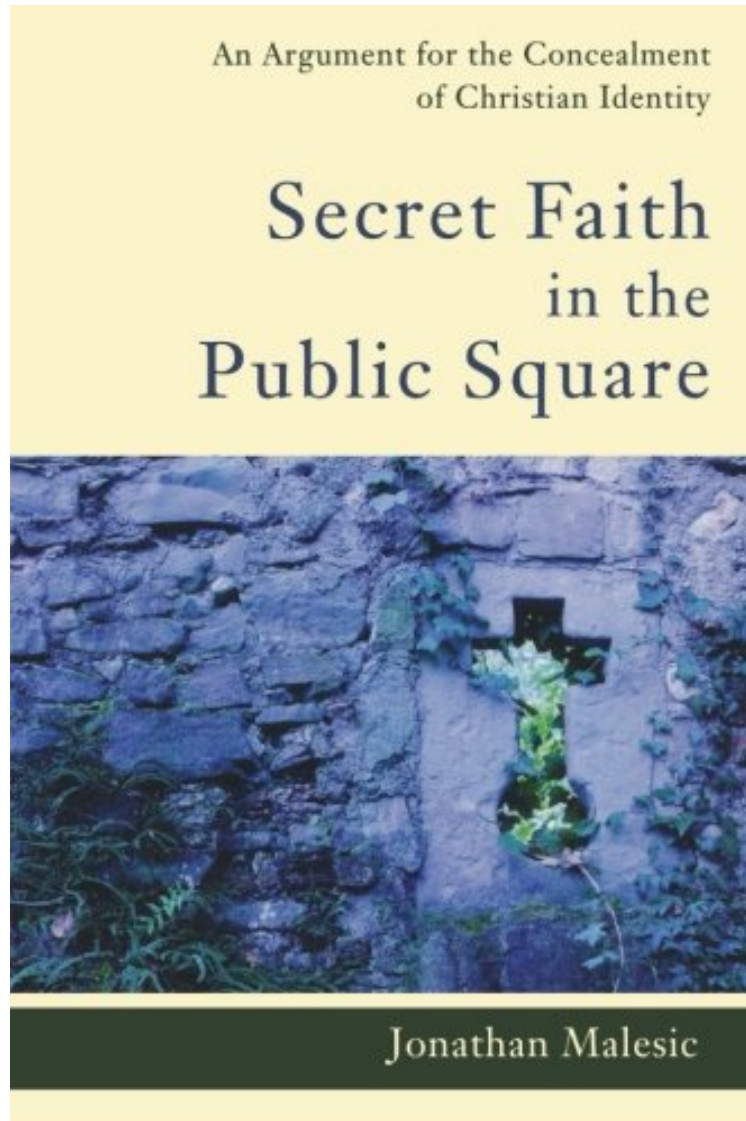


Secret Faith in the Public Square: An Argument for the Concealment of Christian Identity

Jonathan Malesic

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Jonathan Malesic : Secret Faith in the Public Square: An Argument for the Concealment of Christian Identity before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secret Faith in the Public Square: An Argument for the Concealment of Christian Identity:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Daniel L. Garner A very important book that more people should read - a major eye opener.

In this groundbreaking and provocative book, Jonathan Malesic argues that the best way for Christians to be caretakers of their tradition and to love their neighbors selflessly is to conceal their religious identity in American public life. The alternative insisting on Christianity's public visibility in politics, the marketplace, and the workplace risks severely compromising the distinctiveness of Christian identity. Delving deep into the Christian tradition, Malesic explains that keeping Christian identity secret means living fully in the world while maintaining Christian language, prayer, and liturgy in reserve. He shows how major thinkers Cyril of Jerusalem, Sren Kierkegaard, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer sought to protect Christian identity from being compromised by the public sphere. He then shows that Christians' dual responsibilities for the tradition and for the neighbor must be kept secret.

From Publishers Weekly A professor of theology, Malesic offers a theological and philosophical treatise on the need for Christians to resist mass culture and its corrupting accommodation to worldly ideas by keeping their faith a secret. Malesic traces this idea to fourth-century St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who, in an effort to inspire awe in candidates for conversion, hid from them certain doctrines until after their baptism. The book then explores the thought of Sren Kierkegaard and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who also argued for secrecy lest Christianity fall prey to consumerism, comfort or complacency. The book will be appreciated by theologians who worry that the evangelical zeal to make converts may inevitably conform more to American capitalism than to Christian creeds. But the book is more interested in a theological exploration of the concept of secrecy than in arguing for any modern-day solutions. Malesic's many repetitions and inelegant use of language make this book a hard read, though it rewards readers interested in the ideas of a trio of Christianity's most complex theologians. (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From the Back Cover "Against all the arguments that religious conviction should be manifest in public life, Jonathan Malesic offers perhaps the most theologically profound, fruitful, and rigorous challenge: the real truth of Christianity cannot be worn like a flag pin on a politician's lapel. It occurs in secret and in silence. True subjectivity of faith precludes its manifestation in public life, and all attempts to display it in such a way only profane it and further pervert the church as a community of 'secret disciples.' This genuinely fresh, freethinking book displays the independence of mind and life for which it argues. Lucidly written and crisply argued, it is a significant contribution to discussions in the field, and will be a wonderful counterpoint to the dominant narrative in classes about religion and public life."--Charles Mathewes, University of Virginia; editor, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* "Malesic's thesis is striking and provocative: we should conceal our faith in order to protect it from being absorbed and prostituted in our voracious secular culture. Readers may not be persuaded, but by the end of the book they will find themselves richly rewarded with many fresh insights into the possibilities for Christian witness in our strange, postmodern era. A truly fresh contribution to the important debate about faith, politics, and culture."--R. R. Reno, Creighton University "Jonathan Malesic calls Christians in America to conceal their identities in public life as a form of therapy that unhinges Christian witness from its accommodation to public expectation and reward. By credibly challenging the assumption that Christian identity is only authentic if it is publicly visible and explicit, Malesic has transformed the conversation about the relationship of the church to the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This book should be read and discussed widely."--Bryan Stone, Boston University School of Theology About the Author Jonathan Malesic (Ph.D., University of Virginia) is assistant professor of theology at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. He has written several essays for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.