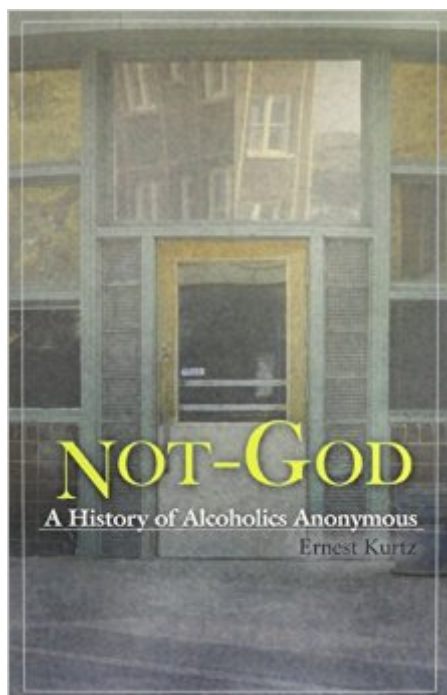


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Not God: A History Of Alcoholics Anonymous



Synopsis

The most complete history of A.A. ever written. Not God contains anecdotes and excerpts from the diaries, correspondence, and occasional memoirs of A.A.'s early figures. A fascinating, fast-moving, and authoritative account of the discovery and development of the program and fellowship that we know today as Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Customer Reviews

well, in my opinion, kurtz accomplished a quite difficult undertaking. it started out as a doctoral dissertation and it was revised a bit for public reading. kurtz describes some of the earliest history of Alcoholics Anonymous. more than that, he examines the underlying cultural evolution that led to the foundation of AA (e.g., the Oxford Movement). it examines a bit of the spread of AA in the USA and elsewhere. i think, perhaps, most importantly, kurtz discusses the psychological dynamics involved in overcoming an addiction, not by masterful tactics, but rather, humility, belief in some form of higher power. that humility, and the power of group processes and sponsorship's guidance, lead the active alcoholic into a potential life of great contributions in guiding others in their search for a way of living without living and finding a life of purpose. i liked it! it was well documented. i take issue with a couple of historical "facts", but, with 99.999% of the facts presented in this book, they appear accurate. this book is, in the words of an original AA'er, "rather pedantic", so, if you're not inclined to read scholarly stuff, it's probably not the most desirable of books to read. if, however, you enjoy scholarly texts, you are intrigued by AA and its history, then this book is very highly recommended. i

give it an "A+".

This is absolutely an essential history of AA. I would say, "THE essential history", but different people have different needs. Like Dick B., I find Kurtz's footnotes to be a rich vein for further research. I also found refreshing Kurtz's resistance to the hagiography or iconoclasm that usually accompanies histories of Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, AA's co-founders. It may be helpful to remember that *Not God* is a reworked dissertation in American Studies, not History. It is essentially academic, but Kurtz retains the ability to marvel at the mystery of the miraculous recoveries that have resulted from the rise of twelve-step programs.

Good book without the mumbo jumbo that one usually finds on the subject. He tackles the question: "Is AA a cult" by describing the common characteristics of cults. A book for the thinking AA member and those interested in the background of a very influential movement that started in the USA and has spread over a large part of the developed world.

Wonderfully insightful for all. Splendidly illustrates the history and formation of AA and its painstaking growth through the early formative years of AA. A great read!

This is by far the most in-depth history I have read to date on the A.A. program. Definitely not a fast read, it is written like a textbook. I am finding it very helpful in my quest to understand the origins of A.A., and what the organization has been through to bring it to its current state as I know it.

I bought this book as a replacement for one I had read and given away several years ago. It is a must read for anyone wanting to know how AA came to be and what its deepest core philosophy is about. This book was written as a research project by a man (who is not an alcoholic or addict) that received authorization from AA to research their archives in preparing the book. The actual reading is split into two parts. The first is the most detailed explanation of the origin and development of AA that exists. It describes what is written in the AA approved literature but goes into so much more detail, particularly about the decisions made by individual groups during the formative years of AA which lead to the development of the "steps" and "traditions" and overall group harmony. The second half of the book describes in painstaking detail the notion of "not God" and how it applies to the AA view of surrender to win. I first bought this book after my AA sponsor requested I read it after I had been sober about 10 years. It is clearly written and concise but 456 pages of microprint.

Around the time I read this I became a licensed counselor working in drug treatment facilities and used much of what I gained from this book to pass on to newly recovering addicts trying to understand community based recovery through the various 12 Step programs. I believe the material in this book (along with the approved 12 Step material) allowed me to convey a deeper understanding to people of why to consider 12 step programs after treatment than I could have with only the institutional training I got in graduate school. I reread the first half of the book about 5 years ago after 20 years of sobriety and found it just as interesting and refreshing as the first reading years before. As I say, it is must reading for persons serious about 12 Step recovery. Don't pick it up for light reading because that it is not.

Kurtz masterfully captures the early days of AA. This book is a must read for students of the 12 Steps and anyone interested in this spiritual program of recovery that has improved the lives of millions. -- Frank D., Author of The Annotated AA Handbook

" God , I'm Not-God , You Are-God " became my " mantra " during the second year of my recovery in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I still repeat it often. I had never heard the phrase " Not-God " . Yet, many people around me and many of my readings suggested I had to stop playing God , especially if I wanted relief from the continuous stream of thoughts that would enter my mind. Not until I admitted , believed and accepted that I was " Not-God " , was I given the relief I sought. This book provides a historical foundation for an understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous. In addition, it fills the blanks required for a more thorough understanding of the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is an absolute must read for those interested in Alcoholics Anonymous . In addition , I suggest alcoholics read the book if they are fortunate to reach a point in their recovery where they develop a curiosity as to the history of AA . Tim H.

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