

A Post-Apocalyptic Exploration of Religion and Good Intentions

My proposed two-act play – *A Little Prayer* – features the struggles of a young pastor-of-sorts who secretly lacks any Christian faith himself but continues to preach out of a sense of obligation to his exceedingly desperate congregation. To this rather cynical premise, I've added in queerness, a post-apocalyptic setting, and evil motorcycle gangs to produce what will hopefully be an entertaining exploration of both the benefits and the dangers of religion. The deceptively upbeat title alludes to the wide-reaching, catastrophic effect that Christianity eventually has on the story's little community.

The premise of the plot was initially an idea that I conceived of three years ago, in the expectation that it would take the form of a novel. However, after two years of quietly sitting on the bare bones of a plot, I realized that my novel may be better suited as a play. The audience, seated in the pews of the set, would be more intimately complicit in the events of the plot than they would as mere readers. Lights could go up on the pews when Gabriel's congregation is present, and down when they are absent.

I intend to write and direct *A Little Prayer* for one of my preparations as an Honors Theatre Major, and having the financial capacity to devote a full summer to preparing a functional draft by next fall would be an incredible opportunity. As part of my writing process, I would like to interview various local pastors, ministers, and priests, in order to better delve into the minds of passionate (and perhaps occasionally less passionate) preachers. There are communities of disillusioned pastors who preach no longer that I would like to investigate as well. Taking time to analyze the various Christian and even certain Jewish and Muslim interpretations of scripture may also prove useful in determining the attitudes of my own little fictitious church. Finally, on a more personal level, having the freedom to pursue this endeavor may help me to reconcile the contradictions that I experience in my own spiritual life. Raised as a devout Christian in an evangelical church, I spent at least sixteen years of my life blindly following who/what I deemed to be my lord and savior; the confusion that resulted from my eventual rejection of faith was disorienting at best, and frightening at its worst. Today, I exist in a realm of spiritual uncertainty – I remain somewhat convinced of intelligent design at work in the universe, but beyond that, I could not articulate anything more concrete. It is my hope that in completing *A Little Prayer*, I will begin to make a number of steps towards resolution.

I wish to devote the entirety of my summer to this work. For the month of May, I will focus on research and development of brief character sketches to better flesh out my characters. June will be spent on the first act, July on the second act, and August on editing the piece as a whole.