forward slowly, talking and waving the
placards. Crowd walks out through audience and back on
stage. They stand in groups on the sides of the stage and
some sit down on the stage steps in front to wait. The
lights go out to denote passage of time. Lights come on
again. Elias stands up from the front and narrates,
spotlight on him, otherwise no lighting. Crowd sits
completely still.)

SPL 1 on
ELIAS - Hundreds of us waited for four days, but Bishop
Raya's request to meet with Golda Meir was never answered.
So we called an end to our waiting. (lights have slowly come
on. The crowd that has been sitting there quietly, slowly
get up and start to leave.)

SPL 1 off all on
A MIDDLE AGED MAN (from the crowd) - (speaking to a young
man) Where are you headed from here?

YOUNG MAN - Oh, I am going back to college. I am studying
agriculture. And you?

MIDDLE AGED MAN - I've got plenty to do. I have a wife and 7
children to provide for. (nod to each other and exit)

A TEENAGE GIRL - (calls in farewell to several others) See
you at the soccer game next week.

YOUNG WOMAN - We'll be there. See you then.

MAN - (calling cheerfully to an elderly looking man) I'll be
down to milk the cows tomorrow morning.

ELDERLY MAN - Good I'll be looking for you.

(Elias stands in front hearing these things and shakes his
head looking disappointed. Bishop Raya stops by and speaks
to Elias before leaving.)

BISHOP RAYA - Elias, what's wrong? You're not pleased? (he points to a group of Christians, Jews, Moslems and Druze people with their arms linked) Look there!

(Elias looks and shrugs his shoulders and continues to look unhappy. Bishop Raya exits and the rest of the people leave. Elias exits last with head bent, still shaking his head. As he walks out he speaks.)

ELIAS - Has any thing really been accomplished? (Exits)

all L off

END OF SCENE: CURTAINS CLOSE:

SPL 1 on
ELIAS - (narrating) A few weeks after I returned to Israel I was summoned to the Bishop.

SPL 1 off all L on
(In front of stage. Bishop on stage and sits at desk. Elias walks up.)

BISHOP - (announces brightly) Elias, you are being sent Ibillin in Galilee, a village of several thousand.

ELIAS - Thank you, Bishop, but excuse me---I've never heard of Ibillin. Where is it located?

BISHOP - (hurrying on in his explanation) Oh, you'll have no problem finding it. We'll give you a map and some directions. (pause) Ehm...it is a rather small village. Modest. Maybe a little poor. The situation is - not easy. We thought that maybe you could try it for a month. No harm in that, is there? If it doesn't seem to work out, we'll have another look at your assignment. I have already sent a letter to the Responsible of the church. They have been without a Pastor there for some time. He is expecting you on August 15. (Bishop hurries out)

ELIAS - But, just a minute. Can you tell me.....

all L off
(Elias indicates that he would have liked to ask many questions, but isn't given a chance.)

SPL 1 on
ELIAS (narrating) - On the morning of August 15, even the blistering heat could not take the spring out of my step as I loaded my car and headed of to find Ibillin. (Walks of stage.)

XXX

SPL 1 off all L on
Lights dim and brighten. Elias enters and looks around. The Responsible lunges toward Elias, shouting and waving his arms and bellowing.

31-37 & 40

RESPONSIBLE - Get out of here! Turn your car around and get out!

ELIAS - (stumbles backwards) Excuse me. I'm Elias Chacour, the new.....

RESPONSIBLE - (interrupting) I know exactly who you are. (He is shouting right in Elias' face.) I received the Bishop's letter saying that you are coming today. We don't want you here. Do you understand? I am the Responsible of the church. Go away!

ELIAS - (grabbing the Responsible's hand) Let's pray together. God, draw us together as Christian brothers. Help us work out our differences. Amen.

RESPONSIBLE - (taken momentarily off guard) If you think you're going to stay here you'd better go and bring back everything you priests have stolen from us.

ELIAS - (staggered) What things? I was only appointed a few weeks ago. I didn't have time to steal anything.

RESPONSIBLE - (mimicking Elias) What things? I'll tell you "what things." The last pastor walked off with everything we had of value. He disappeared one night a few weeks ago. He took the cup and plate used in Communion and most of the benches. (Responsible shows Elias the decrepit looking parish house.) IF you stay, you'll live here, just as the last pastor left it - in shambles-.

ELIAS - (aside to the audience) One month, it's only for a month. (He turns back to the Responsible and smiles) This is suitable. Just fine. I'll be staying.

(Responsible leaves looking disgusted. Women are standing on one side chatting. Elias walks over and greets them.)

ELIAS - Good day, you have some interesting characters here. Must be a good place to be from.

1ST WOMAN - Ha, you said it! And if you didn't get enough just step into that house over there.

2ND WOMAN - You'll get hate spit right into your face!

ELIAS - Hate? How can you hate when you are a Christian?

3RD WOMAN - (laughs) You'll find out. It's not possible to live together like this without hate. Even in our own church we can't all agree.

2ND WOMAN - There are four brothers in our church who hate enough to kill each other. One of these brothers is Abu

Mouhib, the village policeman. We don't dare get near him when one of his brothers is coming toward him.

1ST WOMAN - The last pastor disappeared. He couldn't take it.

2ND WOMAN - Now the responsible leads our church. He says who can and who can't attend. My father-in-law has been banned.

3RD WOMAN - My father's brother, Habib, is banned. The Responsible hates him like no one else. He calls him a dirty communist because he speaks out against the annexation of our land by the Zionists.

ELIAS - (turns away) How much hate can exist in one village!

~~lights dim~~ (lights dim) SONG (lights brighten)

~~lights dim~~
ELIAS - (narrating) In the following days, I visited a few villagers and everywhere I turned, I ran into walls of anger and spite, neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother. What was I to do? I decided to visit every family in Ibillin, whether they were Christian or not. But I would need help. I decided to go to Mother Josephate in Nazareth.

~~lights dim~~
all L off
(Mother Josephate enters to sit at desk. Elias walks up to her.)

all L on
ELIAS - Mother Josephate!

M. JOSEPHATE - Abuna. Welcome!

ELIAS - Mother, I have a problem. I just became the pastor of Ibillin. There is so much hatred there, I just can't believe it. There are three different religious groups, Moslems, Greek Orthodox and Christians who vie for power and influence in Ibillin. If that weren't enough, there's hatred right among the Christian believers. Families are hotly divided over issues. Other problems are delinquency and alcoholism and the fact that the village counsels can never agree on a solution to the villages antiquated water supply - so nothing has changed.

The Responsible of the church rules with an iron will. He dictates who is welcome in the church and who is not. Most people are not. And no one dares oppose him.

I've come to know and love a few of the villagers already - if they could only get past their hatred. I'm sure they could be productive in the church. I wish so much I could somehow help them.

Would you be able to send two women from your community to come and help - by visiting the women of the village? Do

you think any of them would be willing to leave their community and work amid the poor conditions of Ibillin with me?

MOTHER JOSEPHATE - I believe that this request comes not from you, but from the heart of God. I'm sure some will want to go with you. Nevertheless, before I can promise you the help of two sisters, I must get the approval of our superior. But that should not be a problem.

ELIAS - Thank-you. (She exits)

all L off SPL 1 on
 ELIAS (narrating) - Before I saw Mother Josephate again, I found out why the people of Ibillin had been so reluctant even to talk about coming to church again. The Responsible learned that I was visiting in homes and he became infuriated. Now the Responsible was jealous and suspicious of me. He began to dog me constantly, opposed my visiting certain people that he, for any reason disliked.

(Lights dim) *SPL 1 off all L on*
 (Lights brighten. Elias steps out with Responsible coming right behind him.)

ELIAS - I think I will visit Habib today. (He looks up at Habib's house.)

RESPONSIBLE - NO. You will not see him!

ELIAS (throwing up his hands) - All right. I'm not going to argue with you. (Responsible smiles with self-satisfaction. Elias continues to speak.) Will you wait here for me? Just for a moment? I have something to take care of before I go with you. And I know this won't interest you at all.

RESPONSIBLE - Yes, go ahead.

(Elias goes in plain sight to Habib's house. Responsible shows anger. Elias calls out pleasantly to the Responsible)

ELIAS - I knew you would feel uncomfortable visiting here. So i didn't force you to come with me. You can relax and wait if you like. I won't be long. (Elias knocks on the door. Habib appears and they sit outside together. Responsible stands there angrily for a moment and then exits.)

HABIB - Good afternoon, Habib.

HABIB - Good afternoon.

HABIB - Come sit down and have something to cool yourself. It's hot today.

ELIAS - Thank you. (sips the wine - Habib sits down too)

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This wine tastes identical to the wine my father used to make. I haven't tasted such good wine in years ... Did you make it?

HABIB - Yes, I've finally managed to get a little vineyard going again, up there in the slope. it is not the best plot of land in the village, but I thank God that He has given me that much. He knows I am not happy unless I have a vineyard to care for.

ELIAS - So it was with my father. He had a fig orchard. He planted the fig trees himself, one by one. When he lost his orchards, he was a broken man and it was only his trust in God that kept him going.

HABIB - Yes! We have learned from David in the psalms to trust in God who alone is enduring.

ELIAS - My mother often sang those Psalms to me...
(impulsively) Habib, why don't you come join us in church on Sundays? I am the new pastor. We'd love to have you!

HABIB - My vineyard needs pruning on Sunday. And the weeds are growing too fast. Let me prune my vines, while you are pruning yours. The good Lord will count it the same, will He not? Besides, it would anger the Responsible if I entered the church. That would not be right.

ELIAS - No, it would not... Habib, how can we overcome this hate? There is so much hate in this village.

HABIB - It all started when people were forced out of their traditional homes. People of all religions flocked to the hills to find new homes. Here in Ibillin it is the same. We have all been forced to live together, and force has always bred hatred. I speak out against the hatred when I can, but the Responsible cannot understand and therefore he has banned me from the church.

ELIAS - I understand...

HABIB - In the Bible we are told to love our brothers. John wrote, "Whoever loves his brother lives in the light. Whoever loves God must love his brother also." I believe a time will come when it will be possible for all men to live peacefully together no matter what his religion. One day that which is true and right in each man will be what's important and we'll find we are all brothers...

ELIAS - Yes, Habib, today we are brothers and I believe we will always be brothers... I will not give up till you and everyone else is welcome to come to the church, anytime. Tomorrow I must go to Nazareth where I hope to get the help of two sisters to come and work with us here. With God's

help this village will once again become a place of peace and happiness.

HABIB - I will pray for you, brother.

ELIAS - Thank you. ^{all L Dim} (Elias and Habib exit. Lights dim and brighten. Elias walks in front of stage and meets Mother Josephate. At her desk on front stage.)

^{all L on} ELIAS - Hello, M. Josephate! How have you been?

M. JOSEPHATE - Fine, just fine. It's good to see you again. Abuna.

ELIAS - Do you have permission for the two sisters? Can I take them to church with me next Sunday?

M. JOSEPHATE - (Shakes her head, folds hands carefully, clears her throat, picks a cautious path with her words) You know the difficult position I am in. I've always supported my Superior's authority. After all, he has been placed over me by the church. I asked his permission to let two sisters work with you in Ibillin -- and he denied my request.

ELIAS - (groans, head on hands) Well... (rises to leave)

M. JOSEPHATE - (breaking in) I told you I am in a difficult position. That's true. But I have to answer to God, and I can't blame my superior if I fail to do what is right. (with mischievous, compassionate smile) I was forbidden to send two sisters --- and so I am going to send three.

ELIAS - (jumping up and squeezing her hand) Oh Mother, you're wonderful! Thank-you, how can I thank you enough? Can I come and pick up the sisters for service next Sunday?

^{all L Dim} M. JOSEPHATE - (as lights fade) Yes, I don't see why not...
(lights brighten)

^{SPL 1 on} ELIAS (narrating) - And so began my work with the three sisters from the Catholic community. But to my dismay, they did not at all fulfill my hopes for a team of enthusiastic supportive Christian workers. Each Sunday it was the same...

^{SPL 1 off} (Curtains open to Church scene. Sisters enter and sit down)

^{all L on} ELIAS - I've been invited to have dinner today with one of the families. They've invited you to come also.

M. MACAIRE - But Abuna, we've told you we need to get straight back to the convent.

GHISLAINE - And you promised us you would take us home right after the service!

ELIAS - But don't you see, this is our chance to show the families of Ibillin that we really care about and love them, to show them that our Christian faith isn't confined to Sunday morning service or the four walls of our church! (Sisters stand silently.)

XX ELIAS (after a pause) - All right. Let's go then. (Throws up his arms in despair. All exit.)

all off SPL on 40-45 & 50
 ELIAS (narrating) - I couldn't figure out why the sisters seemed so indifferent toward the villagers and yet insisted on coming every Sunday. I expected each Sunday to be their last and sometimes secretly hoped it would be. Well, finally Mother Josephate herself asked how things were going. (Chacour walks to front of stage where Mother Josephate sits at desk, and as light comes up on them, they talk as if just ending a conversation)

SPL off all on
 MOTHER JOSEPHATE - ...Well, thank-you for coming, Abuna. It's good to hear that the villagers are warming to you. Oh yes, before you go, how is it going with the sisters? I noticed you are really faithful with ferrying them back and forth every Sunday.

ELIAS - Well, mmmmm I'd say it's going pretty well, Mother Josephate - but I think it will just take a bit longer.

M. JOSEPHATE - (nodding) Don't give up, Elias. They have "convent mentality". It happens to some of our sisters. Every thing is regulated by the clock. There is a time to eat, to pray, to sleep, a time to close the door and to turn people away. But be patient; they will change. They have good hearts, or they would never go with you. (She exits)

all off SPL on
 ELIAS - I'll help the sisters change a little faster. I'll keep them after the service next Sunday! (He exits.)

SPL off all on
 (New scene. Lights are up on church at end of service; Chacour is saying good-bye to last of villagers, while the sisters stand by, tight lipped and aloof.)

M. MACAIRE - as Chacour turns and begins clearing aside the benches) Are you forgetting that we need our ride back to the convent?

CHACOUR - (turning in feigned surprise) What? Oh, I'm sorry Mere Macaire, I didn't mention it to you. I told some of the village women that you know a bit about nursing and you would be glad to help their sick children if they brought them here after the service.

M.MACAIRE - (in indignation) But Abuna, how could you take such liberties! Why...(sudden knock at door, and Chacour opens it; young mother, face tense and fearful, steps timidly inside, out of icy drizzle. She is cradling a blanketed bundle in her arms. She lifts the folds of the blanket, sisters crowd around.)

MOTHER - What shall I do? He has been ill for days! (softly) His name is Ibrahim....You know, like Father Abraham.

M.MACAIRE - "Oh the poor child ... here Nazarena (as she gently takes the baby and hands it to the other sister) take him... you know the most about nursing.

GHISLAINE - (as she hurries from the room) And I will make some hot tea!

M. MACAIRE - (leading the woman to a bench and sitting down with her) Now tell us all about him. (fading out, but the scene still continues silently. Nazarena comes in with tea, while Chacour stands quietly by watching with awe and amazement. He moves over to narrate.)

~~ELIAS~~
ELIAS (narrating) - This poor child has been sent by God. All they needed was to have a sick child on their laps. Look ...all three sisters have become Ibrahim's mother.

(Sisters give child to mother who exits. They rise and walk across stage talking)

~~NAZARENA~~
NAZARENA - Next week we'll have to find out if others are sick and need help.

M.MACAIRE - Yes. And we'll bring cold medicines and aspirins.

NAZARENA - We'll stay in the church, and they can bring the sick to us.

~~GHISLAINE~~
GHISLAINE - I'll look after the babies! (Sister exits)
(Lights dim on church. Elias steps to front of stage.)

EX Xall #5 PL 1 on
50-569 60
ELIAS (narrating) - The sister's new contact with the villagers brought the unexpected benefits of food delivered to the church. - A batch of flatbread, a basket of vegetables, cheese, milk, olives and honey all from the grateful hearts of Ibillin. Somewhere during this time, I realized my own growing love for this village. My one-month trial period had gone on for almost six months, and I could not think of leaving. But not all hearts were grateful; while I was busy with my afternoon and Sunday morning rounds, the Responsible had been gathering support for his cause, also. Winter and Spring passed, and as the summer

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approached, I could sense that the many factions in the church were living upon two sides - the Responsible's and mine. A head-to-head collision, the very thing I dreaded, seemed inevitable - and it came all too soon.

SPLI off all on
Responsible enters

RESPONSIBLE - Elias! Where are you? Ah, there you are. Come with me.

ELIAS - What for?

RESPONSIBLE - (ignoring the question, he leads Elias over to the grape vine and points to it belligerently). What's this?

ELIAS - It's a grapevine.

RESPONSIBLE - Who planted it there?

ELIAS - MY neighbor Habib; he gave it to me as a gift. This past spring after I had talked with him about my childhood hideout in the vine-laced tree in Biram, he surprised me with this gift of a hybrid grapevine. It's going to look nice in this brown barren garden.

RESPONSIBLE - (angrily) If Habib planted it, then it must go! He has no right here, and I don't want him to have any excuse to come onto this property! Tear out the vine.

ELIAS - Okay, bring me a bucket of water.

RESPONSIBLE - (triumphantly) That's the spirit! It always pays to listen to your superior (gets bucket of water and hands it to Elias.)

ELIAS - (spills water over leaves in slow ritual fashion, sets bucket aside and raises right hand over vine) I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Responsible gapes as if he is dangerously insane)

ELIAS - (warmly) There, now this is a Christian vine. You cannot uproot your own brother. So, it stays. Responsible turns indignantly on heel and stamps away. (Wiping brow); Whew, that was close! I knew I'd be driven to my utmost in this assignment, but I didn't expect to be driven crazy. (after a pause)

SPLI on
ELIAS (narrating) - Well, for the moment, we were stalemated. I knew, however, that the bitter hostilities within the church in Ibillin could not be resolved by mere cleverness. Something else had to break through. It happened late one winter night.

~~off~~ *SPLI off*

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all L on
CHILD - (bursts in) Chacour! Chacour! Come quickly! Grandma is dying. Papa says she will be gone before the sun rises.

ELIAS - (hurriedly grabbing jacket and Bible) Who is your father child?

CHILD - Abu Mouhib - he is the village policeman.

ELIAS - (stopping in mid stride) Abu Mouhib? (aside) Oh dear, this is going to be hard! (they exit)

all L off *all L on*
(Curtains open. Lights come up dimly on scene in which Elias sits by the bed of the dying woman reading from the Bible(Beatitudes) the father sits with head in hands, mother on stool by bed, child kneels at her side)

MOTHER - (starting up) Chacour, she is gone!

ELIAS - (tries to offer words of comfort, then turns to Abu) Shall I go and tell your brothers, Abu? Surely they would like to come and see her.

ABU (grief-stricken face stiffens into a scowl, then shouts) No! My brothers do not set foot in my house. If they dare to come here, you will have five funerals on your hands, because we will kill each other! (mother groans, sinks to chair, head in hands. Elias shaking head, leaves)

all L off
Elias walks to front of stage as light dim. (All others exit)

SPL 1 on
ELIAS (narrating) -I knew that only through the skill of a surgeon was it going to be possible for the sick thing that was destroying this village to be cut away. I did not suspect that I would be the first to need the surgeon's knife. I sat there on the steps and images passed before my eyes. *SPL 1 off SPL 2 on all L on Dim*

(The four brothers appear at the four corners of the semi-dark stage and stand there while Elias speaks about them) (As each image is spoken about, Elias responds with a shake of the fist or other appropriate response)

ELIAS - It's disgusting how you behave with each other. Four blood brothers who hate each other. Impossible! I can't put up with it any longer. Can't you forgive each other even to honor your own mother? You hard-hearted wretches. You don't deserve to be brothers at all....

(The four brothers exit and the Responsible comes in and stands there)

ELIAS - And you call yourself the Responsible of the church. You're a tyrant. A cruel dictator. You don't even belong in the church. Go somewhere else if you want to be a kin...

(Responsible exits as pastor enters.)

ELIAS - You selfish pastor, what do you care about the needs of people beside you? You spend your time having parties while we suffer.

(Pastor exits. Several seminary students and professors enter)

ELIAS - You prejudiced seminary students. You call us Palestinians "terrorists." You accusers. You slanderers. Look to yourselves before judging others.... You professors with your lofty knowledge. You trod me underfoot and I have not forgotten...

(Students and professors exit. The commander and soldiers enter)

ELIAS - You commander, who took my father and brothers. You soldiers, who demolished our village and killed the people of Gish. Your violence burns in my heart still. (Elias jumps up and faces commander, shouting) You bloodthirsty killers. I hate you! I hate you! (He picks up a stick and starts beating the man while shouting)

ELIAS - Take that and that for harming the innocent and that for all the wrongs I and my people have suffered all our lives and continue to suffer....

(The man falls to the ground and Elias stands facing the audience clenching his teeth with an angry grimace, hands clenched above his head. He remains like that for several seconds and then slowly drops his arms to his sides and slumps down again, finally throwing his arms over his face to hide in dejection and sorrow, then a few seconds pass and then Elias starts up as sounds of tanks and explosions are heard and lights are seen back stage.)

ELIAS - No, no stop! ^{all L on} (He covers his face again.)

(Speaking slowly, haltingly) I am capable of vicious killing hatred. All men everywhere capable of hideous violence against other men. Not just the Nazis, or the Zionists or the Palestinian commandos but me. I have covered my hurts with Christian responses, but inside the anger gnaws. I have had deep hatred in my own soul.

ELIAS - Father, forgive them. And forgive me, too.
(He walks off stage looking at peace)

ELIAS - I felt a clean feeling of calmness. I knew what I must do in Ibillin.

(Lights dim. Close of scene) (Curtains close. Elias steps out on front stage.)

SM 2 off SM 1 on all L on Dim
 ELIAS (narrating) - Although a year and a half of home visits and the sisters' months of ministrations had made a small dent in reuniting the believers of Ibillin, few attended the church regularly and walls of hostile silence remained firm. However, most of them would come to services during the Christmas and Easter seasons and be comforted by familiar customs.

(Curtains open)

(The lights come up on church with congregation all sitting)
 (Elias is mimicking preaching the sermon, standing in front)

all L on
 ELIAS - (narrating) On Palm Sunday, every bench was packed. It was a balmy morning., so I left the doors wide open. When I started the service, looks of open hostility greeted me. (As he mentions each of the people on opposing sides, a spotlight should be directed on them.)

The Responsible's faction was clustered on one side of the church. Habib and the others whom the Responsible had ostracized sat on the opposite side. Abu Mouhib, the policeman, sat in the front row with his wife and children. In each of the other three quadrants of the church, as distant from one another as possible, were his three brothers. I thought, with sadness, of the battle lines that were drawn across the aisles of that sanctuary.

~~He preached~~ I preached the stiffest, most unimpassioned sermon of my life. At the close, everyone rose for the benediction.

(Congregation rises) My stomach fluttered as I lifted my hand and paused. It was now or never.

(Elias strides to the open doors at the back of the church)
 (All the people watch him with curiosity. Elias draws shut the huge double doors. He locks the doors. He returns to the front of the church and faces the congregation, takes a deep breath.)

ELIAS - Sitting in this building does not make you a Christian.

(The three sisters' eyes were shut, their lips moving in prayer.)

You are a people divided. You argue and hate each other, gossip and spread malicious lies. What do the Moslems and the unbelievers think when they see you? Surely that your religion is false. If you can't love your brother that you see, how can you say you love God who is invisible? You have allowed the body of Christ to be disgraced.

(Congregation first shows shock and then anger.) (Mouhib taps his foot angrily.)

For many months I have tried to unite you. I have failed, because I am only a man. But there is someone else who can bring you together in true unity. His name is Jesus