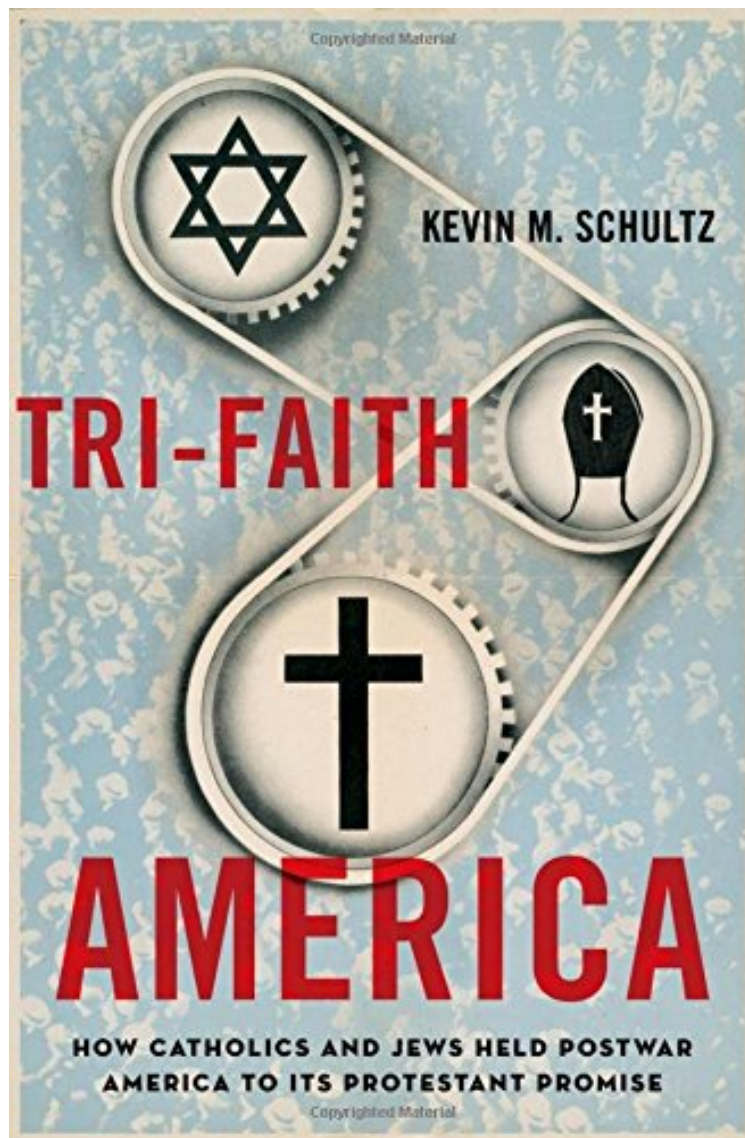


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Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise

Kevin M. Schultz

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt put it bluntly, if privately, in 1942—the United States was "a Protestant country," he said, "and the Catholics and Jews are here under sufferance." In *Tri-Faith America*, Kevin Schultz explains how the United States left behind this idea that it was "a Protestant nation" and replaced it with a new national image, one premised on the notion that the country was composed of three separate, equally American faiths—Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Tracing the origins of the tri-faith idea to the early twentieth century, when Catholic and Jewish immigration forced Protestant Social Gospelers to combine forces with Catholic and Jewish relief agencies, *Tri-Faith America* shows how the tri-faith idea gathered momentum after World War I, promoted by public relations campaigns, interfaith organizations, and the government, to the point where, by the end of World War II and into the early years of the Cold War, the idea was becoming widely accepted, particularly in the armed forces, fraternities, neighborhoods, social organizations, and schools. *Tri-Faith America* also shows how postwar Catholics and Jews used the new image to force the country to confront the challenges of pluralism. Should Protestant bibles be allowed on public school grounds? Should Catholic and Jewish fraternities be allowed to exclude Protestants? Should the government be allowed to count Americans by religion? Challenging the image of the conformist 1950s, Schultz describes how Americans were vigorously debating the merits of recognizing pluralism, paving the way for the civil rights movement and leaving an enduring mark on American culture.

"Schultz's work is an important part of recent scholarship...that examines how access to the political, social, and cultural 'mainstream' was expanded during World War II and the postwar period...*Tri-Faith America* is an important work that challenges historians to think more critically about religious and ethnic relations in the postwar period."--*Journal of American Ethnic History*"A creatively imagined, subtly rendered narrative...Schultz has produced a terrific, timely book that not only accomplishes its stated goals admirably but also helps us consider anew the character of public life and debate."--*Journal of American History*"One of the finest studies of twentieth-century religion and politics in America published in the past two decades."--*Sociology of Religion*"Schultz offers a work filled with contradiction, irony, and unintended consequence. It exemplifies good intellectual history."--*Religion and Politics*"For scholars of twentieth-century American Jewish history, this book is a must-read."--*American Jewish Archives Journal*"Kevin's Schultz's...tremendous study...brilliantly shows that between the labor-capital divide of the 1930s and the racial divide of the 1960s was an ideological contest over the religious composition of the nation."--*Religious Dispatches*"As Kevin M. Schultz demonstrates in this insightful and highly judicious study, '*Tri-Faith America*' represented far more than an interfaith celebration of the postwar nation's 'new religious sociology.' Catholics and Jews pressed their own visions of pluralism with an often militant fervor that changed everything from collegiate fraternity life, manuals of social etiquette, and even America's public education system. This is a timely and important book."--James T. Fisher, Fordham University"Kevin Schultz has placed the history of American religion squarely at the center of political history and, in this insightful and deeply researched book, he has pinpointed the origins of America's embrace of religious pluralism. He has located these fundamental changes in the early decades of the twentieth century and has shown how the emergence of 'tri-faith' rhetoric involved much more than just talk. Rather it reflected a tectonic shift in the life of the nation, and Kevin Schultz deserves our applause for teaching us about it."--Hasia R. Diner, Goldstein-Goren Center for American Jewish History, New York University"As Kevin M. Schultz amply demonstrates in this fresh, absorbing, and admirably nuanced study, the central drama of twentieth-century American religion was the tense, complex, but ultimately successful path to mutual accommodation traveled by American Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Many authors from Will Herberg onward have treated this theme in various ways, but none has done so with more subtlety and insight, balancing the achievements of 'tri-faith America' against its weaknesses and liabilities. Schultz has given us a book we will need to learn from, and contend with, in the years to come, as we make our way through a very different landscape of religious complexity."--Wilfred M. McClay, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga"Nicely illuminates the pre-World War II origins of contemporary ideals of tolerance and inclusion. Riveting reading."--*Balkinization*"The reader who relishes a nuanced view of the forces that have shaped American history and the American Jewish experience will find this book a delight."--*Jewish Book World*"Timely...This important book opens up a promising new framework for reevaluating the American religious and political landscapes of the twentieth century."--*Journal of Church and State*"This well-researched and clearly argued book explains how Protestant America became Judeo-Christian America and then how the success of that achievement led to results that many who cooperated to promote the transition did not expect...[U]nusually fine book."--*American Catholic Studies*"One of the finest studies of twentieth century religion and politics in America published in the past two decades."--*Sociology of Religion*About the AuthorKevin M. Schultz is Associate Professor

of History and Catholic Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.