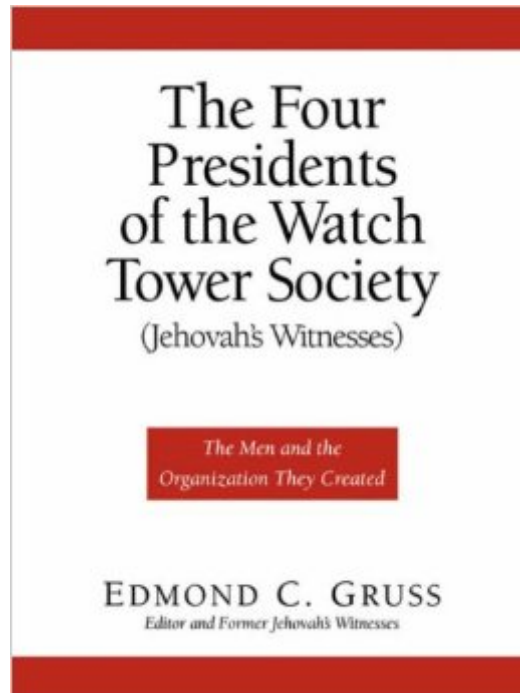


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The Four Presidents Of The Watch Tower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses)



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Customer Reviews

This book is edited by Edmund Gruss, based on anonymous informants who combine have over 75 years within the Jehovah's Witness movement, from the days of Rutherford to the present. Having read it and if I must describe it in one word ... it would be "DISTURBING". The book focuses of course on the characters and motivations of the first four presidents of the Watchtower Society. The book is disturbing to say the least, delving behind the scenes of the personal lives and motivation behind presidents Russell, Rutherford, Knorr and Franz. Showing how from the very beginning of Rutherford's hostile takeover after the death of Russell, with the help of MacMillan and VanAmburgh, that the main thrust of the movement was selfish and self-pleasing. The book is well-documented, why anyone would want to stay in this cult after reading this book is beyond me ... it shows the hold the leadership has on these poor people. This book is not doctrinal, but deals with personalities, and shows without-a-shadow-of-a-doubt that the Society is nothing more than a publishing house, and the Jehovah's Witnesses are its salespeople. The leadership is not about "truth", but about control. sad!

This important new book includes much information on the inner workings of the Watchtower never before published. Edited by Edmond Gruss, the main text is by a third generation Witness, C.A. Lingerfedt, who served at the Watchtower headquarters as the personal secretary for several high level officers at Bethel, including Hayden Covington. His access to much insider information gives him an advantage few other critics have. Heart disease prevented him from completing this book

and, while alive, he had to remain anonymous due to the real fear that disfellowshipping would cut him off from most of his family. As a best selling author, he made a good living writing, always under a pseudonym to protect his family. He confirms the immorality of Rutherford and the corruption in the Watchtower. Gruss confirms many of Lingerfede's claims (and they conform to my knowledge as well). No historian of the movement can claim to produce a history of the Watchtower without consulting this book and evaluating its claims. Gruss is one of the leading scholars of the movement today and editing this work only adds to his stature. It is must reading for all students of the Watchtower.

I purchased this publication without reading any of the detail available through as to its content; clearly I could expect it to cover the 4 presidents of the Watch Tower society but, beyond that, I didn't have any real idea about its content. What I did find was the content is very brief in its material related to the 4 presidents and so, if what you're after is a collation of all that is known about the psychological and theological background of the 4 presidents, this book is perhaps going to leave you looking for more elsewhere. The book is written by a former Witness who remains a dedicated Christian. That's fine although again I didn't buy the book to necessarily have interjected a secondary theological position that was supposedly more accurate than that of the witnesses. I appreciate the author has a hard task here in that working through the JW theology without some reference to mainstream views on the same positions is difficult and potentially isolated but the asides from the author created a view that the book was again really a book where the four presidents were used as a means for de-conversion of Jehovah's Witnesses rather than the focus of the book. The book also detracts by using what I consider to be some unnecessary scare tactics to again push the line that the JWs are bad. Maybe they are and another book title "The JWs are Bad" is the place to put that content. Here, when the author pushes his case for the JWs to be considered a cult, he makes reference - and I don't have the content in front of me - to a woman that escaped the Jim Jones cult and was 'assassinated' some years later. It's all very dark and threatening. Someone left a cult and was hunted down. The JWs are a cult... could the same occur? However, my cursory glance through Wikipedia (happy to be corrected on this since I appreciate it's not the final word on anything) is that the police determined the murder of this woman was unrelated to her previous involvement in the Jim Jones cult. Now that analysis is perhaps for a later edition of the book since it's just been released or, possibly, the author has used it to cast a pall of the foreboding over any cults (and hence the JWs.) Data didn't support the presentation and I think it adds to an overall weakening of the book's purported main purpose. Summary: there's little here

you're going to find (biographically) that you can't find through a search on each of the presidents. Russell wasn't nice to his ex-wife, Rutherford was likely an alcoholic, Knorr was a modern-day Frederick Winslow Taylor and not much more and Fred Franz was a troubled individual who drove much of the JW theology for a number of decades. All those pictures have been painted before. The second and final thirds of the book are much more focused on scriptural change which do much to impact the JW's position that they've largely held to a constant scriptural position. More damaging is the changes to key dates such as 1914 and its meaning. But again, it's not new information. The final third are index and notes. Some quite good. The value you get from this is going to depend what you're after: detailed biographies of the 4 presidents? It's not here. Material to work with JWs to present enough detail to show their founding fathers were failed men and often theologically unfit? It's closer to that. References enough to create doubts in the mind of current JWs? That's a harder task but it's here. Understand that that is where the book shines and you'll be OK with the content.

I found the book most interesting at the beginning, but would have appreciated greater objectivity. The volume has a heavy Evangelical bias which ought to be acknowledged in marketing. I was after biographical profiles, and a degree of scholastic/journalistic detachment. There isn't any of that. Instead, the book is sometimes downright gossipy. After the four presidents are introduced, profiled and critiqued, the author proceeds to set forth his own theological positions. Didn't bother to finish reading.

SIMPLE / SIMPLE / SIMPLE. It's all S-I-M-P-L-E to know that if a President(S) is LOPSIDED, then his/her admin. / supporters / structures / agendas etc., are bound to collapse. - This scientific connection is kindergarten. IE., remember the co. Enron ? Charles Taze Russell (1879-1926) was a good BUSINESS MAN (* the MIND of any good Business man requires an acute objective of constant \$\$\$ CASH FLOW / GOOD PROFIT MARGIN \$\$\$ etc. It's no wonder why Russell expanded his business / healthy returns (" financial success") - p. 13) with a BIG PLAN. - It's the NATURE of a (any) Businesses man (BM) to have an open mind, and to heed its peers trend / style / marketing techniques etc., in order to compete / stay alive (Bus. 101). To be con.

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