

God Dilemma:  
An Intimate Conversation  
Of 3 Characters.

By David Paul

(3 characters on stage only upper torsos in light as they each begin to speak. One needs to be female (g). They are in a triangle formation each facing the audience and also each other on the sides (M & g) ...the center person (N) is only facing the audience. M is the main character that is spiritually evolving, questioning, recovering, hurting, doubting...in other words human. g is god/higher power concept and N is narrator.)

N: Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen. Before we begin to share with you...please turn off your cell phones, no recording or pictures, no texting...in other words turn your eyes up here, listen and react. You are invited guests to observe an internal conversation...one in which you may have had yourself from time to time. You will hear some personal history of the playwright himself, some actual historical facts and some pure speculation...you figure out for yourselves which is which...ok? Me? I am your guide the narrator, the one who comments, I will give you clues, but you as the audience will need to put the pieces of the puzzle together to see the big picture for yourself. So wake up, listen, respond...play the part

of the audience for us the actors...it is ok to laugh & emote. In modern terms we 3 actors are the Id, Ego and Superego working things out...but labels don't matter here...ok? We are mostly adults here. So fasten your seats belts Dorothy, it may be a bumpy ride...

g: Some call me the great "I am"...I am whatever you conceive as god or higher power...a concept for some that is always in flux and developing. However few spiritual authors ever pictured me as female...surprise! History & Religion is written & remembered by the victors of the battles fought...the ones in control...or so they think! Put a label on me...analyze me and put me into an intellectual box...a picture, a statue, a shrine...try to speculate about me...and you think you can control me or speculate my next move? Wrong. I am formless actually, creative, evolving like you and compassionate. I am not interested bashing your human attempts at religion but only to help you to evolve in your understanding of the concept of "religion"...literally the binding together of a set of individual spiritual experiences with written words & ritual...to find the common ground for all to have a worship experience together. Religion has discriminated, started wars, controlled & hurt others, but unlike religion... spirituality is your direct & personal contact with me...no go between...no one telling you what I am saying... in a true relationship there would be a dialogue or conversation back and forth.

M: And me? To complete this trinity...a professional faggot! You too? Guess there is more than 10% of us here! My dad when alive was a retail store manager so growing up we moved around the Midwest every 3-5

years. You military brats can relate...no longer term friends and always starting over in each new town after each move...over and over again...hoping someday to get it right. I am the first born and got my parents complete attention for the first four years until my brother came along who I proceed to tease until he developed a stutter...some big jealous brother fighting to keep the spotlight on him. I am close to my mom vs. my siblings...all fodder for building the classic homo? But add to this mix that I wanted to be a minister when I grew up. My parents would not allow me to go to an all-boys high school seminary...they said I needed a coed experience before I would be allowed to start seminary. A lot of good that did but I tried to fit in....go out for football, kiss the girl, go to prom...but after getting too many bruises I found that I liked music and theatre...classic right? One day as a freshman I found a hand drawn poster in the back of our shared locker...an art project by my alphabetically matched locker mate...a muscular boy who was bused in from a neighboring even smaller farming community...a bully, a trouble maker...The Poster read in big bold letters: "Why I do not wear Bermuda shorts?" Hairy legs....too tight shorts...and big old balls hanging out...guess my dark secret was out!

N: Sticks and stones may hurt my bones...but words (pause) may surely bruise me...It is frightening to see the number of teenage suicides ...children who are teased & bullied for no fault of their own, even though they try...they do not fit in...after praying for the change or that god not let them wake up to another day in hell, the only choice they see is an early

exit. Where is the choice or preference in that? Do you really think one chooses to be anti-social, a mocked minority...discrimination is fun? Why don't you try it out for a while?

g: Some of my natural creation seem to enjoy to have same species mates...bonding for life with no brood to raise. Would a scientist say that this a choice they made as a preference or a spectrum of natural selection and their true orientation? Why do you have to see life as either/or rather than both/and? Dichotomy was created for the sake of debate for philosophers and religious thinkers...it is not part of my creation. Life is pretty colorless when everything is so black and white...actually the spectrum of light and life is multi-faceted...maybe I created the same species mates to bring more rainbows into everyone's life?

N: I thought I was the commentator...

g: ...sorry just pondering some free association!

M: Excuse me...may I continue? A college touring company came to our high school farming community to perform a production of Neil Simon's "Odd Couple". I helped backstage as a stage manager. The set had tons of old newspapers...one came with a pull out pink section of personal ads...to my surprise you could run an ad to meet another gay person! I was dumb enough to try it and knew the post office would not let me open a PO Box without the permission of my parents, so I had them sent to our house...so many I could not get to the outside mail box often enough to retrieve all of them. Letters from other isolated lonely gays like me across the country

who were looking for their own kind somewhere out there. Some letters my mom got to before I could...soon I was being driven to a psychologist an hour away for a month to find a “cure”. I realized that I was good at acting...when I could believably fake an erection to prove I was normal while listening to the doctor talk about heavy petting with a girl. Acting was in my blood so instead of seminary right away after high school I went to the largest university in my state the farthest away from my parents ...to be on my own for the first time & discover the real me. But after a semester the ministry bug would not leave my system so I thought I should try it out for a while.

g: “Variety” is the spice of life...an ever evolving survival of the fittest Darwin once wrote...becoming ever better to compete & thrive in a harsh environment. Scientists are now finally discovering that the smartest species are the ones that live in community & socially interact ...they actually have the larger brain size in comparison with other species...

N: Largest is not always the brightest...bigger is not always better...size does not always matter.

M: Intimacy is more than just sex...right? Companionship a stronger drive than procreation? Imagine wanting to be a minister to serve others and be surrounded by only men? For a gay person that could be either heaven or hell! My first love was in college seminary...we never kissed or had sex but had a strong emotional and romantic bond that lasted for years. He was a year ahead of me and tried to show me the ropes on how to survive in seminary. We were told to not have any “particular friendships” ...be celibate

but no classes on creative sexuality...Masturbation was never discussed as a survival option...no direction or advice...if you had the gift of celibacy you would survive. In the absence of guidance...rumors & witch hunts thrived...someone disappearing in the dark of night never to return I was one of those was asked to leave for the sake of community...I told my spiritual director I thought I might be bi-sexual...and was asked not to return...hetero or neutered was all they wanted for their ministers in training

g: Ministry...now that is an interesting word you have created. Are you to convert the masses to your way of thought, dogma & ritual or help them to find their own unique spiritual path to me? Bully or evolve? Human Dogma of do's & don'ts vs. free will to decide where your heart leads? One true & only way vs. multiple paths to the same place of enlightenment? Questioning and doubt is good...products of an inquiring mind...but boy oh boy does it stress out the human religious management who thinks they have all the answers!

N: At times those two seem to be on opposite ends of the same spectrum...is there any common ground for religion and spirituality to meet on? If your religion says you have to change your sexual orientation to be accepted & fit in...do you throw the baby out with the bath water when they evict you from their churches and slam the religious door in your face? What do you fill that spiritual god void with? Sex, booze, drugs, addiction ...anything to numb it away...Running away is not filling the god void...it is like religious guilt trips.... the gift that just keeps on giving...

g: So now I am reduced to a void? Sounds pretty dark & uninviting to me? From my perspective I created you to share life with me ...to be co-creators... to thrive in a balanced nature that could provide for you. I did not intend to answer prayers through miracles, but to be with you as you untangle the knots of life, by your side. I do not rescue people, cure them, walk ahead of them, or as a passive observer watch your lives from the sky taking copious notes of right & wrong in the good book...I am as close as your next breath...if only you could inhabit the NOW with me...with a grateful & open heart...maybe then life is would not be so lonely and make more sense for you...

M: My life long search for my place in ministry needed to be put on hold for a while. By now in graduate seminary I was leaving in the midst of a large metropolitan area and had the freedom to let my hair down... to discover the real me. Bars with too loud music & drunks falling over me scared me to death, so I ran an ad in a local gay paper to start a "Gay Social Club"... an option for gay men to meet outside of the bars in a social outing situation. Many men wanted to join and we were active for a number of months till Kevin & I met...dated for a month and then moved in together...a first for us both, first real boyfriend, first time being open about being gay and first time to tell both our families about being in a gay relationship. Needless to say the Social Club folded and I worked as a waiter. On a whim one day I wore blue eye shadow to work to see if they would fire me. The other gay waiters thought it was "fabulous"...the management did not care as long as I continued to give good customer service! My folks were more accepting than

his...whatever makes you happy...his family I would never meet during the 10 years we were together. My parents & younger sister would visit us after we bought a condo together. One day my sister found a photo album of our commitment ceremony that we had in our condo...in tears she confronted my folks asking why did they lie to her for years when she suggested to them that she felt we were more than just "roommates"?

N: A dark secret starts with a simple fib but quickly you find yourself digging deeper into the soil of compounded lies...do we say things people want to hear, words that make us more acceptable or the simple truth that may rock the boat?

g: Did you ever see the 70's poster "Footprints in the Sand" two sets of foot prints then only one...why did you leave me god? I did not leave you...I was carrying you. Please do NOT let a Religion separate us...just BE in a spiritual relationship with me...talk with me ..no words to say ...meditate!...if you pray ...BE still...listen for a response...don't assume I do not hear you...watch for me...I am here...don't assume anything...experience everything...you can be spiritually alive and not be involved in religion at all...

M: So there you have it, my spiritual coming out in 20 minutes that was the time restraint I had for this one act...my God dilemma lasts a life time. I live now in the new normal...28 years of customer service with one major corporation and my job was outsourced overseas...now at 61 years young, back in school to learn a more employable carrier. 30 years after coming out



from the seminary, I am involved in ministry as a spiritual mentor with people around the world through an internet website... not attending any religious gatherings but still having a dialogue with god. 3 long term relationships later, all lasting over 10 years, I find myself single and dating again...maybe Mr. Right will come along but till then... I am ok by myself. I am beginning to realize that life is going to continue to change and evolve...dilemmas come & go...with me as a participant or without me as a victim. I have no "control" over the outcome...the only control I have is MY reaction to change...shit is going to happen...we can't stop that ...as I now see it I have two choices: ...do I get buried under it... or see it as creative compost by continuing to grow & evolve through it!

g: By George...I think he has finally got it...

N: You know that's right! (double finger snap!)