

The following excerpt is from a blog post. This, and resources about the play, can be found at [www.salvationroadplay.com](http://www.salvationroadplay.com).

Salvation Road began as a suggestion from a friend of mine a number of years ago; he came to see my thesis play at Catholic University and was impressed enough to urge me to write about the cult experience. Figuring out how not to lose heart and soul to a controlling organization seemed like a worthy issue to me, but somehow the play lacked muscle and after one reading I threw it in a drawer and forgot about it.

Some years later Charlie called to tell me that the International Cultic Studies Association was holding its annual conference in Philadelphia and wouldn't it be a great idea to produce the play there— as a form of entertainment? I immediately went into a cold panic. The play, I told him, was not really ready for an audience. And it certainly wasn't something we could produce in that kind of setting. But I would consider reworking it and doing a reading there to test out the story with a tough audience – former members, their families, caregivers and families of current members.

Enough time had passed that I could look at the script again with an editor's eye. And I realized that the way back in was to write the story from a perspective that I understood intimately as someone who had lost a sister to a strange new church. In my case, she was gone only a few weeks one summer, but it was enough to terrify and traumatize my family, because she had handed over to them everything she had in the world—her beloved camera, her bicycle, her cash on hand—and signed on to 24/7 servitude to an ideology that none of us – including her, it turned out – really understood. Something very attractive had lured her in, but once she was there, it became clear her function was not to seek spiritual enlightenment but to work wage-free in support of the Unification Church – what we then called "The Moonies."

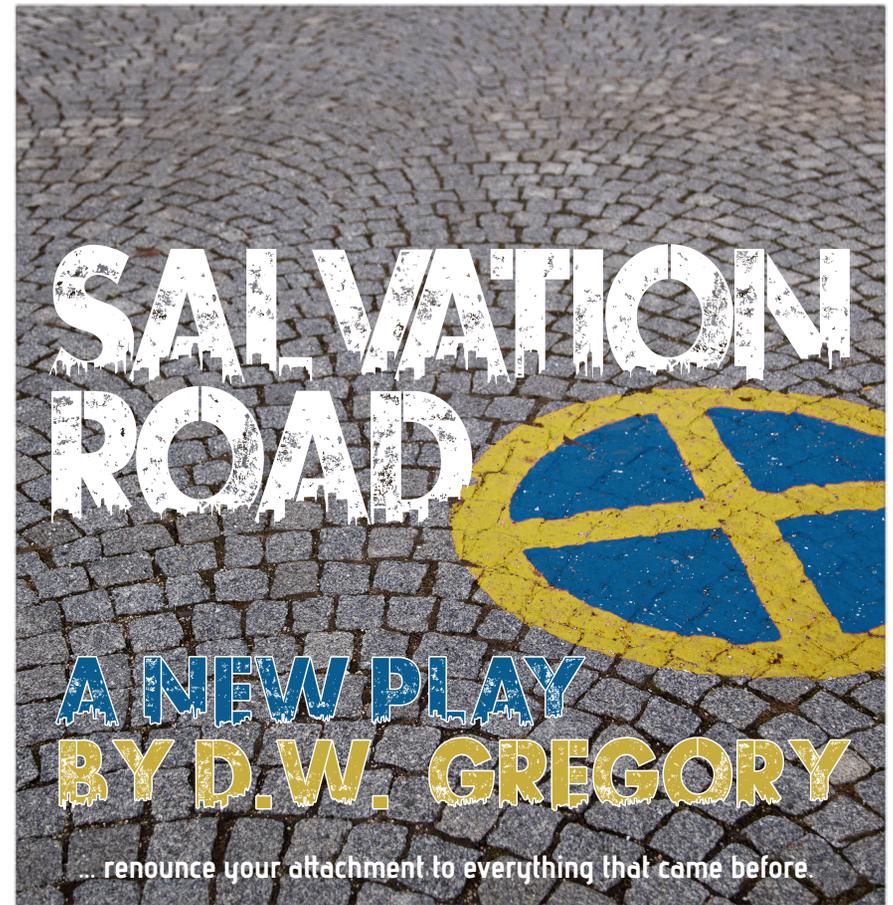
She likes to say now that she wasn't a very good cult member, since she was fond of taking long walks alone at night, in order to think things over. It was not a practice the group encouraged, but she was rebellious enough not to care. And that streak of independence saved her, along with a newspaper article sent to our house by a Boston reporter who had run into her while he was working on expose about the group's guru, the supposedly "Reverend" Moon.

The article revealed Moon to be a fraud – to our Catholic ears, the idea that any man who was on his third marriage could be holy in any way was laughable – and when my mother read the story to my sister during one of her rare calls home, my sister was stunned into action. She left the group and came home, but looking back it is clear that the experience took a lot out of her and left her confused, if not actually bereft, over the loss of something dear to her.

Controlling organizations don't thrive unless they offer their participants something of great value that they can't get anywhere else—that sense of belonging, of being loved, of making a difference in the world. In our material culture we seldom acknowledge the great spiritual thirst within each of us. It is a real and easily exploited need in young people – and if you are raised in a culture of conformity and compliance, as we were, young girls growing up Catholic in the 1970s, you're a ripe target for that kind of manipulation.

Salvation Road is my attempt to explore the mystery of such controlling groups— and where exactly you draw the line between a church and a cult.

D.W. Gregory, Playwright



SALVATION ROAD is produced by special arrangement with the Playwright and Elaine Devlin Literary, Inc.,  
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Salvation Road was developed by New Plays for Young Audiences at New York University's Steinhardt School and subsequently produced by NYU under the direction of David Montgomery, opening Oct. 26, 2012. It was produced by Walden Theatre of Louisville, Ky., as part of its Slant Culture Series, opening Nov. 8, 2012, under the direction of Alec Volz.

## CAST: (in order of appearance)

DENISE KOZAK  
 PATTI  
 BAND MEMBER  
 CLIFF KOZAK  
 JILL KOZAK  
 BRIAN DUFFY  
 COLLEGE STUDENT/FATHER'S VOICE  
 COLLEGE STUDENT/TANK  
 ELIJAH  
 REBECCA  
 JACOB  
 KARL (Clerk)  
 MELANIE (Clerk)  
 SISTER JEAN  
 SIMI  
 SARAH  
 RACHEL

Annelise Leifeste  
 Connie Newnham  
 Guillermo E. Herrera  
 Trey Davis  
 Adriana Lopez  
 Whitten Helton  
 John Paul Woda  
 Robert Leija  
 Christopher DeLuca  
 Brielle Brown  
 Jordan Morales  
 Ryan Beene  
 Hannah Schmidt  
 Brianna Gaetz  
 Allisa Johnson  
 Ashleigh Bullard  
 Anna Midkiff

THE PLACE: Suburban Philadelphia and a university town in central New Jersey.  
 THE TIME: Autumn, the present day.

## CREWS

TEXT ANALYSIS & DRAMATURGY  
 STAGE & HOUSE MANAGEMENT  
 SCENERY & RIGGING

Britnie J. Tucker\*  
 Selina Ramirez\*, Guillermo E. Herrera  
 Trey Davis, Sarah Flores\*, Jimmy McGahan, Jordan  
 Morales, Megan Taylor, John Paul Woda

LIGHTING, SOUND, & AV  
 PROPERTIES & SCENIC ART  
 COSTUME & MAKEUP

Christopher DeLuca, Whitten Helton\*, Connie Newnham  
 Allisa Johnson\*, Annelise Leifeste  
 Brielle Brown, Brianna Gaetz, Anna Midkiff, Hannah  
 Schmidt\*

MARKETING & ARTS MANAGEMENT  
 ARCHIVAL & DISTRIBUTION

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 Ashleigh Bullard, Caroline Jordan, Robert Leija\*

\*denotes Crew Head

## ARTISTIC STAFF

DIRECTOR & PRODUCTION DESIGNER  
 TECHNICAL DIRECTOR  
 ACTING COACH  
 COSTUME DESIGNER  
 STAGE MANAGER  
 LIGHTING DESIGNER  
 LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR  
 SOUND BOARD OPERATOR  
 MEDIA OPERATOR & ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
 CAMERA OPERATORS

Professor David Legore  
 Professor Stephen Ivey  
 Professor Shannon Ivey  
 Hannah Schmidt  
 Megan Taylor  
 Sarah Flores  
 Selina Ramirez  
 Jimmy McGahan  
 Guillermo E. Herrera  
 Ashleigh Bullard  
 Anna Midkiff

CREW

Members of the company and DRAM 101/111

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