



# Apocalypse Child: A Life in End Times

*Flor Edwards*

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For the first thirteen years of her life, Flor Edwards grew up in the confines of a religious sect known as the Children of God, an outgrowth of 1960s counterculture founded in California in 1968. The group's nomadic existence was based on the belief that, as God's chosen people, they would be saved in the impending apocalypse that would envelop the rest of the world in 1993. Flor and Tamar would be 12 years old. The group's charismatic leader, Father David, kept the family on the move, from Los Angeles to Bangkok to Chicago, where the group would eventually disband, leaving the Edwards sisters to make sense of the foreign world of mainstream society around them on their own. *Apocalypse Child* is a cathartic journey through Flor's memories of growing up within a group with unconventional views on education, religion, and sex. Whimsically referring to herself as a real life Kimmy Schmidt, Edward's clear-eyed memoir is a story of survival in a childhood lived on the fringes.

## Apocalypse Child: A Life in End Times Details

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Author : Flor Edwards

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## From Reader Review Apocalypse Child: A Life in End Times for online ebook

### Mary says

Throughout the 1970s and early '80s, pseudo-religious cults seemed to be everywhere. One subgroup—apocalyptic, or “doomsday,” cults—often made headlines, including the Children of God, who were known for “love-bombing” and “flirty-fishing” to recruit new members. Now the grown children (one famous example is actress/activist Rose McGowan) of that cult’s original members are writing memoirs about their strangely unconventional childhoods spent in the cult, where every day the specter of death through martyrdom haunted them.

Flor Edwards spent 13 years growing up in the Children of God, wandering across continents with her parents and 11 siblings, merging with other large member families (birth control was shunned), in search of souls to save before the Great Apocalypse of 1993 struck. The author describes in clear, fascinating detail the rituals, preoccupations (mostly sexual), abuses, and day-to-day doings of the misguided adult devotees and their impact on Edwards. We watch as the author struggles with her growing awareness of ordinary life outside her rigid yet paradoxically fluid, fenced-in existence on various compounds, where terror and pain were all she knew (she expected to die at age 12) and Family included everyone in the cult (there were no emotional boundaries).

This revelatory personal account, brave in its honesty and skillfully written, offers many startling insights into the bizarre apocalyptic cult founded by David Berg (“Father David” to followers) in Huntington Beach, California, spreading quickly across the world and then suddenly falling apart. While the author displays a certain emotional detachment in her writing (probably emblematic of the enormous trauma she suffered), a childlike wonder also permeates this work. It is that glimmer that draws the reader in, rallying us behind Flor in her quest to find a more tranquil, sensible, settled life. One ingredient that could have enhanced this life story is the inclusion of photographs.

This review is based on an uncorrected proof provided by the publisher.

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### Stephanie says

*Apocalypse Child: A Life in End Times* had my immediate interest because I love reading and watching things about religious fundamentalism and cult-like groups. I had heard about the Children of God, in a couple different brief instances; most memorably with Sol/Dawn on Tony Robbins' [I am Not Your Guru](#)

Clip of Woman From Children of God on [I Am Not Your Guru](#)

[Disclaimer: This is not a tribute to Tony Robbins]

I had high hopes that this book might give me some insight into someone like Dawn’s experience, and unfortunately it was a let down for me.

First I will say this: I am so glad that Flor was able to write down her experiences and I hope it was

therapeutic for her.

I wish however, since she is an adult now, that she would have tied some history and “*what I know now*” into her childhood experiences to give the reader a broader understanding as to what was going on inside the families. She did briefly (view spoiler) but it very much just touched the surface of these issues.

Her experiences as a child were horrible to say the least. I hate to say it was boring, but a small child’s view of their world is not enough to engage me through 200 pages. Yes, it was strange. Yes, it was hugely dysfunctional. The main problem for me was that she articulated the world around her as a five year old. If she had written her experiences as a child and juxtaposed her knowledge that she has gained with hindsight and maturity, it would have made the memoir so much richer and given the reader a much better picture as to what was truly happening for little Flor.

I kept reading on, hoping Flor would get older and near the end there was a bit more revelation, but it was a disappointment.

I hope the best for Flor and her siblings, and hope she is living her best life.

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### **Jenny (Reading Envy) says**

This was a must-read for me, because of my obsession with cults and people who leave them! The author grew up in the infamous Children of God cult that started in the 60s, capitalizing on the free love idea and pulling people in around the world. Adherents gave up their possessions and reproduced while awaiting the apocalypse, which was scheduled to happen in 1993. Flor and her twin turned 12 that year, and that was also when she started to suspect that maybe not everything she'd been told was completely true.

This is more of a 3.5 stars read. The story is compelling, of course, but it lacks the perspective I wish I had. The author is an adult now, and I wish she'd done more to fill in the gaps of what she didn't know as a child. Much of the memoir still only contains what happened directly to her. The writing also isn't stellar. It isn't bad, exactly, but that isn't the strength of the book. Still, considering that she actually was practically uneducated as a child, maybe this is asking too much.

I uncomfortably discovered that this group is still around, now known as The Family, still asking people for donations and recruiting people to something thinly veiled as Christian beliefs. Buyer beware!

*Thanks to the publisher for approving my request to read this ahead of time through Edelweiss. It comes out March 13, 2018.*

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### **Ray says**

I admire people who can write about such personal hardships and disturbing memories. The life in this cult is so sad, but the author comes through it and maybe her story can help others. Suicide was and is still a problem for people involved with the COG cult. Cult awareness is so important!

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## **Terra says**

In 1967 and 1968 I spent much time with friends on the beach at the Huntington Beach Pier. I remember the Children of God's beginning. I watched in horror and in disbelief as the cult grew and in 1971 landed on the cover of Time magazine. Flor Edwards writes a beautifully told and engrossing account of her growing up years within the cult.

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## **Jeri says**

I read this book in 4 hours. This memoir was poignant, beautiful and written with clarity that touched your mind, heart and soul. Ms. Edwards story of growing up in a cult was told with naivete of child of acceptancing their circumstance, but growing to question those circumstances. It was riveting reading the teachings of this group and the thought process which people became entranced by the leader. It was truly gripping with strength, love and the harsh reality of trying to find your place in the world. I cannot recommend it enough.

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## **Victoria Wood says**

Read my author interview - <https://girlwithnoselfie.com/apocalyp...>

Apocalypse Child does not disappoint. The authors very fluid writing skills brought me to a world that I know very few of us will know to exist. She describes how she chose to unpack her childhood and attempted to make sense of it all. Paired with her full transparency – Apocalypse Child makes for an excellent read. A truly well written and inspiring memoir.

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## **George Ilsley says**

A well-written, surreal memoir. God, the things children go through. Always a mystery how some turn out to be survivors and others languish in the dirt.

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## **Summer says**

Smart, warm, funny. Brilliantly written. It hit all the notes, I laughed, I cried. I finished the book wondering when we will see another book from her. Amazing author! Must read!

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## **Liralen says**

Gosh. What an odd way to grow up: in a cult spread across the globe, one with an odd mix of freedom (free love encouraged, for example, and it sounds like individual households had a fair amount of lassitude in determining details of daily life...oh, and there's that time that Edwards' mother decides to make a swimming

pool out of the master bedroom of the house they're renting) and strict rules: in many places Edwards and the other children weren't allowed to go outside or open the curtains during the day, lest someone realise just how many people are living in one place.

In some ways Edwards was really lucky: her parents stayed together as a unit, and their family was never separated. Moreover, when Edwards and some of her siblings decided to leave the 'church', their parents opted to leave with them. The church started to fall apart (to some degree; it has since rallied and sprung up under another name) when Edwards was still too young for there to be an expectation that she would start having sex and babies, and because of the AIDS crisis the church had also stopped encouraging 'flirty fishing' (women prostituting themselves with the goals of income, conversion, and pregnancy). But in other ways...that's a grim kind of luck, when you're in a position where you haven't been encouraged towards prostitution but others around you have.

It's pretty fascinating material. I wish Edwards had brought more of her adult perspective to it, because although there's some degree of background, most of it is told from her perspective as a child whose knowledge of what was going on was pretty limited. I'd also have loved a lot more info about her family: she was one of twelve(!) kids, but we learn very very very little about their individual personalities. Her parents are treated compassionately in the book, Edwards acknowledging their flaws as parents (like, you know, raising their kids in a cult) while also respecting their goal of making a difference in the world, but I would have liked more complexity from them as well. I think that's again a matter of Edwards writing primarily from a child's perspective—kids have a simpler view of the world, and of their parents.

I'd be curious, too, about Edwards' path once she finished community college—she was accepted to an excellent four-year university to complete her BA when she was eighteen or nineteen (so roughly in 2000), but per her website, she finished her BA in 2011, which suggests that her path remained circuitous for some time. May or may not be relevant to the story, but it piqued my interest.

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### **Jake K says**

A fascinating look into what it is like to grow up and be raised within the Children of God cult, and a glimpse of how one can get their life moving on after

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### **Autumn says**

I like reading about cults and end-time religions/practicers so this was quite interesting for me. An easy read about the author's childhood as a member of the Children of God religion. The best part was when she was a teenager and comes to the realization that her family was part of a cult.

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### **August Norman says**

As someone fascinated with the often-abused line between organized religion and cults, I bought Apocalypse Child by Flor Edwards as soon as it was released. As a reader who knew nothing about The Children of God or the Family, the two names of the religion Edwards' parents brought her and her many siblings up to follow, I flipped through pages as fast as possible, relishing in the details of the day to day life of the nomadic world-traveling cult's missionary work, all the while waiting for the cult's doctrine and dogma to

fail. After all, as the title hints, the followers of this religion have been taught that the world will end by the time Edwards turns thirteen – a ticking clock that this young woman must reconcile throughout her entire youth. Spoiler alert, the world did not end upon Edwards' thirteenth year and the movement faced the consequences – including the author and her siblings. Told with simple, yet evocative prose, I often forgot that the story was a memoir, rather than a biography, as Edwards masterfully explores the innocence of childhood, the boundaries of faith, and the well-meaning intentions of her altruistic, if not naïve, parents.

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### **Marika says**

To constantly live in terror of the apocalypse. To belong to a family that isn't your real family and where sex between adults and children is encouraged. Welcome to the \*The Children of God\*, a cult that David Berg began in the late 60's. Author Flor Edwards does a remarkable job in shedding light on a cult that damaged so many children. Remarkable in that she writes not from hate, but from love. The recent exposé of Scientology will drive sales of this book.

I read an advance copy and was not compensated.

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### **Diana Raab says**

This book was just released in mid-March. It's not often that you read a published book that you can't put down by someone you know. What's also rare is reading a published book by one of your writing students. Many years ago, Edwards took my memoir-writing workshop at the Santa Barbara Writers Conference, where I read the beginnings of this memoir and instinctively knew she had a gift for writing. I'm over-the-moon thrilled that she's now sharing her riveting story with the world.

Here's my review on Amazon, which has been excerpted for the book cover:

"An astounding work written with indelible clarity and style.

Apocalypse Child is a brilliant and vivid depiction of what goes on behind the walls of a cult--revealing how terror permeates each and every waking moment. Flor Edwards is a wise and savvy soul who was forced to dance the dance--intuitively knowing it was wrong, but also knew she had to do everything in her power to be set free. A singular achievement."

Highly recommended!

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