

In the last decade, 45% of all marriages in the U.S. were between people of different faiths. The rapidly growing number of mixed-faith families has become a source of hope, encouraging openness and tolerance among religious communities that historically have been insular and suspicious of other faiths.

Yet as Naomi Schaefer Riley demonstrates in *'Til Faith Do Us Part*, what is good for society as a whole often proves difficult for individual families: interfaith couples, Riley shows, are less happy than others and certain combinations of religions are more likely to lead to divorce. Drawing on in-depth interviews with married and once-married couples, clergy, counselors, sociologists, and others, Riley shows that many people enter into interfaith marriages without much consideration of the fundamental spiritual, doctrinal, and practical issues that divide them. Couples tend to marry in their late twenties and thirties, a time when religion diminishes in importance, only to return to faith as they grow older and raise children, suffer the loss of a parent, or experience other major life challenges. Riley suggests that a devotion to diversity as well as to a romantic ideal blinds many interfaith couples to potential future problems. Even when they recognize deeply held differences, couples believe that love conquers all. As a result, they fail to ask the necessary questions about how they will reconcile their divergent worldviews—about raising children, celebrating holidays, interacting with extended families, and more. An obsession with tolerance at all costs, Riley argues, has made discussing the problems of interfaith marriage taboo.

'Til Faith Do Us Part is a fascinating exploration of the promise and peril of interfaith marriage today. It will be required reading not only for interfaith couples or anyone considering interfaith marriage, but for all those interested in learning more about this significant, yet understudied phenomenon and the impact it is having on America.



NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY is a former *Wall Street Journal* editor who has covered religion, education, philanthropy, and culture. Her writing has also appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Washington Post*, among other publications. She is the winner of the 2006 American Academy of Religion Newswriting Contest for Opinion Writing. She lives in the suburbs of New York with her husband, Jason, and three children.

"Interfaith marriage became steadily more common in America throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Nationally speaking, these marriages have eased interfaith tensions and increased religious tolerance, producing a country that is at once remarkably religious and remarkably tolerant. But in the lives of individuals the blessings of interfaith marriage are more mixed. *'Til Faith Do Us Part* brilliantly highlights the rich complexities and compromises and difficult tradeoffs that intermarriage entails. It is a profoundly important book—a must-read for the growing majority of Americans living interfaith lives."

—**ROBERT D. PUTNAM**, co-author of *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*

"Growth in the number of interfaith marriages in the U.S. has been a major trend in recent decades, yet few have paid it much attention. *'Til Faith Do Us Part* redresses that oversight, exploring the meaning and implications, advantages and realistic difficulties of people of different faiths uniting in marriage. Naomi Schaefer Riley is a sociologist's journalist, and more. She takes empirical data seriously, is balanced and fair-minded, and writes superbly. I recommend this book most highly."

—**CHRISTIAN SMITH**, author of *Lost in Transition: the Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*

"Almost half of all Americans who marry nowadays marry people not of their own faith. In this informative and well-written volume, Naomi Schaefer Riley explores this phenomenon from an interreligious perspective. Her penetrating interviews and eye-opening statistics paint a fresh portrait of contemporary intermarriage and how it will shape America's future."

—**JONATHAN D. SARNA**, author of *American Judaism: A History*

"Having been an atheist married to a Christian, I know the turmoil that a spiritual mismatch can create in marriage. Here's a well-researched book that offers invaluable insights into this important yet seldom discussed topic."

—**LEE STROBEL**, co-author of *Surviving a Spiritual Mismatch in Marriage*