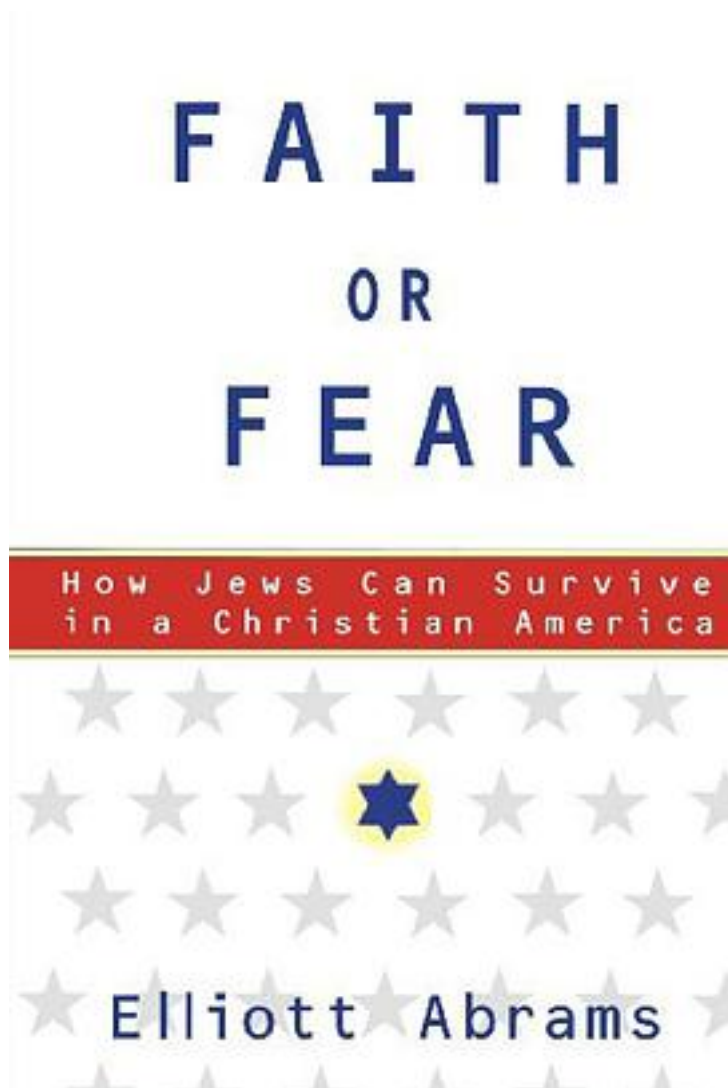


# Faith or Fear



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In the midst of the greatest religious expansion in American history, Jews are a shrinking minority. Inter-marriage is up, synagogue attendance is down, and Jewish education is flagging. Jewish leaders spend less time instructing the young in religious traditions than in promoting liberal causes and attacking conservative Christians. But as Elliott Abrams contends in this tightly argued, insightful polemic, it is not the Christian Right that most threatens Jews today, but rather their abandonment of Judaism. From the New Deal to the present day, the politics of the Jewish majority have been increasingly both liberal and secular. This deep-seated inclination reflects the decision of 18th-century Jews to embrace an absolutist view of church-state separation - a sensible choice at a time of extreme Jewish vulnerability in a hostile Christian society. Yet paradoxically, the Jewish commitment to secular liberal values has itself become the greatest threat to Jewish continuity. Rather than attacking Christian fundamentalists, Abrams argues, Jews should follow their example. Indeed, conservative Christians are the natural allies of Jews, not their adversaries. Abrams documents how many conservative Christian leaders have swept anti-Semitism out of their churches, replacing it very often with strong pro-Israel and philo-Semitic stances, and shows how Jewish interests are more consistent with those of other people of faith than with secular liberals who want to drive religion out of public life completely. Abrams calls on American Jews to renounce their outmoded fear of Christians and their misguided faith in a liberalism that no longer serves to promote Jewish survival. Only through a genuine renewal of religious belief, he maintains, will today's American Jews be able to pass their identity on to a new generation.

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目录:

[Faith or Fear\\_ 下载链接1](#)

标签

评论

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[Faith or Fear\\_ 下载链接1](#)

书评

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