

# JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DEFENDED

AN ANSWER  
TO SCHOLARS  
AND CRITICS

SECOND EDITION

GREG STAFFORD



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# Appendix B

## In Defense of F. W. Franz

In discussions concerning the identity and credentials of the NWT translators, it is common for critics of the NWT to point to what they consider reliable data on just how knowledgeable one of the presumed translators was in Hebrew. That translator was F. W. Franz, the fourth president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. However, although consideration will here be given to this "reliable data," it cannot be confirmed that Franz was indeed a member of the *New World Bible Translation Committee*, as no such official word has come from the WTB&TS or other members of the Translation Committee.

In an attempt to discredit the scholarly nature of the NWT, Ron Rhodes, taking for granted that Franz was one of the translators, cites the cross-examination of Frederick W. Franz from the Douglas Walsh trial in the country of Great Britain in the year 1954.<sup>1</sup> This trial was held to establish whether or not Jehovah's Witnesses should be recognized as a legal religious organization in Scotland. Consider the following cross-examination:

Cross: "You, yourself, *read and speak* Hebrew, do you?"

Franz: "I do not *speak* Hebrew."

Cross: "You do not?"

Franz: "No."

Cross: "Can you, yourself, *translate that into Hebrew?*"

Franz: "Which?"

Cross: "That fourth verse of the Second Chapter of Genesis?"

Franz: "You mean here?"

Cross: "Yes."

Franz: "No. I won't attempt to do that."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest, 1993), 98.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Walsh v The Right Honourable James Latham Clyde, M. P., P. C., as representing the Minister of Labour and National Service, cross-examination of Frederick William Franz (emphasis added), p. 102 (Scotland, 1954).

After referring to this portion of the trial, Rhodes concludes, "The truth is that Franz—like others on the *New World Translation* committee—cannot translate Hebrew or Greek." Let us assume for the moment that Franz could not speak or read Hebrew. How in the world does this prove that he could not translate Greek? Franz studied Greek for two years at the University of Cincinnati, and undoubtedly continued his study of the language after he decided to become a full-time minister. Also, how does his testimony imply that the other Committee members (assuming that Franz was a member of the Committee) were unable to translate Hebrew or Greek? Of course, it does not.

Getting back to the cross-examination of F. W. Franz, we should point out that Rhodes' reproduction of that cross does not give Franz' complete answer to the final question of the cross-examiner. To the question, "Can you translate that [Genesis 2:4] into Hebrew?" Rhodes has Franz saying simply, "No." But that is not all he said. His complete answer was, "No. *I won't attempt to do that.*"<sup>3</sup> By emphasizing the last portion of his answer (which Rhodes omitted) we would like to point out that Franz did not say that he *could not* translate the English of Genesis 2:4 (NWT) into Hebrew, but that he *would not* attempt to do so. Why would he refuse to do so? Perhaps the answer to this question will be better understood after we consider the following comments from William Sanford LaSor:

All learning is in context. The context, however, is not artificial, composed perchance by one who does not use the language naturally, but rather it is the actual language of those who used it as their mother-tongue. For this reason, I refuse to ask the students to compose sentences in Hebrew. To do so is to impress errors on the student's mind. And, frankly, *most of us who teach Biblical Hebrew do not have sufficient fluency in the language to speak or write in it.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cross-examination, pp. 102-103, par. F.

<sup>4</sup> William Sanford LaSor, *Handbook of Biblical Hebrew*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 3.

Now, considering Franz' earlier testimony, that he had made himself familiar with Hebrew, and that he could read and follow the Bible in Hebrew,<sup>5</sup> and his admission that he could not speak Hebrew, we can certainly understand Franz' refusal to translate Genesis 2:4 *from English into Hebrew* (not Hebrew into English). For, as LaSor points out, even most teachers of Biblical Hebrew "do not have sufficient fluency in the language to speak or write in it." Thus, Rhodes' assessment of Franz' testimony is superficial, inaccurate, and misleading.

The same is true of Walter Martin's handling of this trial. In his book *The Kingdom of the Cults* Martin gives the same appraisal of Franz' testimony. Martin, like Rhodes, also leaves out the pertinent data, and does not consider the facts as presented above. Martin goes even further in his attempt to discredit Franz' knowledge of Hebrew. He says he asked a teacher of Hebrew (whose name we are not given) at Talbot Theological Seminary if Genesis 2:4 was a "particularly difficult verse to translate." Martin claims that the professor stated he would "never pass a first year Hebrew student who could not translate that verse."<sup>6</sup>

Of course, after reviewing the court records above we know that Franz was not asked to translate the Hebrew of Genesis 2:4 into English, which is quite different from being asked to translate English into Hebrew. Still, it should not be overlooked that this verse is actually somewhat complicated. It has no finite verb but one Niphal infinitive construct, with suffix, and one Qal infinitive construct. In any event, Franz' testimony on this matter cannot be used as an accurate barometer for his understanding of Hebrew, let alone Greek.

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<sup>5</sup> Cross-examination, p. 7, par. A.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Revised Edition (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany, 1977), 64.

COURT OF SESSION, SCOTLAND.

LORD STRACHAN.

P. R. O. O. P.

L.C.

DOUGLAS WALLEN

MR. RYDER HONORABLE JAMES  
LATHAN CUNDE, K.P., F.C.S., as  
representing the Minister of  
Labour and National Service.

Tuesday, 23rd November, 1954.

Counsel for the Petitioner: The Dean of Faculty,  
(Sir John Cameron, Q.C.), Mr. Smilie, and Miss  
Clark Hutchinson.  
Counsel for the Defenders: Mr. Leslie, Q.C., and  
Mr. Klassen.

P U R S U E R ' S P E R O R Y

PETITIONER WILLIAM FRANK (S)  
WARRANTED I reside at Brooklyn, King's County,  
New York/

H.

F.W. FRENCH.

New York, United States of America. I am Vice-President  
of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and I am a  
member of its headquarters staff. Q. Have you an office  
and a room at its headquarters in Brooklyn which are  
known as Bethel? A. Yes. Q. Is the particular  
aspect of your work theological research and study?  
A. Yes. Q. Are you consulted by the President and  
the Board of Directors of the Society on all matters  
of theology? A. Yes. Q. I think that you have  
been since 1926 engaged in the work of theological  
research? A. That is true. Q. I think that from  
your earliest years you, yourself, were brought up as  
a Presbyterian? A. Yes. Q. Were you educated at  
the University of Cincinnati? A. Yes. Q. And you  
then the view of taking a Bachelor of Arts degree there  
with the intention of proceeding to a seminary for  
ministry? A. Yes. Q. Was it in April, 1944, that you  
decided to devote your life to the teaching ministry of  
Jehovah's Witnesses? A. Yes. Q. At that time was  
the Society known as Jehovah's Witnesses? A. No.  
Q. Was it then called the Watch Tower Bible and Tract  
Society? A. Yes. Q. I think various names were  
given to the adherents and members of that Society at that  
stage? A. Yes. Q. I think 1914, as you will  
explain later, is believed by all Jehovah's Witnesses to  
be a critical year in the history of the world?  
A. That is true. Q. And for you, yourself, it was a  
critical/

A consideration to the matter. Q. Do you say the

Board of Directors do not consider the matter at all

but suddenly find that there has been a new

translation promulgated to the whole of the witnesses?

A. The Board of Directors considers the translation too.

Q. And would be enraptured, wouldn't they, to vote

against it if so minded? A. That is right.

A D J O U R N E D.

Wednesday, 24th November, 1951.

PURSUER'S PROOF CONTINUED

FREDERICK WILLIAM FRANZ (61)

CROSS CONTINUED: Q. First, I just wanted to

get from you the Officers of the various societies.

Of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society,

Pennsylvania, the Officers are, President, Mr. Knorr?

A. Yes. Q. Vice-President yourself? A. Yes.

Q. And Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. Grant Souter?

A. Yes. Q. These same three are the Officers of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society Incorporated of New York? A. The Year Book shows that. Q. Then

for the International Bible Students Association in London, the Officers are, President, Mr. Knorr,

Vice-President, Mr. A. Pryor Hughes, Secretary E. C.

Chitty, and Mr. Grant Souter is the Assistant Secretary and Treasurer. Would you look, please, at No. 42 of

Process, which is the New World translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. I think we come to the number

Jehovah in the fourth verse, don't we, of the Second Chapter of Genesis, Page 34? A. Yes. Q. You,

yourself, read and speak Hebrew, do you? A. I do not speak Hebrew. Q. You do not? A. No. Q. Can

you, yourself, translate that into Hebrew? A. Which?

Q. That fourth verse of the Second Chapter of Genesis?

A. You mean here? Q. Yes? A. No. I won't attempt/

- A attempt to do that. Q. At the footnote there shows, and I understand correctly, the name Jehova. In the original Hebrew consisted simply of consonants? A. That is right.
- Q. It was called the Tetragrammaton? A. Yes. Q. Do you subscribe to the view that in Ancient Hebrew it was the ineffable name which was not to be pronounced?
- B A. According to the Jewish tradition which developed later on after the closing of the Canon that was not to be pronounced. Q. But you follow later manuscripts, do you, in inserting vowels to make it a word which may be pronounced? A. Yes. The Masoretic text contains the vowels. That is the traditional text. Q. Do you, yourself, speak Aramaic? A. No. Q. The Book of Daniel is partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic in the original, isn't it? A. That is correct. Q. I think we get the same thing, don't we, in the Prophets such as Ezra and Nehemiah? A. In Ezra, yes, and there are Aramaic words scattered throughout various Books of the Bible. Q. Did you O.K., as you put it yesterday, the text of the translations of the Books of Ezra and of Daniel in Nos 42 of Proceedings? A. No. Q. You said yesterday, I think, that the Society had modified its views in various respects as time passed? A. That is right. Q. I may assume, may I, that you, yourself, have anxiously and carefully studied the whole literature of your movement from the beginning? A. Yes. Q. Am I right that you put what is described as the end of/

- A of the time of the Gentiles in October, 1914? A. Yes.
- Q. Is it not the case that Pastor Russell put that date in 1874? A. No. Q. Is it not the case that he fixed the date prior to 1914? A. Yes. Q. What date did he fix? A. The end of the time of the Gentiles he fixed as 1914. Q. Did he not fix 1874 as some other crucial date? A. 1874 used to be understood as the date of Jesus' Second Coming spiritually.
- Q. Do you say, used to be understood? A. That is right. Q. That was issued as a fact which was to be accepted by all who wore Jehovah's Witnesses? A. Yes.
- Q. That is no longer now accepted, is it? A. No.
- Q. Pastor Russell in so concluding passed the view, did he not, on an interpretation of the Book of Daniel?
- A. Partly. Q. And in particular Daniel, Chapter 7, Verse 7, and 12. What did you say, he based some thing on these Scriptures? Q. His date of 1874 as a crucial date and the date of Christ's Second Coming? A. No.
- Q. What did you say he fixed it as; I understood that is what you said, I must have misunderstood you?
- A. He did not base 1874 on these Scriptures. Q. He based it on these Scriptures coupled with the view that the Anarc-vothic conspiracy occurred in 539? A. Yes. 539 was a date that he used in the calculation. But 1874 was not based on that. C. But it/

A Q. Have you also made yourself familiar with Hebrew? A.

Yes. Q. Do you also know and speak Spanish Portuguese and French? A. Spanish Portuguese and German, but I have a reading knowledge of French. Q. So that you have a substantial linguistic apparatus at your command? A.

B Yes, for use in my biblical work. Q. I think you are able to read and follow the Bible in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, German and French. A. Yes. Q. It is the case, is it not, that in 1950 there was prepared and issued what is called the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures? A. Yes. (Shown Ex. 41 of Ex. 42)

C I recognize that as an authentic copy of the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures issued in the summer of 1950. Q. But as it shows, there to be the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures rendered from the original language by the New World Bible Translation Committee, A.D. 1950?

D Yes. Q. That is on the flyleaf? A. Yes. Q. And I see that it is copyrighted by the Jehovah's Witness Bible and Tract Society and published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society Incorporated, and made in the U.S.A.? A.

E Yes. Q. And I think you have a foreword. Are you responsible yourself for the foreword? A. That is

is proposed by the Translation Committee as the signature will show. Q. And are the Christian Greek Scriptures referred to there what is usually called

the /

A the New Testament? A. That is true. Q. I think that it was your duty, was it not, before the issue of the New World Translation by your Society to check that translation for accuracy? A. That is true. Q. In light of your studies and in light of your knowledge? A. That is true. Q. And did you do so? A. I did so. Q. I think as the book shows, that there was a substantial printing of that translation? The first edition was 480,000 copies and the second edition was 1,000,000? A. Yes. Q. So that at least one and a half million copies have been issued is that right? A. That is true. Q. And have those been issued in connection with the work of the Society all over the world? A. Yes, particularly in English-speaking countries. Q. I should ask you this, has that version been translated into any other language than English? A.

B No. Q. It is an English translation? A. Yes. Q. So may I take it in round figures that you have published and disseminated something like one and a half million copies of that translation under the authority of your Society? A. Yes. Q. And does the Society regard it as an authoritative translation of the New Testament Scriptures? A. Yes. Q. And as the foundation of Bible study in English-speaking lands amongst members of the Society with regard to the New Testament? A.

C Yes. Q. In 1962 was there a similar translation of the /

D

E