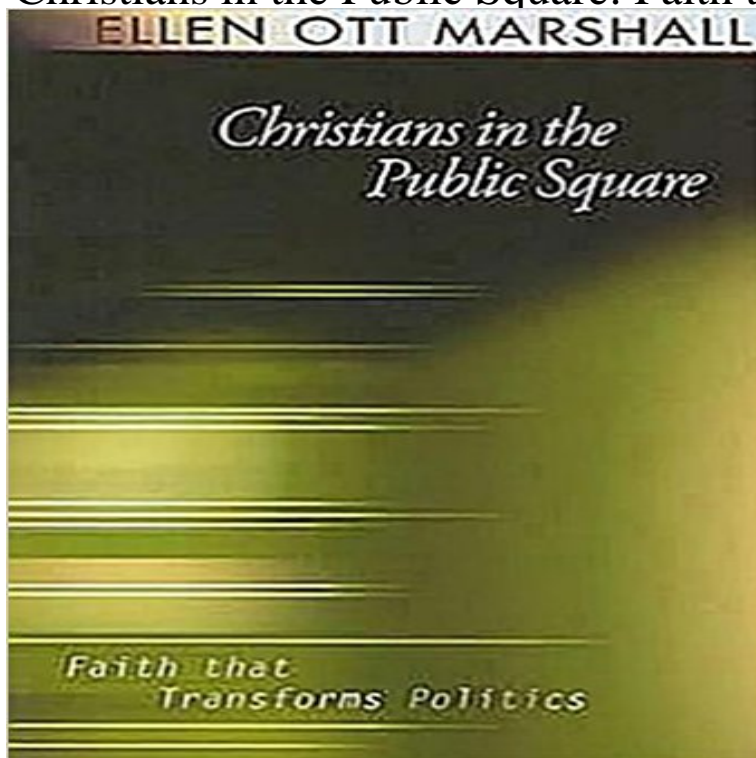


Christians in the Public Square: Faith that Transforms Politics



Christianity's chief contribution to America's civic life resides less in the ideas and positions Christians promote than in the way they go about promoting them. Debate about our shared life as citizens has always been a vigorous affair in American history. Yet recent years have seen a hardening of positions and a refusal to cross boundaries to cooperate or even understand those with whom we disagree. Not only in the rough and tumble world of political campaigns, but even in the historically more bipartisan world of governance, the American public square has become a fundamentally divided place.

One reason for this situation, says Ellen Marshall, is an absolutizing of the ethical positions that underlie political commitments. Both the religious right and the secular left have couched their ideas in terms of unbending moral principles, certain in their possession of the truth. But Christian ethics teaches us that, while God's truth is indeed absolute, our grasp of it never is. Recognizing this truth, Christians can more faithfully engage in the political sphere by: Insisting on a rigorous and sustained exercise of the virtue of humility.

Charting a narrative understanding of Christian ethics, in which a rich description of the context of moral decisions is necessary to understand how right and how wrong they are. Taking account of the moral ambiguity that resides in almost all human actions. Read the Introduction

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