Still giving hope after 83 years
Documentary shares a positive message from a veteran of peace
It’s a simple, poetic message: “There are underground rivers which in one moment can emerge and transform history. And these rivers are rivers of hope for humanity.”

That is the message with which 83-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel chooses to lead us on his long journey towards rights, equality and unity in Latin America.

“Adolfo Pérez Esquivel: Rivers of Hope” is a documentary that provides not only a straightforward depiction of Latin American history spanning the 60s to the present, but also gives viewers the unique opportunity to hear it from the man on whom the film is based.

Argentina was a burgeoning nation under the guidance of President Juan Peron whose form of governance known as “Peronism” focused on social justice, economic independence and political sovereignty. It was a form of governance that attempted to find middle ground between capitalism and communism.

The fall of Peron, and Peronism, caused a social uprising in Argentina that would last decades and not reach its conclusion until 2012.

It also led to birth of one of the world’s greatest activists: the artist Esquivel.

“I was really interested in the theme of problems faced by Latin America,” Esquivel said in Rivers of Hope. “So my art tended towards social expression.”

With social change in mind, Esquivel decided to travel Latin America and discover the different cultures and realities within the continent.

One of the most enlightening attributes of the documentary was how it tied many of the world’s civil rights movements together. Though separate and in separate nations it is worth noting that movements ranging from South America to the Caribbean and further north to the United States all took place in the mid-50s to the late 70s and early 80s. Under different leaders and against different foes, nations across the world fought (non-violently and violently) against the powers that be in search of equal liberties.

Not lost on Esquivel through his travels, his arrests and the abuses he and his family incurred because of his constant movement for change, was his faith.

“Spirituality was always most important for me,” Esquivel said. “That stayed with me all my life.”

Though many parts of the documentary cover Esquivel’s travels, the action takes place in Argentina where military conflicts would lead to
social uprisings, all of which resulted in the blackest eye of the country's history.

From the late 1960s to the late 70s, thousands of Argentinians were disappeared by military forces. Using live footage the documentary depicts how journalists, activists and other civilians are taken against their will to encampments where they were tortured, raped and killed.

The documentary uses also uses news footage to show the desperate mothers that marched on May Square to protest the government and inquire of the whereabouts of their children and grandchildren. The Mothers of May Square, as they came to be known, were a large part of the organized uprising against the military dictatorship.

Rivers of Hope also reveals the presence of the United States government in the separate South American movements, almost always fighting alongside the dictatorships.

That said, Esquivel never turned his focus on the opposition, rather he aimed to unite Latin America under a single cause.

"When our roots are cut, we are lost," he said. "We need to rediscover who we are because if we don't know who we are or where we come from, we also don't know where we're going. We don't have an identity."

“Adolfo Perez Esquivel: Rivers of Hope” premiered at the Monte Carlo Television Festival in June and is currently available on Google Play for $.99. It will become available on iTunes and Amazon on The International Day of Peace September 21, 2015.