

The Secret: The Spanish Inquisition in Old St. Augustine Part Two 2012-12-09

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By [LEE WEAVER](#)
Special to The Record

Part Two

Two weeks ago I related how "The Secret" came into being. It would deal with the notion that the first Jews in America did not arrive in 1654, in New Amsterdam, N.Y., but rather came much earlier, making the crossing with Menendez in 1565. They would have been fleeing for their very lives as the Spanish Inquisition bore down on them. They would come as Conversos (Jews converted to Christianity) and there would be pretenders to conversion, Marranos, a derogatory term meaning "pig." To be caught in this pretense could mean torture and/or death.

"The Secret" was off to the races. I sought to make it entertaining, educational and exciting while keeping it focused on the instructions of Micah in the Old Testament ("do Justice, love mercy and walk humbly") and The Apostle Paul's "Fruits of the Spirit" (love, joy, peace, patience kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"). At all turns there appeared the possibility of defending diverse actions by quoting Scripture, a not uncommon practice today among the many proponents of diverse theological and political thought. The resultant standoff would take the play into difficult waters. In the end, whatever moral conclusion was reached would have to stand on its own. Holy Scriptures, Christian and Jewish, would be appreciated and respected, but they could not be the basis for reconciliation and hope. The real basis for change would be informed by Scripture but it would have to come from within the individual struggling for understanding. Enter The Inquisition.

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"The Secret" is a one-person play. The narrator of the story is one of the two main characters. The two would have respect for one another. They would share the struggles of new life in the New World. They would find in each other familial love and support. They would be very close.

Dramatists refer to the "great reveal" in a play as that moment when the audience collectively goes, "Oh wow! What a staggering moment! Now what will happen?" In "The Secret" the "great reveal" occurs at the end of the first act when the narrator discovers a reality that nearly undoes him. In the second act, he struggles with himself, his religion and, most importantly, those closest to him.

It almost goes without saying that Act II provides the resolution and redemption. There is, however, a stunning last scene that may be seen coming by some, but nevertheless impacts in such a way, that many, in test audiences, are left speechless. One reviewer suggested that the play's end will be met with silence. While that might be remarkable, this playwright hopes for applause!

The Barn Theater in Old Fort Menendez is located where Eastbound Route 16 ends at San Marco Presentations are Jan. 4, 5, 11 and 12 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees Jan. 6 and 13 at 2 p.m. Admission: \$20; Reservations: 824-8874.



Weaver, a retired UMC clergyman who lives in St. Augustine with his wife Nanette, has been seen locally as Don Quixote in "Man of La Mancha," as three different Light Keepers in "Piercing the Darkness" and in his original "Three Men of the Bible." He will be speaking at The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in St. Augustine on Jan. 20. He invites your questions and comments at leafweaver@gmail.com.

<http://staugustine.com/living/religion/2012-12-06/secret-spanish-inquisition-old-st-augustine#.UMRZhpHhfsM>