

The Watchtower Society's Loyalty Test over Blood

Doug Mason

A Guide to Understanding and Handling

- *The REAL reason JW's refuse some blood products and some medical procedures involving blood.*
- *The WTS, which is not a "No Blood" organization, says it is ok to withhold the truth and to be evasive with the truth.*
- *The WTS expects JW's to break the law by passing on confidential patient information to their Elders.*
- *Help a JW patient make their own decision on the medical use of blood.*
- *Manage the information available to the WTS's Hospital Liaison Committees.*
- *Information to help formulate laws on managing JW patients.*
- *Difficulties that thinking JW's have with the WTS's teachings on blood.*

- ✧ Always observe procedures that fully accord with the requirements of all locally applicable legislation.
- ✧ Keep in mind that Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) are known to disobey the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's (WTS's) edicts concerning the medical use of blood. The official voice of the organization does not represent the views held by every JW.
- ✧ Never allow personal religious beliefs to impede the making and execution of a proper decision.
- ✧ It is not the purpose of this Guide either to advocate or to deny the provision of a specific medical procedure, whether using blood or not. That decision must only be made by a medical professional working with their patient.
- ✧ This Guide is not an advocate for the WTS, hence the Guide does not detail the current conditions under which the WTS permits or denies the use of blood or any of its components.

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INTRODUCTION

The first book of the Hebrew Scriptures records that Noah, his family and the animals on his boat survived a Great Flood. After land reappeared, they stepped on it and Noah gave thanks.

Noah built an altar to [YHWH] and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. [YHWH] smelled the pleasing aroma.¹

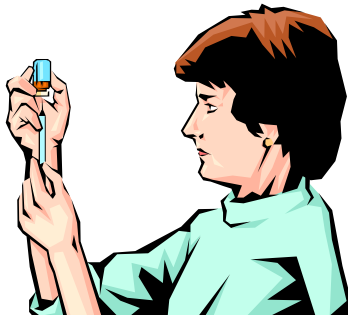
Then God (ELOHIM) blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them,

Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.²

This dietary instruction was aimed at ensuring a beast was dead before its flesh was eaten. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTS) extends this dietary instruction to include human blood, although God did not intend for a human's flesh to be eaten, nor for humans to be killed for that purpose. The WTS is aware that a transfusion is not eating but is an organ transfer, a process it is otherwise not averse to.

Blood is often likened to an organ of the body, "Blood is one of the many organs—incredibly wonderful and unique," Dr. Bruce Lenes told *Awake!* Unique indeed! One textbook describes blood as "the only organ in the body that's a fluid".³

The WTS says this dietary instruction to Noah means a Jehovah's Witness (JW) may not permit the injection of either whole blood or certain parts of blood, whether human or animal, into their body. The WTS leaves the decision whether to accept the medical use of some parts of human and animal blood to a JW's conscience.



The WTS permits the vaccination of products made from blood

The WTS also permits the vaccination of products made from blood. And it appears that the WTS does not provide instructions regarding the use of specific oral medications that contains blood.⁴ And these oral medications require blood components to be swallowed.

¹ Genesis 8:20 – 21, NIV

² Genesis 9:1 – 4, NIV

³ *Awake!* August 2006, page 3

⁴ Such a list is being compiled at *NoBlood Guide to Medicines Containing Blood Components and Fractions* at <http://www.noblood.org/community/3225-noblood-guidelines-to-medicines-containing-blood-components-fractions.html>

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

A significant number of non-JWs are choosing to receive medical procedures without the use of blood. When that is their right, they are perfectly entitled to exercise it. They have considered the available information and have made a deliberate and reasoned decision.

One objective of this *Guide* is to provide medical care facilities with information that helps them develop systems that ensure a JW patient is freely able to make their own decisions concerning the medical use of blood.

INFORMATION FOR COUNSELORS

Providers of medical care carry out their duties to protect and preserve life. When their patient is a Jehovah's Witness (JW), the providers of medical services may find medical procedures are more difficult, with their patients possibly face increased risks.

This *Guide* provides professional counselors with

- Relevant objective information about JWs that should help in the counseling process and in the management of a JW patient, to the genuine benefit of the Counselor and the patient.
- An understanding of the causes for a JW's struggle and hence hopefully help a professional to better manage a situation.
- Suggestions for procedures that respond to strategies employed by the Watchtower Society (WTS).
- Information that should be considered when formal Procedures and Laws are formulated or reviewed.

WEB SITE REFERENCES IN THE *GUIDE*

References to web sites appear throughout this *Guide*. These sites provide additional information and the reader should consult them. Supplying references to web sites reduces the amount of secondary material contained within the *Guide* and allows the reader to select topics for further study.

This does not mean that a referenced web site endorses everything contained within this *Guide*. Nor does this mean that this *Guide* endorses everything contained on the referenced web site. The Reader must exercise due caution.

STRUCTURE OF THE *GUIDE*

UNDERSTANDING THE JW'S ENVIRONMENT

Key strategies employed by the WTS

- Theocracy
- Theocratic War Strategy
- Marking, disfellowshipping and shunning
- Patient confidentiality can be broken
- Past decisions create present dilemmas
- Management of prepared documentation

HANDLING THE SITUATION

Responding to the WTS's strategies

- Relating with a Hospital Liaison Committee
- A decision of conscience
- Practical considerations
- Real-life communications between a JW Elder and the WTS.

SECTIONS IN THE GUIDE ON “UNDERSTANDING THE JW’S ENVIRONMENT”

To enforce its directives, including its edicts concerning the medical use of blood, the WTS employs several complementary strategies. These directly impact every JW, and hence affect the effectiveness of any professional counseling. The WTS’s key strategies are outlined below and are described in the following Sections.

THEOCRACY (page 6)

The WTS tells its followers that it alone occupies the unique position of being God’s direct voice towards humankind. To doubt the WTS is to doubt God himself. The WTS says that *holy spirit* is an impersonal force available only to a select small group (“The Elect”) within their organization.

The WTS moved from a democracy to “theocracy” in 1938. The term *theocracy* means a “rule by God or by priests”. For the WTS, this means direct personal involvement by Jehovah God in the WTS’s operations, with a strictly enforced “top-down” control.

Being under theocratic control means a JW always defers to it, and will ignore any contradictory advice given by a person who represents another organization.

THEOCRATIC WAR STRATEGY (page 10)

To further its cause, the WTS invokes its *Theocratic War Strategy*. Under this practice, the WTS defines a “lie” as being an untruth that is told to a person who deserves to know the truth. Thus the nature of the recipient defines whether something said by the WTS is honest or not.

The WTS says that under this strategy it is perfectly acceptable for it to withhold information and to be evasive. The WTS practices this strategy towards other organizations, to protect itself from enquiry, and towards its own followers, to protect itself from searching questions.

MARKING, DISFELLOWSHIPING AND SHUNNING (page 14)

Since JWs are taught that salvation is possible only through the WTS, it is critical for a JW to remain within it, at any cost to themselves. To be cast outside the organization is to be damned, eternally lost, outside God’s kingdom rule.

The WTS employs an internal judicial system, involving their Elders, to determine the worthiness of a professed JW. When a professed JW is deemed no longer worthy of fellowshiping with the organization, the JW is “disfellowshipped”, without a public reason ever being provided.

Fears associated with such disfellowshipping and its consequences can adversely affect a JW’s autonomy in medical decision-making. Acceptance of certain medical procedures could easily threaten a JW’s future ability to be with family and close friends who are still within the religion.

It is not unknown for a JW to report to the Elders doubts being expressed within the home by their spouse. The Elders would conduct an enquiry, often in secret, make their decision and then announce to the congregation, without providing any reasons, that the JW had been disfellowshipped. Their decision means the expulsion and shunning of the doubting JW.

A Counselor must therefore be judicious when deciding whom they confide with. The patient should be told that the medical system will not reveal their decisions to anyone, not even to their spouse, without their explicit permission.

By far the most powerful deterrent to a wavering JW accepting blood in contradiction to the WTS's edicts is the organization's policy of "shunning".⁵

When a JW is removed from the organization, they are denied social contact with current members. While this may not impact within an ex-JW's direct family (spouse and children) in terms of legal relationship, spouses are required to avoid all spiritual interaction with their mate. Adult children living independently are taught to avoid any and all social interchange except for essential family business. The ex-member is treated as "dead" by all other believers, including their loved relations. All contact is broken, members walk on the other side of a road, there can be no greeting or acknowledgement. The effects of this organized shunning are powerful and life altering.

Because Witnesses' social life generally revolves around association with fellow believers, being shunned can isolate a member in a very powerful way. Being disfellowshipped can be devastating if everyone in a member's social circle participates in the shunning. Witnesses are expected to shun family members, except those living in the same household. ...

Once the person has moved out from home, shunning is generally practiced. The organization discourages association with disfellowshipped family members living outside the home.⁶

It is critically important for a Counselor to carefully understand the pressure that this teaching is likely to have on their efforts. But a Counselor has no right to initiate a discussion with a patient on the merits of the WTS's disfellowshipping process.

WTS: PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY CAN BE BROKEN (page 17)

Since the WTS considers it is the sole representative of God's government on earth, it says that its needs stand supreme over the laws of earthly governments. This is manifested through actions such as a JW not recognizing a country's head of state or its flag, nor do they vote.

With respect to laws pertaining to patient confidentiality, the WTS sees its need to know as surpassing any stated legal requirements. The organization wants patient information to enable it to exert pressure on JWs, who know their decisions are likely be reported to the Elders for their action. The WTS rationalizes that this illegal, unethical and immoral action is required in order to keep the congregation "clean" and "pure".

THE PAST CREATES PRESENT DILEMMAS (page 20)

The history of the WTS's handling of the medical use of blood casts a shadow forwards, helping to put the present into context, showing how previous pronouncements have resulted in today's decisions. The evolution of the WTS's stance has caused it the dilemmas it faces today.

MANAGEMENT OF PREPARED DOCUMENTATION (page 26)

The WTS is concerned that in the pressure of a medical environment, a JW might demonstrate disloyalty to its current teachings. To be confident that a JW will take the WTS's position, the WTS issues prepared forms to each baptized JW, declaring the bearer's convictions as set out by the WTS. These forms are issued, signed and witnessed within the group through a tightly controlled process.

When validated as directed by the WTS, the process may be seen as displaying a JW's loyalty to the organization. But given the carefully managed manner employed by the WTS to have forms validated, there could be serious doubts that a completed form truly represents a

⁵ "Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit" Watchtower 15 April 1988, pp 26 – 31

⁶ http://experts.about.com/e/p/pr/Practices_of_Jehovah's_Witnesses.htm

bearer's genuine convictions. For a medical service provider to consider a document or card to be valid, there must be no suggestion of duress, physical or otherwise, during the validation process.

SECTIONS IN THE *GUIDE* ON “HANDLING THE SITUATION”

RELATING WITH A HOSPITAL LIAISON COMMITTEE (page 31)

The WTS set up a system that enables any medical care provider to receive information directly from the WTS's *Hospital Information Services* (HIS) located at the organization's Headquarters. The interface with the medical care providers is provided by the WTS's *Hospital Liaison Committees* (HLC).

Armed with information provided in this *Guide*, medical and legal professionals are better able to operate a meaningful interface with HLCs that is in the best interest of their patient's well-being.

The community needs to ask itself if its cooperation with the WTS means the community is giving tacit approval to the WTS's methods, which are at best dubious, with some appearing to be illegal.

A DECISION OF CONSCIENCE (page 34)

The WTS has approved a number of products derived from blood, human and animal, that may be used in medical procedures. Many JW's find the list difficult to understand and apply. Additionally, the WTS tells JW's they are now able to exercise their conscience whether to accept a permitted blood-based product or not. When a JW does not comprehend the reasons, how well can they use their conscience to arrive at a decision?

The wisest choice is for a JW patient to heed the medical advice and not tell anyone of their decision or the doctor's actions.

Contrary to general expectations, many JW's are prepared to go against the strict teachings of the WTS. And the WTS is fully aware of this. Despite the enormous pressure on JW's to maintain validated “No blood” documents; despite the enormous pressure to be loyal to the organization; despite the fear of being disfellowshipped; despite the enormous consequences, there are JW's who question the WTS.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS (page 40)

Having described the environment that directly impacts a JW patient's wellbeing, the *Guide* considers practical aspects that administrators and legislators should address. Professionals need to have systems that take account of the WTS's strategies. Professionals focus on the welfare of the JW patient whereas the strategies of the WTS focus on protecting itself.

REAL-LIFE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN A JW ELDER AND THE WTS (page 44)

Generally, JW's do not express their doubts with WTS teachings, not even within the family circle. When a JW writes to the WTS to express their difficulties, the JW has thought long and carefully about the issues, but more importantly, about the possible consequences. It could mean the end of their association with lifelong friends and complete separation from their loved family.

Thus a series of communications between a JW Elder and the WTS provides a rare insight into issues raging in the minds of many JW's, as well as showing the WTS's Theocratic War Strategy in action.

THEOCRACY

A Counselor's work should be greatly assisted when they understand the Jehovah's Witness's (JW's) religious environment, since this impacts every decision a JW makes.

This does not mean that a Counselor should become involved in discussing the merits of the JW's religious system nor should they discuss the meaning or application of passages in the Bible. Rather, an understanding of the JW's religious environment helps a Counselor to better understand the difficulties a JW has in accepting guidance from a Counselor.

TWO SPIRITUAL CLASSES

There are two religious Classes:

- **The “Faithful and Discreet Slave (“FDS”) class”**

This Class numbers just 144,000, and includes worthy people from the past 2000 years. Today, only a small number claim to be members of this elite group. Virtually all are already in heaven, ruling the earth with Christ, on behalf of the Kingdom of God.

This Class is known variously as “Brothers (of Christ)”, “Little Flock”, “Elect”, “Anointed servant of Jehovah”, and so on. Only this Class is “born again of the spirit”, only this Class has the heavenly hope. Jesus Christ died for only these 144,000.

- **The millions of adherents**

These are the “Publishers”, known as Jehovah's Witnesses⁷ or more correctly as “Christian witnesses of Jehovah”, or simply “Christians”. These form the Class known as “The Great Crowd”.

They are not “born again”. Since Jesus did not die for this class and since they do not have “holy spirit”, it is incumbent on JWs to exercise unquestioning loyalty to anything the organization requires.

Their hope is to survive the imminent Armageddon and to live thereafter on earth, where they will exert authority over those who currently rule the earth.

THE GOVERNING BODY

The **Governing Body** (“GB”) is the sole representative on earth of the Kingdom's “Faithful and Discreet Slave” class that is already ruling in heaven.

The GB alone is responsible for passing on Jehovah God's instructions towards humankind. All doctrinal control thus lies with the GB.

The GB teaches that it is the only voice on earth through whom God's government (The Kingdom) speaks to mankind. All other governments and all other institutions belong to Satan, and must not be heeded.

THEOCRATIC RULE

The organization declares that in 1938 it moved from a democracy to a “theocracy” (a rule by god or by priests). Since that time, every JW must remain in step with all instructions coming down through the leadership.

⁷ Technically, the word “Witness” should be spelt with a small “w”.

Theocratic appointment permeates every part of the organization. It is directed from the top, from Jehovah God himself, down.⁸

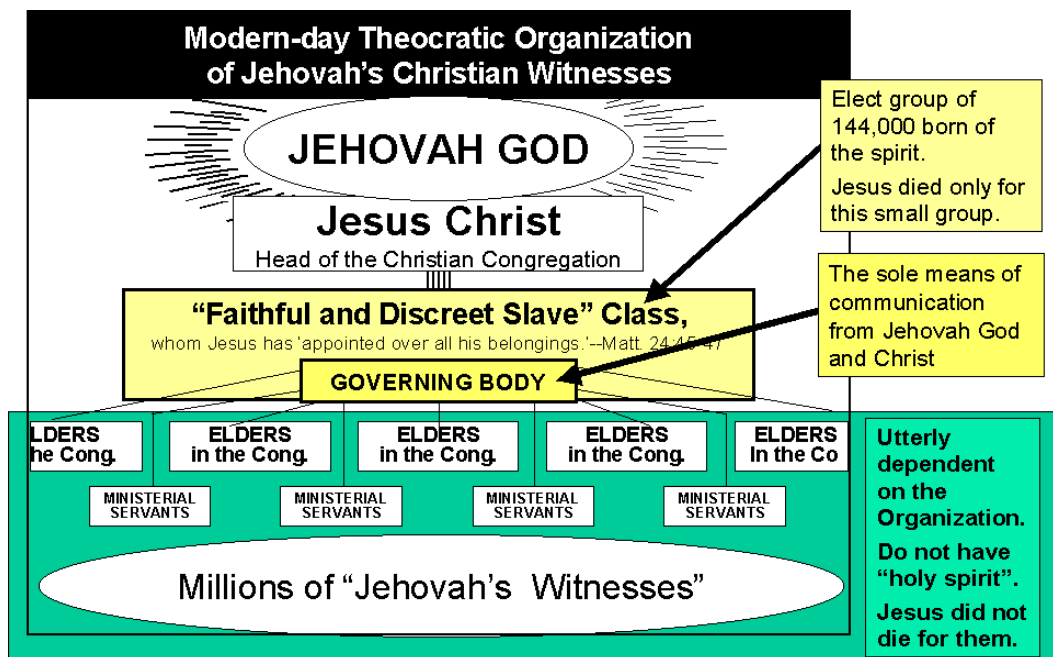
A JW may change step only when the leadership, the “Faithful and Discreet” slave class, changes its instructions.

The organization is interested in loyalty, the leadership decides what is truth. The organization employs several methods that are designed to ensure its requirements are complied with. Key methods are presented in this *Guide*.

THE WATCH TOWER SOCIETY

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (“WTS”) is the legal governing agency for Jehovah’s Witnesses. It is an agency for administering matters. The WTS produces the organization’s materials, prints and distributes Bibles and literature, trains people, provides buildings, arranges world-wide assemblies, and so on. The GB uses the WTS as an “administrative agency”, an instrument in behalf of the work of the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” (FDS) class.

The WTS includes an administration that is dedicated to work with JWs and the medical fraternity regarding the medical use of blood. The WTS produces the relevant documentation and the processes for implementing its stance. This *Guide* discusses the WTS’s roles concerning blood.



OBEDIENCE TO THE WTS’S TEACHINGS

A Jehovah’s Witness follows the adjustable teachings of the WTS because of **WHOM** the Governing Body claims to be, **REGARDLESS OF WHAT** it is currently teaching. In the words of the old Hymn: “Trust and Obey”, but in this case the objects are the Governing Body and the Watchtower Society.

The WTS instructs JWs that the organization is the sole voice on earth of God’s ruling Kingdom. The WTS’s expectation is simple – completely unquestioned loyalty to the

⁸ *The Watchtower*, June 15 1957, “Overseers of Jehovah’s People” page 371

⁹ Diagram is based on *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 749

organization is paramount. All other voices are of Satan’s kingdom, who “may appear as an angel of light”.

THE WTS DEMANDS STRICT UNITY AND COMPLETE TRUST

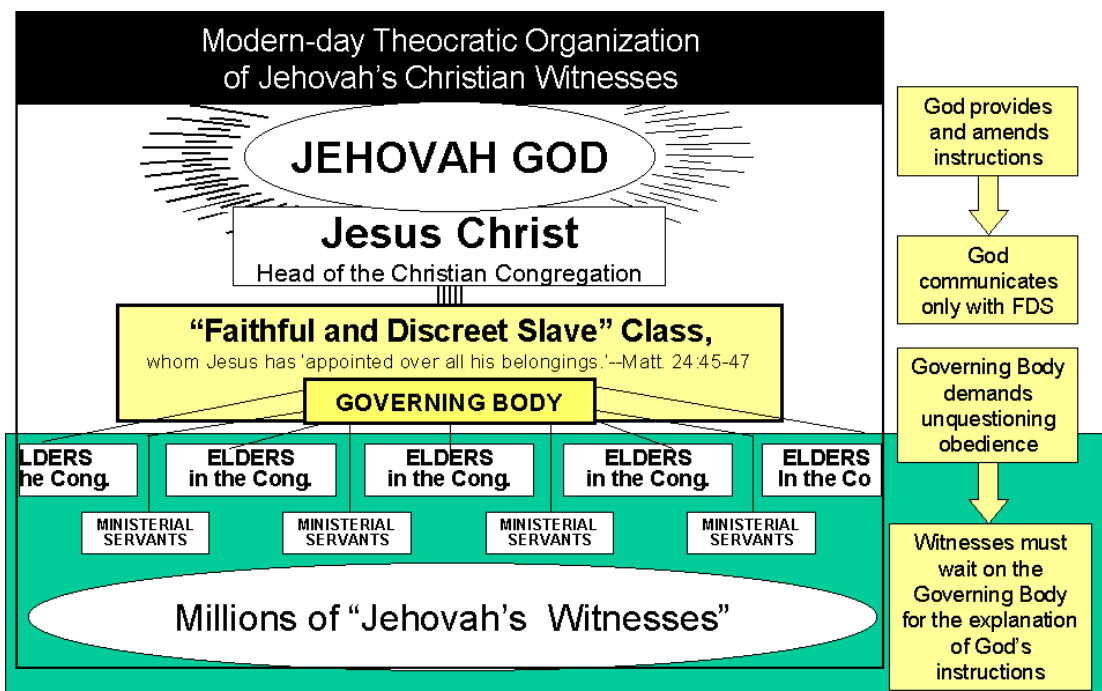
The WTS expects strictest unity. When the GB adjusts its thinking, God had decided to provide them with added light. Thus any alterations are not the fault of the Governing Body.

JWs are expected to accept such change without question, and to remain lock-stepped with the WTS, whatever the GB’s current teachings.¹⁰

Respect for Jehovah’s organization means to trust our proved, faithful brothers. These are the ones who through much hardship and experience have demonstrated that the spirit of God is with them. The rich blessing that has been poured out upon the visible organization is evidence that the governing body and those who represent it are deserving of our full support and trust. This we can demonstrate only by accepting every provision as coming from the Lord through the “faithful and discreet slave.”¹¹

Showing respect for Jehovah’s organization really resolves itself down to our attitude toward God’s visible channel and the trust that we place in our proved, faithful brothers.¹²

It is vital that we appreciate this fact and respond to the directions of the “slave” [*Governing Body*] as we would to the voice of God, because it is His provision.¹³



¹⁰ JW’s know the organization as *The Truth*, but it appears to be concerned with loyalty, rather than with absolute truth.

¹¹ *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1957, page 281 “Trust your proved, Faithful Brothers”

¹² *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1957, page 284 “Trust your proved, Faithful Brothers”

¹³ *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1957, page 370 “Overseers of Jehovah’s People: Jehovah’s Channel of Communication”

THE JW'S MOTHER AND GOD'S BELOVED WIFE

Through its *Watchtower* magazine, the WTS declares that the organization is “our mother and the beloved wife of our heavenly Father, Jehovah God”:

The great motherly organization of God arrayed with the heavenly light of truth and righteousness, walking in the pathway of divine light, with perfect organizational light brightening and adorning her mind, how happily we can exclaim: “This woman is the spouse of the universal King of whom it is written, “God is light,” and in her heavenly position she can worthily bring forth his royal heavenly creation.’¹⁴

With thankful hearts we acknowledge God’s mercy and gratefully and willingly show our respect for Jehovah’s organization, for she is our mother and the beloved wife of our heavenly Father, Jehovah God.¹⁵

¹⁴ *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1957, page 284 “Trust your proved, Faithful Brothers”

¹⁵ *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1957, page 285 “Trust your proved, Faithful Brothers”

THEOCRATIC WAR STRATEGY

THEOCRATIC WAR STRATEGY

When a person who is not a Jehovah's Witness (JW), such as a professional counselor, communicates with the Watchtower Society (WTS), they would naturally expect the WTS's representative to be completely open and frank with the truth. If that is the counselor's expectation, they have made a serious mistake.

The WTS's official policy is to hide the truth when this is in the organization's interests. This is termed "Theocratic War Strategy".

Theocratic war strategy, **hiding the truth** by action and word for the sake of the ministry.¹⁶

The WTS says it is legitimate for a Jehovah's Witness (JW) to withhold information when this protects the organization.

While malicious lying is definitely condemned in the Bible, **this does not mean that a person is under obligation to divulge truthful information** to people who are not entitled to it.¹⁷

This is not a slip, for the WTS repeats itself in another of its publications.

While malicious lying is wrong in Jehovah's eyes, a person is **not obligated to divulge truthful information** to people who are not entitled to it.¹⁸

The WTS says that for a statement to be a "lie" depends on who is receiving the information.

Lie: The opposite of truth. Lying generally involves **saying something false to a person who is entitled to know the truth** and doing so with the intent to deceive or to injure him or another person.¹⁹

Under its Theocratic War Strategy, the WTS says it is perfectly acceptable to "hide the truth", "misdirect", and "be evasive":

The talk "Cautious as Serpents Among Wolves" ... showed that the **Scriptures justify the "war strategy" of hiding true facts from the enemy.**²⁰

God's Word commands: "Speak truth each of you with his neighbor." (Eph. 4:25) This command, however, does not mean that we should tell everyone who asks us all he wants to know. We must tell the truth to one who is entitled to know, but if one is not so entitled **we may be evasive.** But we may not tell a falsehood. ...

As a soldier of Christ, [the JW] is in theocratic warfare and he must exercise added caution when dealing with God's foes. Thus the Scriptures show that for the purpose of protecting the interests of God's cause, it is **proper to hide the truth** from God's enemies. ...

¹⁶ "Use Theocratic War Strategy", *The Watchtower* May 1 1957, page 285

¹⁷ *Insight* (it-2), Vol 2, page 245, art. "Lie" (emphases provided)

¹⁸ *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1993, page 25 (emphases provided)

¹⁹ *Insight* (it-2), Vol 2, page 244, art. "Lie" (italics provided)

²⁰ "Assembly Realizations Exceed Anticipations" *The Watchtower*, May 15 1960, p. 295 (emphases supplied).

When faced with the alternative of speaking and betraying his brothers or not speaking and being held in contempt of court, the mature Christian will put the welfare of his brothers ahead of his own.²¹

Hiding the truth, which he is not entitled to know, from an enemy does not harm him, especially when he would use such information to harm others who are innocent. ...In time of spiritual warfare it **is proper to misdirect** the enemy by hiding the truth. ...

God's servants ... need to exercise the extreme caution of serpents so as to protect properly the interests of God's kingdom ... At all times they must be very careful not to divulge any information to the enemy that he could use to hamper the preaching work.²²

The above statement appears in the same issue of *The Watchtower* magazine that calls the organization "our mother and the beloved wife of our heavenly Father, Jehovah God".

CONTROLLING INFORMATION TO RESEARCHERS

"Theocratic War Strategy" includes managing information to researchers. In the following letter, the WTS issued official directions on handling inquiries from researchers, instructing that any attempt to contact individual JW's shall be prevented, in case the JW provided their own views and not those of the organization.

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers:

Recently, academic researchers who say that they are interested in conducting surveys of religious community activities have contacted the Elders of a number of congregations. Since there is a need to be careful about the nature of surveys and how such information will be used, we are providing direction for a qualified Elder representing the congregation to follow, provided your congregation is asked to participate in such a survey. Some of the points to have in mind are as follows: ...

If there are survey forms, it might be kindly explained that Jehovah's Witnesses have considerable information in their publications that would no doubt answer some of the questions they are asking. ...

This approach is far more advantageous in giving a witness and providing information than having various members of the congregation taking the time needed to fill out survey forms carefully and accurately. While in some instances we can cooperate with research projects including surveys—we certainly want to avoid having [JW's] expressing personal viewpoints that may not be in line with the Bible principles that really govern each [JW's] conduct and the united efforts of the brotherhood to carry out Jehovah's will.²³

This shows that the WTS knows individual JW's hold personal views that are not consistent with current Watchtower teachings. It also shows why answers from WTS representatives do not accurately depict the beliefs held by the population of individual Jehovah's Witnesses. These official representatives are trained to say what the WTS teaches, no matter what personal views are held by individual members.

²¹ "Questions from Readers", *The Watchtower* June 1 1960, page 351 (emphases supplied).

²² *The Watchtower*, May 1 1957, pages 285—286 (emphases supplied).

²³ Letter of April 25, 2001 from "The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses", Patterson, NY.

The WTS is acknowledging that an objective survey of beliefs obtained from firsthand, direct contact with individual JW's would reveal that seriously divergent beliefs are held, with many holding views that do not accord with official WTS teaching. Efforts by the WTS to have its own views accepted as representing the views of all JW's would be seriously undermined if such a research effort was documented.

In its January 2002 monthly leaflet outlining congregation meetings (the *Kingdom Ministry*), the Watchtower published the following announcement:

Researchers and others have contacted a number of brothers, seeking information about Jehovah's Witnesses and our organization. They have requested that survey forms be completed, supplying answers to questions related to our beliefs and teachings. If such individuals approach a congregation publisher, he should provide the name of the presiding overseer. The Elders can handle such inquiries and make an appropriate response based on a letter addressed to all bodies of Elders, dated April 25, 2001

THEOCRATIC WAR STRATEGY EMPLOYED IN WTS'S BOOKLETS ON BLOOD

In 1977, the WTS released its 64-page booklet *Jehovah's Witnesses and the Question of Blood* (QB). The booklet canvasses religious, biological, ethical, moral and medical issues.

A point-by-point analysis of QB in my publication *The Watchtower's Handling of Blood*²⁴ shows how the WTS employs its Theocratic War Strategy throughout its booklet. Analysis shows continual misquotations, misrepresentations, selective quotations, information being withheld, and verifiable evidences distorted. The analysis also shows that the WTS's interpretation of blood in Scripture is unsound and untenable.

In 1990, the WTS released a pamphlet "*How Can Blood Save Your Life?*" In a detailed analysis of that pamphlet in her article *Jehovah's Witnesses, Blood Transfusions, and the Tort of Misrepresentation*,²⁵ Kerry Louderback-Wood²⁶ came to the same conclusions:

The Society has grossly misrepresented (page 108) ... The Society twists writers' actual words out of context. (110) ... The Society omits (111) ... Create[s] a false impression (112) ... The Society fails to inform the reader (112) ... The Society omits the article's discussion (113) ... The Society distorts ... presents its followers with a misleading, myopic interpretation (117) ... (The Society) unfortunately does not tell its readers (118) ... The article cited [by the WTS] does not contain [the WTS's] proposition (120)... More telling, however, is the self-incriminating information that the Society omitted (page 124) ...

The pamphlet's most puzzling aspect is its scant discussion of the Society's allowing individual Witnesses personal decision to accept blood components, a policy in place for many years prior to its printing. (125)

The pamphlet appears intentionally ambiguous, if not contradictory, as blood components are never mentioned in its medical alternatives section, banned altogether in its legal section, yet inexplicably allowed in one statement near the end. (126)

²⁴ Available at no cost at au.geocities.com/doug_mason1940/blood.html

²⁵ *Journal Of Church And State*, Autumn 2005, Vol. 47, Baylor University

²⁶ A practicing attorney and a JW until her adulthood.

When taken together, the misrepresentations serve to warp the follower's mind regarding the actual medical and historical perspective. The Society deceives its followers. (125)

THEOCRATIC WAR STRATEGY EMPLOYED TOWARDS JWS

Since a JW should be entitled to know the truth, the WTS should not withhold anything from its followers, and should be completely open towards its own people.

However, correspondence between JW Elder Jensen and the WTS shows that the WTS does apply its War Strategy internally. Their correspondence is summarized later in this *Guide* and is provided in full at <http://www.jwtruth.com/articles/BloodJensenLettersText.aspx>.

“BAD NEWS” STORIES EMPLOYED

The WTS places added pressure on JWs, using only “bad news” stories about the medical use of blood and painting rosy pictures of treatments employing blood substitutes. The WTS never writes about the far greater risks when treatment with blood is refused. It glosses over the “bad news” stories when blood substitutes are employed.

The WTS provides JWs with a distorted, unbalanced account of the medical application of blood, which prevents JWs making informed decisions.

HALF-TRUTHS TOLD

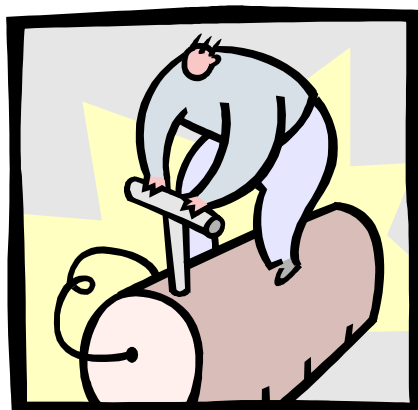
The WTS says that a JW's decision to refuse blood affects the quality of treatment they receive. While this may be true, it is only half the story.

[JWs] obey the Bible command to “keep abstaining from blood,” insisting on nonblood medical management. And this choice often results in a higher quality of treatment.²⁷

Since the refusal to accept blood means the outcomes for JWs is invariably made worse, medical managers have to raise the level of treatment being provided.

The WTS does not provide JWs with the statistical and medical reports, freely available on the www, that show the added burden and greater risks that are the outcome of its position on blood.

It is being evasive, withholding all the facts from their own followers.



²⁷ Awake! August 2006, page 12

MARKING, DISFELLOWSHIPING AND SHUNNING

The Watchtower Society's (WTS's) expelling practice is a most powerful tool for eliminating dissent. The Jehovah's Witness's (JWs) knowledge of the devastating impact of being expelled controls their words and decisions. This, in turn, hinders the work of counselors.

ELDERS MANAGE THE EXPELLING

The expelling process is managed by the Elders:

An individual who 'has committed serious sins' needs the attention of [the Elders]. ... Usually a committee of three Elders is designated to handle a case of grave wrongdoing.²⁸

It is not unknown for a family member to report dissent to the Elders, resulting in an enquiry and probable drastic action. This makes it quite difficult for JWs to discuss their concerns within the family home or from a hospital bed, even with their closest and dearest loved ones. A JW must therefore be very careful about what they say in front of the family group. The patient's Counselor must be very sensitive to this situation and act appropriately.

MARKING

Marking means that JWs minimize social involvement with a JW who is said by the Elders to be deviating from the WTS's teachings. The supposed intention is to shame that JW.

What if there is someone who is significantly deviating from God's principles? ... The Elders [try] to help him, but he [might] persist and may be affecting others in the congregation or presenting a danger to others. ... [JWs] might feel obliged to 'mark' the person. ... That would mean your curtailing social involvement with the "marked" person. ... You personally would avoid the company of the "marked" person. ... It is to be hoped that the "marked" individual will become ashamed. He may realize that ... you are avoiding his social company.²⁹

DISFELLOWSHIPING AND DISASSOCIATION

Being *disfellowshipped* or considered *disassociated* is totally soul-destroying for a JW. To be out of the organization's domain is to be cast out with the damned, into Satan's kingdom.

"Disfellowshipping" is what Jehovah's Witnesses appropriately call the expelling and subsequent shunning of ... an unrepentant wrongdoer.³⁰

In the latest iteration of its teachings on blood, the WTS no longer disfellowships a JW who conscientiously accepts the medical use of blood. Rather, says the WTS, the JW has *disassociated themselves* through their action. But the outcome is the same – the JW is no longer within the bounds of the only organization where God is actually and really present.

SHUNNING

The JW's greatest fear is the WTS's policy of "shunning". With this policy, JWs including friends, family and loved ones, are forbidden from making any contact or acknowledging a disfellowshipped ex-JW. The only JWs who may still communicate with an ex-member are their spouse and children while they are living in the same home.

²⁸ *Happy Are Those Whom God Corrects*, Watchtower September 1, 1981 pp. 21

²⁹ *Happy Are Those Whom God Corrects*, Watchtower September 1, 1981 pp. 20-21

³⁰ *Disfellowshipping—How to View It*, Watchtower September 15, 1981 pp. 22

[An ex-JW] can no longer converse with members of the [JW] congregation.³¹

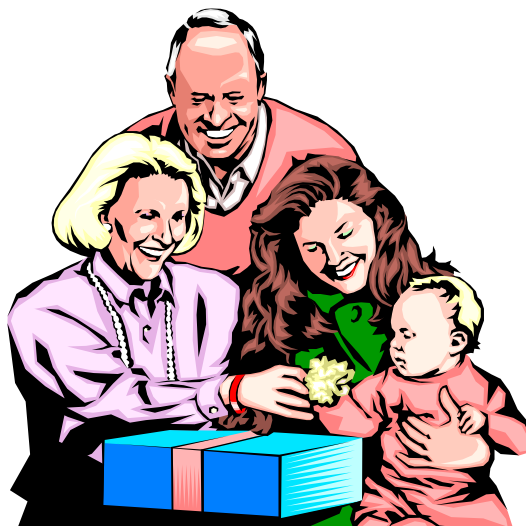
A person who disassociates themselves has the same experience – it is no longer possible to have any contact with JW's, even with their own relatives.

By **avoiding persons who have deliberately disassociated themselves**, Christians are protected from possible critical, unappreciative, or even apostate views.³²

ALL CONTACT IS DENIED

“Shunning” means all socialization is denied, even with close loved ones. This places an enormous pressure in a patient’s mind as they consider the likely consequences of their decision. The despair has led disfellowshipped JW's to suicide³³.

[The expelling process] rules out social fellowship, too, such as joining an expelled person in a picnic or party, ball game, trip to the beach or theater, or sitting down to a meal with him.³⁴



The WTS demands the complete breakdown of loving relationships within families

Because of the exclusive nature of the organization, the people within the congregation had been the ex-JW's only friends for many years. The prospect of being completely cast adrift and totally cut away is a mighty disincentive to disobedience in word or in deed.

A man who is **disfellowshipped or who disassociates himself** may still live at home with his [JW] wife and faithful children ... normal family affections and dealings can continue. The situation is different if the disfellowshipped or disassociated one is a relative living outside the immediate family circle and home. It might be possible to have almost no contact at all with the relative. ... This may be difficult because of

³¹ *Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit*, Watchtower April 15 1988, p 29

³² *Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit*, Watchtower April 15 1988, pp 27

³³ *Who Pays the Ferry Man* at <http://www.freeminds.org/psych/ferryman.htm>

³⁴ *Disfellowshipping—How to View It*, Watchtower September 15, 1981 p. 24. (For a detailed analysis of this *Watchtower* article see “Watchtower Destroys Families” at <http://www.escapefromwatchtower.com/shun.html>)

emotions and family ties, such as grandparents' love for their grandchildren.³⁵

The WTS requires its members to risk their lives on the operating table on the basis of its ability to apply Scripture. Even more, it demands the complete severance of loving relationships between parents and their children, between grandparents and their grandchildren, and so on, for the sake of the organization. The loyalty demanded by the WTS confronts a Counselor and places the JW patient under great stress.

NOT EVEN A SIMPLE "HELLO"

A woman ... was upset because former acquaintances would not converse with her after she chose to reject the [JW] faith. ...A wrongdoer ... can no longer converse with members of the [JW] congregation. [Disfellowshipped JWs are] totally cut off from loved ones and from close contact with the [JW] congregation.³⁶

A simple "Hello" to someone can be the first step that develops into a conversation and maybe even a friendship. Would we want to take that first step with a disfellowshipped person? ... If [a JW] will not cease to fellowship with [an] expelled person, he thus has made himself 'a sharer (supporting or participating) in the wicked works' and must be removed from the congregation, expelled.³⁷

EX-JWS FURIOUS

It is possible that the WTS disfellowshipped certain JWs for not following its teachings on the medical use of blood but in later years the WTS might alter its position and then agreed with those JWs. But this does not permit those who had been cast out to return. They had demonstrated *independent thought* and had *gone ahead* of the Governing Body, and it is this that is not acceptable. Loyalty is the key.

Previously disfellowshipped JWS are furious when their stance is later accepted. They have suffered the unnecessary heartbreak of shunning, and although the WTS might later agree with their dissent, the heartbreak continues.

³⁵ *Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit*, Watchtower April 15 1988, p 28

³⁶ *Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit*, Watchtower April 15 1988, p 29

³⁷ *Disfellowshipping—How to View It*, Watchtower September 15 1981, p. 25

WTS: PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY CAN BE BROKEN

LAWS PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY OF A PATIENT'S RECORDS

People demand that their personal information must be kept secure, and are accessible only to persons who are duly authorized. Generally, people are most sensitive about the security of their financial and medical records.

DILEMMA FACING A JW

Using a hypothetical person named Mary to represent any Jehovah's Witness³⁸ (JW), the Watchtower Society (WTS) illustrates the dilemma they might be faced with.

Mary works as a medical assistant at a hospital. One requirement she has to abide by in her work is confidentiality. She must keep documents and information pertaining to her work from going to unauthorized persons. Law codes in her state also regulate the disclosure of confidential information on patients.

One day Mary faced a dilemma. In processing medical records, she came upon information indicating that a patient, a fellow [JW], had submitted to an abortion³⁹. Did [Mary] have a Scriptural responsibility to expose this information to Elders in the congregation, even though it might lead to her losing her job, to her being sued, or to her employer's having legal problems? ...

When there seems to be serious wrongdoing, should a loyal [JW] ... reveal what he knows so that the apparent sinner can receive help and the congregation's purity be preserved?⁴⁰

INDEPENDENT ADVICE

The following advice was obtained in response to an enquiry regarding release of a patient's medical record without the knowledge or permission of that patient. The advice relates to the laws of Victoria, Australia as they stood in October 2006. The professional counselor is advised to obtain local advice.

It would be a breach of the Health Records Act 2001 for a medical service to disclose health information to a church elder without the consent of the patient/client of the health service. It would also be in breach of accepted professional ethics to disclose health information to a non-health service without the patient's consent except in very limited circumstances such as threat to life of the patient or other persons.⁴¹

JWS TOLD TO OBEY THE WTS RATHER THAN MAN'S LAWS

The WTS says the laws of the land are of an authority that is lesser than the authority of the WTS.

³⁸ Including a doctor or a member of a Hospital Liaison Committee

³⁹ *Abortion* is one offence that may cause a JW to be disfellowshipped. ("Practices of Jehovah's Witnesses at AllExperts" http://experts.about.com/e/p/pr/Practices_of_Jehovah's_Witnesses.htm)

⁴⁰ *A Time to Speak—When?* Watchtower September 1 1987, p. 12 (emphases supplied)

⁴¹ Email dated 17 October 2006 from the Office of the Health Services Commissioner, a statutory authority of the Government of Victoria, Australia.

There may be times when a [JW] is obligated to bring a matter to the attention of the Elders. True, it is illegal in many countries to disclose to unauthorized ones what is found in private records. But if a [JW] feels ... he is facing a situation where the law of God required him to report what he knew despite the demands of lesser authorities, then that is a responsibility he accepts before Jehovah. There are times when a [JW] “must obey God as ruler rather than men.”⁴²

Thus the WTS says that the need for Elders to know a patient’s confidential medical record is far greater than man’s laws that prohibit such access. In some ironic way, this highly immoral and unethical action is said to keep the congregation “pure” and “clean”.

While oaths or solemn promises should never be taken lightly, there may be times when promises required by men are in conflict with the requirement that we render exclusive devotion to our God. When someone commits a serious sin, he, in effect, comes under a ‘public curse’ from the One wronged, Jehovah God. All who become part of the [JW] congregation put themselves under “oath” to keep the congregation clean, both by what they do personally and by the way they help others to remain clean.⁴³

WTS SAYS ITS REQUIREMENTS CARRY MORE WEIGHT

Even though unauthorized disclosure of personal medical records is illegal, the Watchtower Society (WTS) sees its need to access these personal records as being more important than any laws.

Mary was somewhat apprehensive about the legal aspects but felt that in this situation Bible principles should carry more weight than the requirement that she protect the privacy of the medical records. ... So Mary ... decided conscientiously that this was a time to “speak,” not to “keep quiet.” ... Mary was somewhat apprehensive about the legal aspects but felt that in this situation Bible principles should carry more weight than the requirement that she protect the privacy of the medical records.⁴⁴

WTS’S LAW IS SUPREME OVER EMPLOYER’S RIGHTS

The WTS is fully aware of what an employer rightfully expects of its employees. There is no doubt how the WTS acts when it suspects one of its own is revealing “confidential information”. It even disfellowships (discharges from membership) a JW for having a meal with an ex-JW.

Employers have a right to expect that their [JW] employees will ‘exhibit good fidelity to the full,’ including observing rules on confidentiality. ... And where the law reinforces a requirement on confidentiality, the matter becomes still more serious. Hence, before a [JW] takes an oath or puts himself under a confidentiality restriction, whether in connection with employment or otherwise, it would be wise to determine to the extent possible what problems this may produce because of any conflict with

⁴² *A Time to Speak—When?* Watchtower September 1 1987, p. 13 (emphases supplied)

⁴³ *A Time to Speak—When?* Watchtower September 1 1987, p. 13 (emphases supplied)

⁴⁴ *A Time to Speak—When?* Watchtower September 1 1987, p. 14 (emphases supplied)

Bible requirements. ... We cannot ignore Caesar's law or the seriousness of an oath, but Jehovah's law is supreme.⁴⁵

JW DOCTORS AND LAWYERS MUST REPORT TO THE ELDERS

The WTS says that JWs, including doctors and lawyers, are obliged to break privacy laws and pass personal information to the Elders.

Anticipating the problem, some [JWs] who are lawyers, doctors, accountants, and so forth, have prepared guidelines in writing and have asked brothers who may consult them to read these over before revealing anything confidential. Thus an understanding is required in advance that if serious wrongdoing comes to light, the wrongdoer would be encouraged to go to the Elders in his congregation about the matter. It would be understood that if he did not do so, the counselor would feel an obligation to go to the Elders himself.⁴⁶

WTS LAW KEEPS THE CONGREGATION "CLEAN"

The WTS says a JW might decide to "breach the requirements of confidentiality" in order to keep the congregation clean.

There may be occasions when a faithful servant of God is motivated by his personal convictions, based on his knowledge of God's Word, to strain or even breach the requirements of confidentiality because of the superior demands of divine law. Courage and discretion would be needed. The objective would not be to spy on another's freedom but to help erring ones and to keep the [JW] congregation clean.⁴⁷

Since the Elders do not provide the congregation with the reasons for a JW being disfellowshipped, the rest of the congregation never knows the nature of a misdemeanor, so its cleanliness would remain unsullied. This shows that by "keep the congregation clean" the WTS actually means *disfellowshipping*⁴⁸.

IMPACT ON A JW PATIENT'S DECISIONS

JWs fear being disfellowshipped, in particular the element of *shunning*. A JW patient would normally be aware that fellow JWs, even their loved ones, are likely to report their actions to the local Elders. This would likely affect their decision concerning the medical use of blood.

To ensure a JW patient receives the care and treatment that is in their best interest, the patient needs to know they can make their decision confident that the medical care facility has systems in place to ensure their decision concerning the medical use of blood will never be available to another JW.

⁴⁵ *A Time to Speak—When?* Watchtower September 1 1987, pp. 14 – 15 (emphases supplied)

⁴⁶ *A Time to Speak—When?* Watchtower September 1 1987, p. 15 (emphases supplied)

⁴⁷ *A Time to Speak—When?* Watchtower September 1 1987, p. 15 (emphases supplied)

⁴⁸ Disfellowshipping is discussed in the following Section of this *Guide*.

PAST DECISIONS CREATE PRESENT DILEMMAS

THE WTS'S MEDICAL HISTORY

History has a habit of casting its long shadow forward, helping us to understand the present. For a large part of its history, the Watchtower Society (WTS) has been decidedly anti-science.

In the field of medical science, the WTS has notably been against vaccinations and blood. The record of the WTS's medical pronouncements is readily available at several sites on the www, including:

<http://ajwrb.org>

<http://www.seanet.com/~raines/quackery.html>

http://www.watchtowerinformationservice.org/index.php/watchtower_quotes/medical-science/vaccination

<http://www.quotes-watchtower.co.uk/blood.html>

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/witness6.htm>

WTS'S BAN ON BLOOD ORIGINALLY TOTAL

When the Watchtower Society (WTS) initially developed its ban on the transfusion of blood, its message was a simple: "no blood". Initially the WTS was consistent, since it also refused vaccinations, which may be sourced from blood that was pooled and stored.

VACCINATIONS "VIRTUALLY UNAVOIDABLE"

For decades, the WTS conducted a sustained but ill-informed attack on vaccinations. It now tolerates vaccinations using blood even though they employ processes it finds unacceptable. The WTS finds vaccinations are "virtually unavoidable"⁴⁹, and leaves the decision whether to accept a vaccination containing blood to each JW's conscience.

Often, several liters of blood are removed from a horse each time it is bled⁵⁰, whereupon the red cells and plasma are separated and processed to produce the vaccine. The WTS does not approve of the steps taken in the production of such vaccines yet allows JWs to accept the final product.

WTS RESPONDS TO TRANSFUSIONS OF BLOOD COMPONENTS

With advances in medical technology, whole blood was rarely given. Rather, specific parts of blood were administered to address a patient's specific needs. The WTS responded, arbitrarily deciding there are four "major components" of blood (red cells, white cells, plasma and platelets) that cannot be transfused, alongside its ban on the transfusion of whole blood.

[JWs] reject all transfusions involving whole blood or the four primary blood components—red cells, plasma, white cells, and platelets. As for the various fractions derived from those components—and products that contain such fractions—the Bible does not comment on these. Therefore each Jehovah's Witness makes his own personal decision on such matters.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *The Watchtower* November 1 1961 p. 670, Questions from Readers. *The Watchtower* November 15 1964 p. 682, *Employment and Your Conscience*

⁵⁰ Usually every two or three months.

⁵¹ *Awake!*, August 2006, pp. 11-12.

Certainly, the Bible does not comment on the “various fractions derived from (red cells, plasma, white cells, and platelets)”. But where does the Bible comment on any part of blood?

WTS FORCED TO MAKE CONTINUAL AMENDMENTS

Medical science continues to extract an increasing number of products from blood. Once the WTS opened the gates to vaccinations using blood, the transfusion of some parts of blood, and to certain medical procedures, the WTS has had to continually amend its list of permissions. Some estimate the WTS has made over 200 such adjustments.

Official church publications show that the use of serum was prohibited by the church from 1964 to 1973, the use of clotting factors by hemophiliacs was prohibited until 1978 and the use of albumin was forbidden until 1981. ... The total reversal of the policy surrounding the use of hemoglobin in only 2 years ... raises further concerns about the ever-changing nature of the policy.⁵²

Details of the WTS’s policy changes and reversals are available at <http://ajwrb.org>.

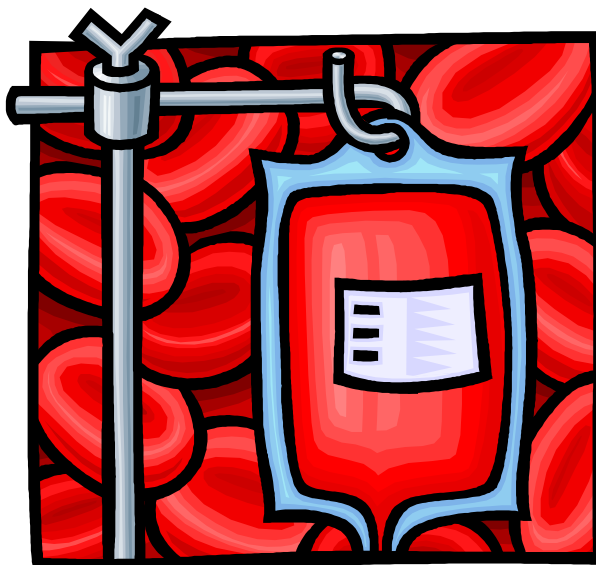
THE WTS DOES NOT HAVE A BLANKET BAN ON BLOOD

The WTS does not have a blanket ban on the medical use of blood or on every medical procedure that employs blood. It is not a “no blood” organization. For examples, see

ajwrb.org

<http://jehovahswitnessesandblood.quickseek.com>

<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1305593>



Jehovah’s Witnesses are allowed to accept some products made from blood

The WS permits a Jehovah’s Witness (JW) to at times use their own conscience, making this a most difficult position for JWs and for the providers of their medical needs.

⁵² Jehovah's Witnesses and artificial blood – Osamu Muramoto 164 (7): 969 -- Canadian Medical Association Journal at <http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/164/7/969-a>.

PRESENT DILEMMAS FOR THE WTS

Dilemma: WTS recognizes blood to be an organ

Initially, the WTS banned transfusions because they were a form of eating, which was banned by Scripture. Today, the WTS recognizes blood as an organ. So the WTS should recognize that a transfusion is a form of organ transplant, a process it accepts.

Blood is often likened to an organ of the body, “Blood is one of the many organs—incredibly wonderful and unique,” Dr. Bruce Lenex told *Awake!* Unique indeed! One textbook describes blood as “the only organ in the body that’s a fluid”.⁵³

Dilemma: Oral medications containing blood

It does not appear that the WTS has provided clear instructions regarding the use of oral medications that contains blood.⁵⁴ Here, the blood components may be swallowed.

Dilemma: Ongoing medical developments

The ongoing developments are causing a strain on the WTS’s reasoning. The WTS writes:

Within each red blood cell are some 300 million hemoglobin molecules. Hemoglobin represents about one third of the volume of a mature red cell. Each molecule contains the protein globin and a pigment called heme—which includes an iron atom. ...

Some manufacturers now process hemoglobin, releasing it from human or bovine red blood cells. The extracted hemoglobin is then filtered to remove impurities, chemically modified and purified, mixed with a solution, and packaged.

The end product—not yet approved for use in most lands—is called a hemoglobin-based oxygen carrier, or HBOC. Since the heme is responsible for the rich red color of blood, a unit of HBOC looks just like a unit of red blood cells, the primary component from which it is taken.

Unlike red blood cells, which must be refrigerated and discarded after a few weeks, the HBOC can be stored at room temperature and used months later. And since the cell membrane with its unique antigens is gone, severe reactions due to mismatched blood types pose no threat.

However, compared with other blood fractions, the HBOC presents more challenges to conscientious [JWs], who seek to obey God’s law on blood. Why? As long as the HBOC is derived from blood, there are two objections that may be raised.

- One, the HBOC carries out the key function of a primary component of blood, the red cells.
- Two, hemoglobin, from which the HBOC is derived, makes up a significant portion of that component.

⁵³ Awake! August 2006, page 3

⁵⁴ Such a list is being compiled at *NoBlood Guide to Medicines Containing Blood Components and Fractions* at <http://www.noblood.org/community/3225-noblood-guidelines-to-medicines-containing-blood-components-fractions.html>

Regarding this and similar products, then, [JWs] face a very serious decision.

They must carefully and prayerfully meditate on Bible principles concerning the sacredness of blood. With a keen desire to maintain a good relationship with Jehovah, each must be guided by his Bible-trained conscience.—Galatians 6:5.⁵⁵

GALATIANS 6:5 IS AN ILLUMINATING REFERENCE

The WTS's reference to Galatians 6:5 at the conclusion of the above piece is illuminating.

In its methodology, the WTS first presents its conclusion and then it refers to Scripture. It is not starting with Scripture to arrive at a conclusion.

The way the citation is presented at the end of the article could be understood as saying that Galatians 6:5 refers to the whole of the article. But that is not the intent, and the context in Galatians has nothing to do with blood. The words in Galatians 6:5 (in the WTS's own translation it reads: *for each one will carry his own load*), shows that the WTS is relating Galatians 6:5 to only the final words of the article: "each must be guided by his Bible-trained conscience".

The WTS does not write "guided by his conscience"; instead, it writes "Bible-trained conscience". Thus when the WTS demands that a JW be allowed to exercise their conscience, it appears the WTS really means "to exercise their conscience as it has been molded by the WTS's teachings". A JW may exercise their conscience only on those parts of blood that the WTS allows. That is not a true exercise of conscience. A JW's conscience is constrained by the training the WTS has provided.

The direct context of Galatians 6:5 reads (NIV):

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load.⁵⁶

Thus these final words do not carry the intent suggested by the WTS.

The purpose of the letter to the Galatians shows why apostle Paul used the expression "law of Christ" in the context of Galatians 6:5. Paul wrote his letter to counter people at Galatia who were demanding obedience to the Law of Moses. In their case, the issue was the rite of circumcision. The WTS requires JWs to obey the Law of Moses, such as in Leviticus.

This is not the place for a detailed study, but the following is one typical passage in Galatians:

I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.⁵⁷

What Paul says regarding circumcision is relevant also to the laws concerning blood.

⁵⁵ Awake!, August 2006, page 11 (emphases supplied)

⁵⁶ Galatians 6:2 – 5 (NIV)

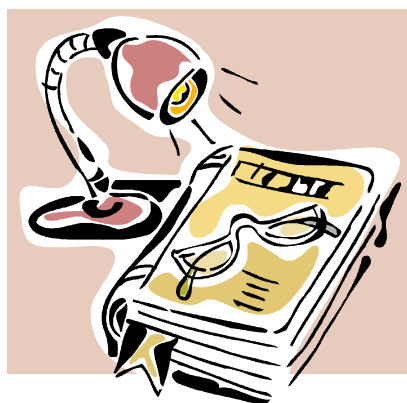
⁵⁷ Galatians 5:3 – 6 (NIV)

WTS'S SCRIPTURAL ERROR CONCERNING "BLOOD"

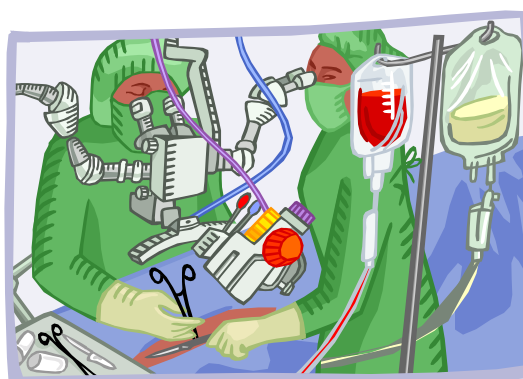
When Noah was instructed to remove all of the blood from an animal before he was allowed to eat it, the display of the blood demonstrated that the beast was dead. Throughout all of the Scriptures, the word "blood" invariably means "death".

When the meeting recorded at Acts 15:29 and Acts 21:25 speaks of "blood", the word means "murder" not "food", as the corresponding passage in Ezekiel 33:25 – 26 confirms.⁵⁸

In a blood transfusion, the blood does not represent the death of its previous owner. Neither is it from an animal that God permitted to be eaten.⁵⁹



Throughout Scripture, the word "Blood" always means "Death"



In a transfusion, the blood *never* requires the donor to die

WTS INCONSISTENCIES

Some of the WTS's decisions appear neither logical nor rational. This is particularly evident with its preparedness to allow some blood fractions, many of which are produced using processes that the WTS does not tolerate, yet it denies the use of other blood fractions. JW's rightly ask: "When is blood no longer blood?"

While forbidding the transfusion of blood and "major" blood components, the Society has long allowed the consumption of such "minor" blood components as albumin and immunoglobulins; these components are permissible because blood is thus used in "small quantities" (*Awake!*, June 22, 1982, pp. 25-27). This policy is contradictory. Dr. Lowell Dixon, former staff physician for the Brooklyn headquarters, explains, "If a person needs a particular blood element to save his life then that element is a 'major' one for him" (quoted in *In Search of Christian Freedom*, p. 287).

A further inconsistency in the doctrine can be found in the allowance of the minor components. A person suffering from third degree burns over forty percent of her body would need to receive approximately 600 grams of albumin. In order to extract this amount of albumin, from eleven to sixteen quarts of blood would be needed; this is certainly not a "small quantity" of blood (*In Search of Christian Freedom*, p. 290). Similarly, extracting the immunoglobulins needed for a single cholera vaccination requires over three quarts of blood (*Ibid.*).

Witness hemophiliacs are allowed to take preparations that include Factor VIII, a blood component that assists in clotting (*Watchtower*, June 15,

⁵⁸ See "The Meaning of the Word 'Blood' in Scripture, Rev. A. M. Stibbs, available for download at http://au.geocities.com/doug_mason1940/blood.html

⁵⁹ Genesis 9:6

1978, pp. 30–31). The amount of blood required to extract enough Factor VIII for a hemophiliac to live 16.5 years is over 100,000 quarts (*In Search of Christian Freedom*, p. 290). Interestingly, while Witness hemophiliacs are allowed to take preparations with Factor VIII, a non-hemophiliac who is involved in an accident may not take this clotting agent (*Comments from the Friends*, Winter 1994, p. 4). The rationale seems to be that hemophiliacs are only using a small amount of the blood component at one time, whereas an accident victim requires a large quantity of Factor VIII to increase clotting.⁶⁰

AN OBSERVER MIGHT NOT KNOW WHAT IS BEING TRANSFUSED

It might not be possible for an observer to know whether a blood product being provided to a JW patient is on the WTS's banned list or not. It is thus in the best interests of a JW patient and of their medical care providers for the patient and carers to keep the conscientious decision confidential.



Is the JW receiving a product permitted by the WTS?

CHANGES HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED BY JWS

The WTS's position on the medical use of is not static. It continues to change with developments in medical products and services. And it swings back and forth.

With each policy change, JWS have to follow them, strictly and without question. Followers are removed from the organization for failing to follow a teaching, only to find that a while later, the WTS changes its teachings to those of the people it had eliminated from the group. From that time on, all had to follow the new doctrine.

Since the WTS allows a JW to make a conscience decision over some products from blood, this could be seen as a means of the WTS organization distancing itself from a JW's final decision. This might be an attempt to reduce the likelihood of successful litigation against the WTS. But JW's are finding it increasingly difficult to wade through the technicalities associated with the WTS's various permissions and exclusions.

⁶⁰ *The Watchman Expositor: Jehovah's Witnesses - Blood and Bulgaria*, <http://www.watchman.org/jw/bloodbulgaria.htm>

MANAGEMENT OF PREPARED DOCUMENTATION

THE NEED FOR PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS

Medical science is able to keep a person alive while they are no longer competent to make decisions, such as following serious illness or injury, the effects of aging, mental incapacity, and so on. It is normally impossible to determine their wishes at that time regarding their ongoing treatment.

To cater for such eventualities, laws covering the provision of medical care services⁶¹ provide means for any person to specify their wishes beforehand, while they are still competent. State authorities often provide their requirements and their forms on-line, addressing issues such as resuscitation, intravenous feeding, and the like. Some have very specific requirements, and a counselor needs to be fully aware of these.

TYPES OF FORMS

Official forms are employed to indicate a person's wishes covering the delivery of medical services should they become too incapacitated in the future to make their wishes known.

- **Advance directives**

An Advance Directive instructs family members, medical providers and others about the medical and nursing care that the person wants when they are no longer competent to make their wishes known. An Advance Directive is completed and validated while a person is still able to give their instructions and must be completed before the directions are needed.

A "living will" is one type of advance directive. A living will gives specific or general instructions as to the kinds of care to provide or withhold, and the type of conditions in which it should apply. Some states have very specific requirements for a living will to be valid. The rules for signing an Advance Directive vary among the states.

- **Health care power of attorney**

A "health care power of attorney"⁶² is different from a living will, because it names one or more persons to make medical decisions for the signer in the event of incapacity.

While a "living will" gives instructions about care choices, a "health care power of attorney" empowers an individual to take actions on behalf of the patient such as: sign consents, discuss health care issues with the care team, and secure second medical opinions.

Some states formally recognize only one or the other kind of document, but most states expressly permit both kinds.

Some administrations combine the two documents into one. This allows a single signature to satisfy the formal requirements and ensures health care providers see all of the patient's instructions at the one time.

THE WTS'S ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

At the start of each calendar year, the Watchtower Society (WTS) issues its Advance Directive forms to its followers. Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) are told to complete the form at home and bring it back to a specified meeting where they sign it and have their signature witnessed by two members of the organization. The WTS has been doing this for many years

⁶¹ Most commonly, state governments are responsible.

⁶² Known variously as "Durable Power of Attorney", "Enduring Power of Attorney (Medical Treatment)" and similar.

(see, for example: *The Watchtower* of December 1, 1984 and the first issue of *Kingdom Ministry* for each calendar year).

Conducting the renewal annually can be seen as a means of constantly refreshing the WTS's stance in the mind of each JW. It can also be seen as providing the Elders with a means for checking JWs who remains loyal to the organization, with family and the congregation directly involved in the verification process.

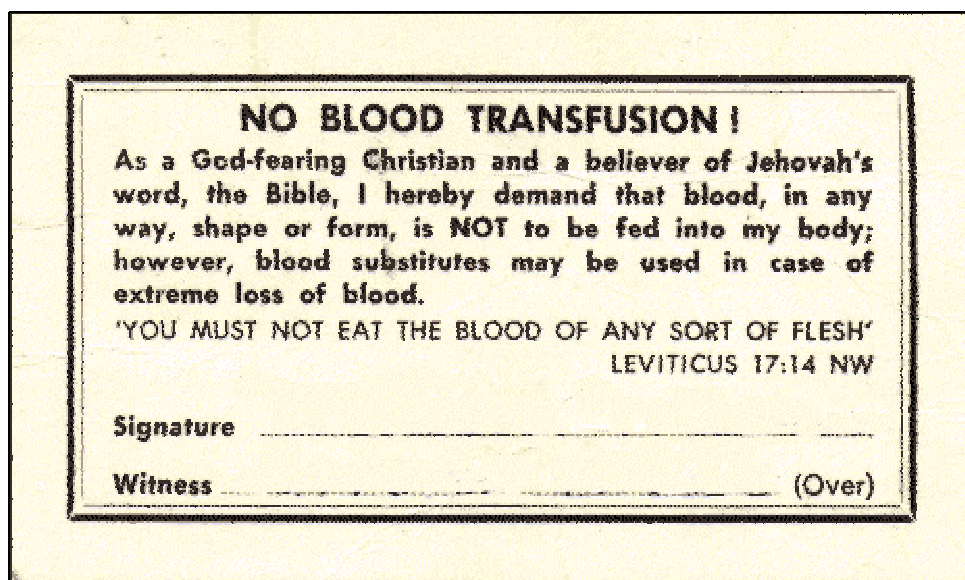
The WTS writes of its Advance Directive:

In the event that you are rendered unconscious in an emergency, the card will:

- Identify you as one of Jehovah's Witnesses
- Alert medical personnel to your refusal of blood
- Indicate that you have filled out a DPA form
- Identify your emergency contacts.⁶³

The identification of the bearer as a JW helps a medical care provider, since the JW's stance is known about by the general community.

The early cards completely eliminated all use of blood:




Early Advance Directive card

Changes in the WTS's stance are reflected in the later Advance Directives (see below). However, these do not state that some parts of blood may be administered.

The later Directives include a "Release" for medical staff from any future claims in respect of liability. This should not be necessary, since medical staff are bound by legislation to follow a patient's expressed requests.

⁶³ "LOVING PROVISIONS FOR OUR HEALTH CARE (Outline for Service Meeting part for the week of January 8, 2001)", page 1

| | |
|--|---|
| Allergic: _____ Current medications: _____ Medical problems: _____ <p style="text-align: center;">MEDICAL DIRECTIVE <small>(signed document inside)</small></p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-size: 1.5em;">NO BLOOD</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;">IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, PLEASE CONTACT:</p> Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Address: _____ <p style="text-align: center;">ALTERNATE CONTACT:</p> Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Address: _____ <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-size: 0.8em;">Open to signed document</p> |
|--|---|

ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE/RELEASE

I, _____, make this advance directive as a formal statement of my wishes. These instructions reflect my resolute and informed decision.

I direct that ***no blood transfusions*** (whole blood, red cells, white cells, platelets, or blood plasma) be given to me under any circumstances, even if physicians deem such necessary to preserve my life or health. I will accept nonblood volume expanders (such as dextran, saline or Ringer's solution, or hetastarch) and other nonblood management.

This legal directive is an exercise of my right to accept or to refuse medical treatment in accord with my deeply held values and convictions. I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I make this directive out of obedience to commands in the Bible, such as: "Keep abstaining . . . from blood." (Acts 15:28, 29) This is, and has been, my unwavering religious stand for _____ years. I am _____ years old.

I also know that there are various dangers associated with blood transfusions. So I have decided to avoid such dangers and, instead, to accept whatever risks may seem to be involved in my choice of alternative nonblood management.

I release physicians, anesthesiologists, and hospitals and their personnel from liability for any damages that might be caused by my refusal of blood, despite their otherwise competent care.

I authorize the person(s) named on the reverse to see that my instructions set forth in this directive are upheld and to answer any questions about my absolute refusal of blood.

Signature

Address

Date

Telephone

Witness

Witness

and 3/99 Printed in U.S.A.

1999 Advance Directive

THE WTS'S DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

The WTS Legal Department has prepared a “Durable Power of Attorney” (DPA) to cope with the legislative requirements of each US state. The WTS's DPA provides for the nomination of the Agent and the features of a “Living Will”.

One source states it prefers a “Power of Attorney (Medical Treatment)” over the “No blood” card:

Promote the importance and advantages for Jehovah's Witnesses in appointing an Enduring Power of Attorney (Medical Treatment) rather than relying on a No Blood Card.⁶⁴

In the WTS's DPA, a JW is provided with options regarding the medical use of blood they are prepared to accept. Since the WTS permits some “fractions” of blood while denying the use of other fractions, and since the WTS permits some procedures that employ the use of blood while denying other procedures, the average JW finds it difficult to complete the form intelligently.⁶⁵

The WTS is constantly redefining its position⁶⁶ and is telling JW's to exercise their consciences. Since JW's find it difficult to comprehend the medical technicalities, let alone be able to follow the WTS's permissions and exclusions, most find it difficult to complete the form. Their difficulties could result in a JW unnecessarily nominating the exclusion of all blood and procedures, or in a JW not completing a form.

Of their Durable Power of Attorney (DPA), the WTS writes:

These new DPA forms are based on state statutes that hospitals and doctors should be familiar with.

In addition to clearly expressing your refusal of donor blood, the DPA contains additional information that is not included on the Advance Medical Directive/Release card. For example, it communicates your decisions regarding:

- Medical products containing blood fractions
- Medical procedures, such as hemodilution, cell salvage, and tagging
- End-of-life decisions
- Appointment of an agent to make health-care decisions consistent with your values if you lose decision-making capacity.⁶⁷

The WTS's DPA is thus an amalgam of a “living will” and “power of attorney (medical care)”.

⁶⁴ *Jehovah's Witnesses and Blood Transfusions*, OPA Practice Guidelines, page 7-4, Office of the Public Advocate, www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au

⁶⁵ Online discussions involving Jehovah's Witnesses, as at <http://www.noblood.org/ask-professional/2861-advance-medical-directive-jehovahs-witnesses.html> show difficulties they experience with the documentation

⁶⁶ *The Watchtower Society redefines the guidelines for use of blood products*, Osamu Muramoto, M.D. <http://www.jwic.com/wt-blood-6-15-04.htm>
Also *Recent developments in medical care of Jehovah's Witnesses*, O Muramoto, Western Journal of Medicine, Vol 170, May 1999, pages 297 – 301, at www.jwic.com/wjm-1999.htm and <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1305593>

⁶⁷ “LOVING PROVISIONS FOR OUR HEALTH CARE (Outline for Service Meeting part for the week of January 8, 2001)”, page 1

COMPARISON OF POWERS OF ATTORNEY

Appendix 4 provides the WTS's Durable Power of Attorney for Alabama, USA. This is provided to indicate the type of information contained in a WTS document. The professional Counselor should compare this with their local requirements. If possible, the Counselor should obtain the document produced by the WTS to cover JWs in their State.

THERE MUST BE NO SUGGESTION OF DURESS

When a "No-blood" card or a Power of Attorney is presented, there must be no indication of duress in its preparation or during its submission. This is shown in the following example from a government instrumentality.

The absence of a No Blood Card does not establish that the person is not a Jehovah's Witness, nor does it establish that they are eligible to receive a blood transfusion or blood products. However, the card, without any evidence to suggest that the card is not current or that the person has changed their mind, is a legitimate expression of the patient's wishes. In some cases there may be a card which is not current (dated more than a year earlier). If the holder has subsequently lost capacity, the card represents an indication of the person's wishes prior to becoming disabled. This is also the case when a person without capacity has signed a card, **unless there is a suggestion that the card has been signed under duress.**

The case of Malette in the Supreme Court of Ontario explored the legitimacy of a No Blood Card as an instruction to the health service and doctor, and found that **an undated and unwitnessed card signed by the patient was an appropriate and bona fide instruction** and refusal of medical treatment. There are no Australian cases providing legal authority on these issues. It is presumed the same interpretation may well apply in Victoria, unless there is clear evidence that the patient had changed their mind, cancelled the card, or arrived at a different decision with respect to blood transfusions.⁶⁸

Does the method used for the annual renewal of the "No blood" card constitute a form of duress?

CHANGING ONE'S MIND

It is perfectly legal for a patient to change their mind and to cancel their Power of Attorney. Each administration has its own procedures for doing this.

ROLE OF A MEDICAL AGENT

The term *Medical Agent* is used here to identify the person assigned by a Power of Attorney as the patient's representative. Ensure that all who are involved clearly understand how the role of a Medical Agent is defined in local legislation and by authorized procedures.

⁶⁸ *Jehovah's Witnesses and Blood Transfusions*, OPA Practice Guidelines, page 7-2, Office of the Public Advocate, www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au.

RELATING WITH A HOSPITAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

SYSTEMS SET UP TO MANAGE INCREASING COMPLEXITIES

To help manage the increasingly complex situation, the Watchtower Society (WTS) created *Hospital Information Service* (HIS) at its Headquarters. Thus answers and advice should be readily available.

As the next quite natural step, the WTS created *Hospital Liaison Committees* (HLC) to act as conduits between a medical service provider and the WTS.

All too few doctors realize that Jehovah's Witnesses are not against medical treatment and that their stand on blood is both nonnegotiable and firmly rooted in Scriptural law. ... How can Jehovah's Witnesses get this information across to the medical community?

To that end, the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses directed the establishing of hospital liaison committees in major cities with large medical institutions ... forming a bridge between the medical world and the Witnesses. ... The purpose was threefold:

- hold seminars to train preselected Witness ministers for hospital liaison committee work,
- train branch personnel to manage a Hospital Information Services desk in each branch, and
- visit hospitals and doctors so as to encourage continued and expanded treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses without using blood.⁶⁹

Online, the WTS provides these reasons for creating the HLCs.

- To support the Witnesses in their refusal to receive blood,
- to clear away misunderstandings on the part of doctors and hospitals, and
- to create a more cooperative spirit between medical institutions and Witness patients,

Hospital Liaison Committees were established by the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. ... From a handful of such committees in 1979, their number has now [1993] grown to 850 in 65 lands. That means that their helpful services are now available to some 3.5 million of Jehovah's Witnesses.

More than 4,500 Elders in congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses have been trained to speak with doctors ... In cases where there is some special need, appropriate articles are faxed directly to the hospital ... Or the committees arrange for consultation with other cooperative doctors.⁷⁰

Apparently reiterating material it obtained from an HLC, the Office of the Public Advocate, an independent statutory office accountable to the Parliament of Victoria, Australia, lists the functions of a Committee as:

⁶⁹ *Bridging the Gap Between Doctors and Witness Patients*, Awake!, 22 Nov 1990, p.21 (bullets added)

⁷⁰ http://www.watchtower.org/e/19931122/article_01.htm (bullets added)

1. Help Witnesses find cooperative doctors and surgeons prepared to treat them without using blood;
2. Be on hand for patients and their families in difficult situations;
3. Make available to doctors and hospitals articles from recognized professional journals on alternative non-blood medical management; and
4. Liaise with doctors, surgeons, and specialists to facilitate their joint consultation where appropriate.⁷¹

OPERATION OF AN HLC

An HLC only provides a service to Jehovah's Witnesses [JWs] in good standing and their children who are under "threat" of a blood transfusion. The HLC do not get involved in other situations.

The patient's information is passed on to the HLC by the Elders. The names of the members of an HLC are known only by the Elders, and are not provided to the congregation. Before deciding whether to call the HLC, the Elders must know the full details of the JW patient's condition.

Listen long enough and ask enough questions to try to determine whether the HLC should be involved or not. For example, it is important to determine exactly what the medical problem is, such as leukemia, surgery for an aneurysm, open-heart surgery, etc. Ask if they know what the blood count of the patient is, since that information is often vital. If you are going to follow through and call the HLC, be sure to obtain the name and phone number of the [JW] so that you can give them to the HLC.⁷²

The HLC becomes active in the treatment that a doctor is trying to provide. Writing to the Elders, the WTS says:

If in some critical emergency situation the HLC asks you to stay with the patient in the hospital because the doctors are threatening to give blood, do your best to cooperate. You may have to organize other elders and mature ones to assist you so that you always have someone present until the patient stabilizes and the threat of a blood transfusion has been eliminated.⁷³

THE OPERATING CONTEXT OF HLCs

The JWs in an HLC know that their eternal future depends on continuing unquestioned allegiance to the WTS and its Governing Body (GB). (See "Theocracy" earlier in this *Guide*.)

Their first allegiance is to the WTS, who operate under its *Theocratic War Strategy*, where it is perfectly legitimate to withhold information, to not tell the truth when they deem the recipient is not worthy of receiving it, and to be evasive. (See "Theocratic War Strategy" earlier in this *Guide*.)

Their first allegiance is to the WTS, who says it is perfectly acceptable for a patient's confidential information to be passed on to the Elders, even when this is in defiance of a nation's laws. (See "WTS: Patient confidentiality can be broken" earlier in this *Guide*.)

⁷¹ OPA Practice Guidelines, page 7-3, at www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au (review of June 2004)

⁷² Letter to All Bodies of Elders, May 1, 1992

⁷³ Letter to All Bodies of Elders, January 3, 1995

They have no medical training. They have total faith in the utterances of the WTS, which has been shown to be less than upright or forthright. (See Louderback-Wood under “Theocratic War Strategy” earlier in this *Guide*.)

The people of an HLC do not know when a change in WTS policy might occur, or the reasons. The instructions from the WTS are subject to change, even reversals.

An HLC’s understanding of the WTS’s current stance might be incorrect, with fatal consequences. In her article *Jehovah’s Witnesses, Blood Transfusions, and the Tort of Misrepresentation*, attorney Kerry Louderback-Wood writes:

Doctors warned [Kerry Louderback-Wood’s] mother that she was at great risk for heart failure because of her severe anaemia and low blood pressure, and recommended a blood transfusion. Her mother refused, and she suffered a fatal heart attack within 48 hours of that warning.

The doctors, hospital, relatives, and visiting members from the local congregation were not aware that the Society allowed followers to accept blood-derived hemoglobin, and thus did not offer it.

Instead, a relative ordered the hospital to administer an erythropoietin injection, relying on the Society’s literature which stated it worked “very quickly” to produce red blood cells. The doctors explained that this injection would not work as quickly as the relative thought.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ *Journal Of Church And State*, Autumn 2005, Vol. 47, page 118.

A DECISION OF CONSCIENCE

THE TYPICAL JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

It might be very difficult to understand how a person could accept the Watchtower Society's [WTS's] teaching on the medical use of blood, given its inconsistencies, mishandling of facts, doctrinal reversals, and so on.

A Jehovah's Witness [JW] accepts anything the WTS says, because it is God's only voice on earth. There is no other access to God.

The following analysis was written by a person who remained faithful to the WTS until her adulthood. She should know.

Witnesses Strongly Rely on Watchtower Literature

The Society nicknames its religion "the Truth" and its followers refer to each other as "Friends" who "study the Truth."

The Watchtower Society's books are read and discussed in church meetings in a "classroom" manner where the written material, presented by a speaker, is directly followed with written questions, orally answered by individual audience members upon raising their hands. Individual Witnesses interviewed by this author stated that they rely on the Society's literature because they "trust" the Society to give them good information, as the Society "stays on top of things" and "is so well read."

Individual Witnesses often demonstrate lack of ability to critically analyze, which may correspond to the average follower's lack of advanced education. One study found that "[of] thirty groups surveyed, Witnesses ranked last in education —only 4.7 percent have college degrees as compared to 49.5 percent of Unitarians and 46.7 percent of Jews."

The Society does not ban its members from reading outside, general literature or news articles, but it strongly steers its followers away from material that questions the religion.

The Society warns its followers to "avoid independent thinking ... [including] questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organization [the Society]." The Society deeply believes that they are the only religion on earth today that God is directing.

The average follower's lack of higher education, combined with the classroom atmosphere and loyal adherence to the Society's literature seem to be compelling reasons why the Society has a duty to not misrepresent or omit facts, especially when the religious belief to be followed concerns potentially life-threatening decisions.⁷⁵

A DEGREE OF CONSCIENCE PERMITTED

In June 2000, the WTS described the degree of conscience it permits [JWs] regarding the medical use of blood.

⁷⁵ *Jehovah's Witnesses, Blood Transfusions, and the Tort of Misrepresentation* pages 105 – 107, by Kerry Louderback-Wood, in *Journal of Church and State*, Autumn 2005, Vol. 47, Baylor University

While the WTS places a total ban on whole blood and what it terms the “major components” of blood – red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma (serum) – it allows JW’s to make a decision of conscience on those parts of blood that are parts of those “major components”. This means that some JW’s might elect to accept some parts of blood while others might decide to reject all parts.

Today, most transfusions are not of whole blood but of one of its primary components: (1) red cells; (2) white cells; (3) platelets; (4) plasma (serum), the fluid part. ... Jehovah’s Witnesses hold that accepting whole blood or any of those four primary components violates God’s law. ...

Since blood can be processed beyond those primary components, questions arise about fractions derived from the primary blood components. ...

Plasma ... carries such proteins as albumin, clotting factors, and antibodies to fight diseases. Technicians isolate and use many plasma proteins. For example, clotting factor VIII has been given to hemophiliacs, who bleed easily. Or if someone is exposed to certain diseases, doctors might prescribe injections of gamma globulin, extracted from the blood plasma of people who already had immunity. Other plasma proteins are used medically. ...

Just as blood plasma can be a source of various fractions, the other primary components (red cells, white cells, platelets) can be processed to isolate smaller parts. For example, white blood cells may be a source of interferons and interleukins, used to treat some viral infections and cancers. Platelets can be processed to extract a wound-healing factor. And other medicines are coming along that involve (at least initially) extracts from blood components. Such therapies are not transfusions of those primary components; they usually involve parts or fractions thereof. **Should [JW’s] accept these fractions in medical treatment?** We cannot say. The Bible does not give details, **so a [JW] must make his own conscientious decision.** ...

Some would refuse anything derived from blood (even fractions intended to provide temporary passive immunity). **That is how they understand God’s command to ‘abstain from blood.’** ... Some [JW’s] reject such products, just as they reject transfusions of whole blood or of its four primary components. Their sincere, conscientious stand should be respected.

Other [JW’s] decide differently. They too refuse transfusions of whole blood, red cells, white cells, platelets, or plasma. **Yet, they might allow a physician to treat them with a fraction extracted from the primary components.** Even here there may be differences. One [JW] may accept a gamma globulin injection, but he may or may not agree to an injection containing something extracted from red or white cells. ...

Jehovah’s Witnesses **refuse transfusions of both whole blood and its primary blood components.** The Bible directs [JW’s] to ‘abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from fornication.’ (Acts 15:29) **Beyond that, when it comes to fractions of any of the primary components, each [JW], ... must conscientiously decide for himself.**⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The Watchtower, June 15, 2000, pp. 29 - 31

BENEFITING FROM A “CONSCIENCE” DECISION

The WTS permits the medical use of some products from blood and it leaves the decision to accept any permitted blood product to the conscience of the JW patient.

Since the patient is comfortable with their conscientious decision, and since it is personal, there should be no need for that patient, or their medical carers, to reveal that decision to anyone.

JW’S ACCEPT SOME BLOOD PRODUCTS

The WTS’s instructions have seen numbers of JWs prepared to accept blood. Writing in the area of obstetrics, a gynecologist concluded:

RESULTS: A total of 61 [JW] patients were identified. Of these, 39.3% agreed to accept a variety of donated blood products, 9.8% would accept donated packed red blood cells, and 50.1% would accept neither from a homologous donor.

With respect to nonstored autologous blood, 55% of respondents would accept either intraoperative normovolemic hemodilution or transfusion of their own blood obtained by a cell salvage system. ...

CONCLUSION: This review refutes the commonly held belief that all Jehovah’s Witnesses refuse to accept blood or any of its products. In this population of pregnant women, the majority were willing to accept some form of blood or blood products.

This information can be used to help health care providers counsel a patient when she is initially faced with considering these issues and may help to remove the stigma of accepting one of the options.⁷⁷

This article does not show whether the accepted blood products were permitted by the WTS or not. A far better statistical model is required. The article does show, however, there are JWs who are comfortable with accepting blood products.

A RANGE OF CONVICTION

Within any faith there is a range of adherence to the stated precepts of the religion by the members. No person is wholly defined by their membership of a church and membership of the Jehovah's Witnesses should be considered as only one, albeit important, influence in forming a person's views. Verification of a person’s adherence to the faith, especially in circumstances where there is no available card, requires investigation and verification. In cases where there is dispute or disagreement as to the person’s commitment to the faith and their opposition to blood transfusions, an application for guardianship should be made when the person has a cognitive disability.⁷⁸

JWS WRITE TO THE WTS EXPRESSING THEIR CONCERNS

Over the years, JWs have written to the WTS to express their difficulties with the organization’s policy on the medical use of blood. When JWs write, the WTS exhibits a low tolerance towards the writer. The first response from the WTS might be a polite: “We have

⁷⁷ *Obstet Gynecol* 2004; Vol 104, No 3:September 2005, pages 541–544. ©2004 by The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

⁷⁸ *Jehovah’s Witnesses and Blood Transfusions*, OPA Practice Guidelines, page 7-4, Office of the Public Advocate, www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au

heard you, and in the meantime you must continue following what the Governing Body has decided. Meanwhile you must wait". Never does the WTS involve itself in a proper debate in such correspondence.

The WTS does not initially discipline JW's directly when they write questions to the WTS regarding their position on blood. However, a persistent correspondent soon discovers the WTS employing its Theocratic War Strategy.

QUESTIONING JW'S ARE TOLD TO "WAIT"

JW's are advised by the organization that if they have difficulties with any of its teachings, they must "wait on Jehovah". This means that if Jehovah has similar difficulties with the organization, he will personally intervene in the organization, in due course. They must wait for him to personally intervene.

If we feel sure something is wrong we will 'keep the commandment' of our Father and take whatever theocratic steps are open to us and then wait on Jehovah. We will not 'forsake our mother's teaching' by immediately beginning to criticize and find fault. We will realize that Jehovah knows what is going on in his organization, and if he is willing to permit it, who are we to insist it should be different?

If we really have faith, we will know that if it is wrong he will straighten it out eventually, and we are far safer inside his organization even with these minor difficulties than we would be on the outside where only chaos and destruction await us.⁷⁹

RESPONDING TO A JW'S LETTER IN 1950

In the May 1, 1950 issue of *The Watchtower*, during the early stages of the no-blood policy, the WTS replied to a concerned JW's seven-page letter. The following indicates some of the problems being raised by JW's as early as 1950:

"Dear Madam: ...

Repeatedly we are confronted with requests⁸⁰ for information on blood transfusion, particularly for us to pronounce a sanction of this medical practice. ...

Our statements have not caused any more division of opinion upon the subject than existed before we said anything about it. It is only that we have made ourselves clear upon the matter, so that others in doubt as to our position will not be pleading with us to **sanction their resort** to this disputed medical practice. ...

So in this important regard you are absolutely wrong when **you say** that "God or Christ Jesus NEVER issued any commandment against HUMAN blood except the shedding of it in MURDER". ...

you also raise the question: "Since Jesus gave his blood for us, so that we might have life—eternal life, would it not be fitting, that we, his imitators, give our blood to a sick brother when he is nigh to death, so that he might recover and further serve his Lord?" ...

You say God's laws concerning the disposal of animal blood have no bearing upon the matter of blood transfusion. ...

⁷⁹ *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1957, page 284 "Trust your proved, Faithful Brothers"

⁸⁰ Emphases are supplied throughout this citation

You send us a clipping from the *Evening Bulletin*, Philadelphia, Friday, December 16, 1949, announcing “Rare Operation Saves Girl, 14” and telling of how this girl “had been built up by 17 blood transfusions” and telling of her discharge from the hospital. ...

It may be true, **as you say**, that one Roman Catholic pope banned blood transfusion.”

THE “JENSEN” LETTERS

JWs continue writing to the WTS to express their deep concerns with the organization’s teachings concerning the medical use of blood.

In February 1998, Elder R. Jensen of Alabama wrote to the WTS of New York, the JW’s main controlling body. The full text of their correspondence is available at <http://www.jwtruth.com/articles/BloodJensenLettersText.aspx> A synopsis and analysis of their correspondence appears later in this *Guide*.

The Jensen letters provide a case study, supporting assertions made in this Guide. They show the grave difficulties that the Elder has with the organization’s stance on blood, and his reasoning. In their letters, the WTS evades direct questions, fails to provide all of the relevant facts, does not give Scriptural reasons for its decisions, tells the Elder to “wait on the organization”, and so on. These are clear examples of its Theocratic War Strategy in action applied internally, and in the direct context of blood.

Throughout the years covered by the correspondence, Elder Jensen maintained his lifelong ongoing deep and sincere devotion to the organization. But he was so concerned with the teachings concerning the medical use of blood that he felt he had no option but to communicate directly with the controlling body.

The letters show that JW’s as high as Elders have grave reservations with the teachings and they provide substantial reasons for those concerns.

Although the JW Elder asked for scriptural and/or scientific reasons for the WTS’s stance, none was forthcoming. He was told to heed whatever the “faithful and discreet slave” class (Governing Body) said, and to wait.

The letters also show that the WTS permits the use of some constituents of blood while it denies the use of other constituents. Some decisions rely on a JW’s personal convictions, and the WTS did not provide Scriptural explanations to show which fractions were acceptable and which were not.⁸¹

CLAIMED EXPRESSION OF JW CONSCIENCE

The WTS’s Durable Power of Attorney apparently empowers a JW with decisions of conscience. Their choice however only extends to deciding whether to accept or reject which “fractions” the WTS permits a conscience decision on. The JW is not permitted a conscience decision on whether to accept those elements of blood and medical care that the WTS ostracizes.⁸² This is not a true exercise of a JW’s conscience.

⁸¹ The WTS starts with a teaching and then looks for Scripture for support of that teaching, rather than starting with Scripture, determining the principles and then extracting a teaching. (“The Society is using its doctrine to interpret the Bible, rather than using the Bible to inform its doctrine.”. <http://www.watchman.org/jw/bloodbulgaria.htm>)

⁸² *Bioethics of the refusal of blood by Jehovah’s Witnesses: part 3*, Osamu Muramoto, Journal of Medical Ethics; Dec99, Vol. 25 Issue 6, p463, 6p, <http://www.jwic.com/JME1999.htm> <http://www.jwic.com/JME1999.htm>. Also: *Medical Confidentiality and the protection of Jehovah’s Witnesses’ autonomous refusal of blood*, Osamu Muramoto, Journal of Medical Ethics, ©2000 British Medical Association

WTS'S INSTRUCTIONS NOT FOLLOWED BY EVERY JW

The annual renewal of the Advance Directive is a straightforward process. Being conducted each year ensures JWs are very familiar with the process and the content of the document. Nevertheless, a large proportion of JWs does not validate the form.

In a letter to "all bodies of [JW] Elders", the WTS (Desk HIA) wrote on December 1, 1993 concerning the *Advance Directive*:

Dear Brothers: A most serious situation was discovered this past summer at our "Divine Teaching" District conventions when brothers were asked to produce their Advance Medical Directive/Release card in order to obtain one of the new releases.

Some reports claim that more than 50 percent of the cards shown were either unsigned, not witnessed, or outdated. One card offered was dated 1981! ... hospital personnel could misinterpret this to mean that Witnesses are not serious or do not have strong convictions on the matter of abstaining from blood. ... (WTBTS of New York, Hospital Information Services)

Despite the enormous pressure on JWs to maintain validated "No blood" documents; despite the enormous pressure to be loyal to the organization; despite the fear of being disfellowshipped; despite the enormous consequences, significant numbers of JWs do not carry out the organization's instructions. In a letter written on December 1, 2000 to all "Elders in the United States", the WTS wrote:

Dear Brothers: ... Reports from the field indicate that only a small percentage of brothers have filled out the Society's DPA form. While many⁸³ are careful to fill out and consciously carry the Advance Medical Directive card, a much greater degree of legal protection is available when the DPA is carefully executed. ... Your brothers, (WTBTS of New York, Inc)

⁸³ Neither "most" nor "all", only "many".

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

ALWAYS FOLLOW LEGAL PROCEDURES

Always observe procedures that fully accord with the requirements of all locally applicable legislation. Be fully aware of all formal Guidelines and Procedures produced through government agencies that describe and support all relevant laws. Ensure all actions can be fully defended at law.

Ensure that any appointed Medical Agent carries out the most recent wishes of the patient, not their own. Be aware of the procedures to follow when it is thought the Medical Agent is not doing so.

Be fully aware of the legal situation when the patient is the child of a Jehovah's Witness (JW).

Determine whether the state administration accepts documentation such as a Durable Power of Attorney (DPA) prepared in another jurisdiction. Know how to access a DPA lodged with another jurisdiction.

MAINTAIN OBJECTIVITY

Never allow personal religious beliefs to impede the making and execution of a decision.⁸⁴ Do not enter into a discussion on the Watchtower Society's (WTS's) interpretation of Scripture. Only discuss the merits of the proposed treatment.

JWS DO DISOBEY THE WTS

Keep in mind that JWs are known to disobey the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's (WTS's) edicts concerning the medical use of blood. The official voice of the organization does not represent the views held by every JW.

Within any faith there is a range of adherence to the stated precepts of the religion by the members. No person is wholly defined by their membership of a church and membership of the Jehovah's Witnesses should be considered as only one, albeit important, influence in forming a person's views.⁸⁵

LIAISING WITH WTS REPRESENTATIVES

Providers of medical services should regularly update and maintain a register of the WTS's current permissions and exclusions, as issued formally by them. Always access official WTS information to ensure the latest pronouncements are obtained. It should not be assumed that each Jehovah's Witness, their local Kingdom Hall, or the local *Hospital Liaison Committee* (HLC) is fully aware of the WTS's current teaching whether a blood fraction or procedure is acceptable or not.

Since the WTS is known to continually change its position concerning the medical application of blood, their current information must be obtained from their duly endorsed legal representative.

While a healthy relationship should be maintained by the professions with the WTS's Hospital Liaison Committees, due regard must be given to patient confidentiality. It is

⁸⁴ While the community is concerned for the wellbeing of each individual, its objectivity is affected since the WTS expresses faith in the Jewish/Christian Bible.

⁸⁵ *Jehovah's Witnesses and Blood Transfusions*, OPA Practice Guidelines, page 7-4, Office of the Public Advocate, www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au.

advisable that a Jehovah's Witness patient does NOT contact their organization at any level.⁸⁶ Such a move is likely to be counterproductive for the patient's well-being.

CREATE TERMS OF ENGAGING WITH AN HLC

Formal procedures should be developed that ensure the medical service provider properly manages the local HLC.

Not every JW agrees with the WTS's stance on the medical use of blood, and every step should be taken that enables every JW patient to express their genuine wishes, without any influence from their loved ones, friends or members of the HLC.

The aim of the medical professional, their patient and of the HLC must be to provide the very best possible environment for a patient's treatment. The HLC has an over-riding aim of maintaining the "purity" of the congregation and ensuring the treatment accords with the WTS's current stance, whatever that may be. Also, the JW member of the HLC will feel driven to do whatever the Hospital Information Service at the WTS HQ says. This is important for their own standing before Jehovah God.



Set up a Code of Conduct for interacting with an HLC

In view of the realities, each medical service provider needs to set up a *Code of Conduct for interfacing with an HLC*.⁸⁷ Elements to consider in an Interfacing Code could include:

- Provide a "single-window" interface into the medical facility. This should help limit unwanted access to individual patients.
- Have each member of the HLC sign a legal Affidavit that they will not divulge a patient's personal information to a third party, including the organization's Elders.
- Make the HLC members sign that they take legal responsibility for any adverse outcomes resulting from their interference with a patient's medical treatment, such as requiring the application of alternate products or processes.
- Allow HLC members to speak with a patient only after that patient has given expressed permission, preferably in writing.
- Show a JW patient of the *Code of Conduct*.

⁸⁶ *Bioethical aspects of the recent changes in the policy of refusal of blood by Jehovah's Witnesses*, Osamu Muramoto, **BMJ** Volume 322, 6 January 2001 pages 37 – 39 (bmj.com) at: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/322/7277/37>

⁸⁷ Most already have a medical Code of Conduct for responding to a JW patient's expressed refusal of some parts of blood (for example: WITNESS.PDF from the Royal College of Surgeons of England at www.rcseng.ac.uk/publications/docs/jehovahs_witness.html).

- Use a standardized reporting system that enables an analysis of each intervention by an HLC. Show the impact on the patient of the HLC's intervention. Do not provide information sufficient to identify an individual patient.
- Check with a JW following discharge that they were not subsequently harassed by their organization in any way because of their medical treatment.

MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE PATIENT TO MAKE A PERSONAL DECISION

As far as is humanly possible, institute procedures – with the full knowledge and agreement of the JW patient – that ensures the patient is able to fully express their genuinely held beliefs regarding the medical use of blood.

- Minimize the opportunity for any JW, including close relatives, to be able to impose undue pressure on the patient to comply with their wishes.
- Ensure the patient is able to openly express their views to the medical providers of medical care, in the full knowledge that their decision will be held with complete confidentiality.
- Ensure no JW relative and no JW medical personnel can access the patient's records related to the receipt of blood products.
- Ensure no representative of the WTS is made aware of individual cases, patient's names, treatments, decisions, or other personal information. All communication with the WTS's representatives (such as Hospital Liaison Committee members) shall be of a general nature.
- Employ a follow-up system that verifies the patient's well-being related to the WTS's stance on blood. This could take place some months following discharge.



Enable the JW patient to make their decision free of external influences

TRAGIC OUTCOMES

Some estimate that 1000 Jehovah's Witnesses die each year because of the WTS's edicts concerning the medical use of blood⁸⁸. That would amount to 3 each day. By following the WTS's edicts, the health and welfare of countless more JWs is seriously compromised, with longer recovery periods and less satisfactory outcomes.

Also, JWs exhibit mental illnesses ranging from three to forty times the norm of the general community.⁸⁹ It is not known if the movement attracts people having a greater propensity to

⁸⁸ <http://www.ajwrb.org/science/risks1.shtml>

⁸⁹ www.equip.org/free/DJ601.htm ; <http://www.rickross.com/reference/jw/jw72.html> ; "Jehovah's Witnesses and mental illness" by John Stedman; "The Pessimistic Sect's Influence on the Mental Health of its members: the Case of Jehovah's Witnesses" by Havor Montague in Social Compass, Vol

mental instability or if the environment is the dominating factor. Regardless, the professional Counselor needs to maintain vigilance in this respect.

BURNING QUESTIONS

- * Through its legislators, the community needs to decide whether, by acceding to the WTS's demands regarding the medical use of blood, the community is agreeing with the strategies employed by the WTS. That is, if the community accepts the ends, is it then complicit in the means employed to arrive at that conclusion?
- * The community needs to ask what is encompassed by "freedom of religion". The community does not go so far as to condone or permit human sacrifice, which indicates there is a limit to the community's level of tolerance. When the WTS asks its members to risk their lives, does their preparedness to sacrifice go beyond the community's tolerance level?
- * To protect the vulnerable, should the community legislature remove the right to reject specific medical procedures?
- * Should an HLC be made responsible for the outcomes resulting from their interventions?
- * How culpable are the members of the Governing Body for any unnecessary deaths, illness and poorer outcomes resulting from their ongoing teachings and strategies?

WTS DENIES THE RIGHTS IT DEMANDS OF THE COMMUNITY

The WTS raises legal, medical, ethical and moral issues with the community, seeking the right for JW's to supposedly be able to exercise their own conscience. It can be argued that the rights that the WTS demands from the community towards its followers are the very rights that the WTS fails to provide to them. This could be extended to other rights that it fails to provide, such as freedom of association, freedom of expression, right to express dissent, and so on. JW's are known to have been disfellowshipped for attending the funeral of a dearly beloved non-believer, such as a parent.

STATISTICAL ANALYSES REQUIRED

While some anecdotal evidence exists that some JW's are prepared to rebel against the WTS's edicts concerning the medical use of blood, there is no known statistically sound comprehensive study.

IS THERE INSTITUTIONALIZED DURESS?

A patient's "No-blood" or "Durable Power of Attorney (Medical Treatment) documents must indicate that patient's true position. This means no duress may be applied during its validation.

The community needs to ask if the JW's religious environment, with its very real threat of disfellowshipping and shunning, should be considered institutionalized duress. Does the method used for the annual renewal of the "No blood" card constitute a form of duress? Does the WTS's lack of balanced reporting on the medical use of blood constitute a form of duress?

XXIV, 1977/1, pages 135-147; "A psychological and sociological study of Jehovah's Witnesses", a paper read by Prof. Gösta Rylander on March 8, 1946 to Nordisk Medicin ("Scandinavian Medicine")

REAL-LIFE COMMUNICATIONS: THE “JENSEN LETTERS”

In Elder Jensen’s February 1998 letter to the WTS, he explains to the WTS the circumstances that caused him to write to them:

Dear Brothers

The contents [of this letter are the outcome of] my own activity in the ministry with persons in the health care industry. ... These individuals have heard expressions of my faith on opportune occasions, and beliefs of Jehovah’s Witnesses have been the subject of friendly and meaningful conversation. ...

In the last few months questions have been presented for which I have no answer. ...

Elder Jensen describes himself

I am an Elder in the C----- congregation in C----- Alabama ... I have understood and appreciated the [JW] directive to abstain from blood for most of my life, and as an Elder have several times assisted friends under stressful and even life threatening circumstances. Reading and studying further into this subject has only strengthened my resolve to abstain from blood, consequentially.

The concerns that Elder Jensen’s health care contacts have

Physicians are ... interested in knowing how to deal with patients who happen to be Jehovah’s Witnesses. ... Of interest to the physicians is how our organization deals with persons who decide to accept blood components. ...

They begin having the questions (about which I write) when we discuss how Jehovah’s Witnesses deal with [JWs] differently due to particular blood components accepted. ... They question why *we do not* deal judicially with [JWs] accepting injections of blood components as long as they are from the fractions of protein, hormone, salts or enzyme components of blood, when *we do* deal judicially with [JWs] accepting any components of red cells, white cells, platelets or plasma ...

The most direct difference these physicians see between the two is in the relatively small measure of some blood components compared to other blood components and the amounts usually administered (they see all as being of blood), and that it appears our organizational tolerance (referring to actions left to conscience and not dealt with judicially) is somehow determined by individual conscience. They thus wonder why the entire matter is not left to personal conscience by our organization. ...

Questions asked by the physicians

They ask the following:

Regarding judicial / non-judicial status:

- Is it the amount of blood or the particular components of blood one accepts that measures when we deal judicially with someone?
- If it’s the amount, what is the amount?

- If it's not the amount is it simply left up to the conscience of the individual as to which component they are willing to accept and which they decline, or are there arbitrary reasons for the selection of some blood components for medical use requiring judicial action and others requiring no judicial action?

Regarding our understanding of the prohibition in Acts 15:29:

- What is Jehovah's Witnesses' *definition* of blood?
- Are all parts of blood “blood” or are there certain components of blood we do not define as “blood” as prohibited in Acts 15:29? (For example: Scripturally what makes red cells coming from whole blood *different* from proteins coming from whole blood, making one a matter of interest judicially and the other of no judicial interest?)
- If certain components in blood are not “blood” as prohibited at Acts 15:29, *how is this determined*?
- Are components of blood no longer viewed as “blood” once they are of small enough proportion, if so what is the amount?
- Is it the *particular component* binding the relation to Acts 15:29's prohibition? If so what are the **scriptural** reasons for allowing these components as a matter of conscience by our organization while upholding God's requirements judicially in response to acceptance of other components? ...

“The source of nourishment for the unborn”

Also, regarding Acts 15:29, there was discussion about the passage of antibodies and proteins via the placenta. This did not seem to satisfy their questions from a *scriptural* position and there was reluctance to accept that only antibodies and/or proteins passed through the placenta. One asked: “How do you think water is delivered to an unborn child if not *from* the mothers blood, specifically from the plasma?” He added: “Even though their blood systems do not actually intermingle, the source of nourishment for the unborn is from the mothers blood.” ...

Regarding general misuse of blood, I was asked if I had any idea how much blood had to be “misused” (by Jehovah's Witnesses' standards) to produce the blood components which our organization leaves to conscience, I had no idea (and still don't). ...

Elder Jensen desires a better Scriptural understanding

I too desire a better understanding of *how* we can determine Scripturally that Elders should deal judicially with publishers because of a particular component of blood accepted, while not dealing with publishers accepting other components.

Especially confusing is a statement made in the June 1st 1990 Watchtower on page 31, it says: “Others have felt that a serum (antitoxin), such as immune globulin, containing only a tiny fraction of a donor's blood plasma and used to bolster their defense against disease, is *not the same as a life-sustaining blood transfusion. So their consciences may not forbid them* to take immune globulin or similar fractions. They may conclude that for them the decision will rest primarily on whether they are willing to accept any health risks involved in an injection made from others' blood.” (italics added) There are two things puzzling about this quote.

First:

Doctors will admit that transfusion of plasma or red cells may save someone’s life, but so does factor VIII. *Both save lives*, both are life sustaining. Without factor VIII hemophiliacs would be certain candidates for extremely short life. Since both save lives how can one be singled out for judicial action and the other ignored? Also there is the use of albumin for burn victims, this administered blood component certainly *saves lives*.

Second:

The italicized portion also indicates that *individual consciences play a determining role* in our decision about what we tolerate morally. What if someone’s conscience allowed acceptance of components like plasma, concluding that their decision rests primarily with accepting health risks?

With this information how can Elders show individuals Scripturally why we tolerate acceptance of some blood components while dealing judicially with acceptance of other components? I have read countless articles on these issues and find no answer, nor could the Elders I asked.

Additionally ... the w89 3/1 30 comments that Jehovah’s Witnesses “DO NOT accept” certain autologous procedures. The reason for this is well stated: ‘We have long appreciated that such **stored blood** certainly is no longer part of the person. It has been completely removed from him, so it *should be disposed of in line with God’s Law*: “You should pour it out upon the ground as water.”—Deuteronomy 12:24.’ ... With this bottom line scriptural law in mind it seems of importance **that all blood fractions for medical use come from whole blood which has been intentionally: donated (or even sold), stored**, processed, sold for commercial profit, and finally introduced into another person. How can it be *Scripturally reasoned* that all of this misuse of blood, explicitly to sell, buy or use blood fractions, can possibly be accepted by any [JW’s] conscience? ...

My question arises because in the case of blood fractions administered medically there *must* first have occur several procedures which we “DO NOT accept”, leading *intentionally* and *directly* to the product offered. Would not acceptance (and purchase) of the intentional end product be directly supportive of the process when there is *no obligation* on our part to accept such? Is the described process acceptable? (reference: w81 10/15 30, w90 6/1 30) ...

Elder Jensen needs assistance to provide him understanding

I look forward to reading your reply. ... I look forward to your response. ... I seek only understanding. ...

I just can’t nail down the *scriptural answers* to the questions above and need your assistance. I thank you in advance for your kind spiritual aid in this matter. ... *Keep up the good work!*

Your brother in Jehovah’s service,

A few weeks later, in March 1998 the WTS (Desk ECC:ECO) responded to Elder Jensen’s letter.

They initially provided their own summary of his letter.

Dear Brother Jensen:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of February 16, 1998. You ask about the propriety of a [JW] accepting blood fractions for medical purposes. You say you have been discussing this matter with various medical doctors and have found it difficult to answer some of their questions. We note you have considered what the Society has published on this subject ...

The WTS allows an individual to decide whether to accept certain proteins from blood

As indicated, the Society has left it to the individual [JW] to decide whether he or she can accept blood fractions such as proteins found in the bloodstream, believing this to be in a gray area ...

If a [JW’s] conscience will not allow him to accept a serum, we would encourage him to respect the dictates of his conscience. However, as you know, when we say “fractions,” it is not meant that a few drops or even a drop of whole blood is involved. Rather, whole blood is broken down into its various parts and certain proteins or other minute substances are taken from the breakdown product, called immunoglobulins ...

(WTS) “The blood derivative is only a small fraction of blood”

It might be argued that if blood was properly disposed of, it would not be possible to make serum injections ... But if blood is taken from a body and, before it is disposed of, is broken down by a medical procedure and in the process a small fraction is extracted, not to eat or to nourish the body, but to immunize against a disease, could it be said that there is a clear violation of God’s law not to eat blood? Jehovah is reasonable concerning his laws and their application. ...

So, too, the blood derivative is only a small fraction of blood, as mentioned above. Such can be distinguished from the major components of the blood, such as the red cells. ...

(WTS) “Accepting a small injection ... of a breakdown product”

Taking a transfusion of blood is clearly contrary to God’s law. But what about accepting a small injection, not of whole blood or even a primary component of blood, but of a breakdown product, whether it be salt taken from blood, sugar taken from blood, iron, calcium, a hormone, or another fractionalized part?

(WTS) “Why ... disfellowshipped for taking a blood transfusion but not for taking blood fractions”

You also ask why one can be disfellowshipped for taking a blood transfusion but not for taking blood fractions. While both may affect the life of an individual, the expression “life-sustaining” in connection with blood transfusions is synonymous with the idea of taking in food for nourishment. In this regard both whole blood and major components of it carry nutrients, oxygen, and other nourishment to the body. It is this aspect of taking in blood, that is, to provide nourishment, that links blood transfusions with the Biblical prohibition.

(WTS) “Blood fractions in certain situations can be lifesaving [but] they do not operate to feed and nourish”

The motive or reason for taking a serum is ... not to feed the body, as would be the case if there was an eating of whole blood (or a major component thereof) by mouth or by having it transfused intravenously. Rather, the antibodies that have been separated out are administered for the purpose of immunizing the body against a certain disease. While blood fractions in certain situations can be lifesaving, they do not operate to feed and nourish the body and in this way sustain life but, rather, utilize other mechanisms.

We trust the above comments will be helpful to you in reasoning on this matter from the Scriptures. We take this occasion to send our warm love and Christian greetings.

At the end of July 1998, 4 months after the WTS replied, Elder Jensen wrote again.

“In your response I found no answer to my questions relative to this issue”

In your letter the following statement is made:

“It might be argued that if blood was properly disposed of, it would not be possible to make serum injections”

This argument is precisely at the heart of one of my questions. ...

[JWs] know that use of any blood derivative is dependent on blood not being poured out as commanded by God. In your **response I found no answer to my questions relative to this issue.**

“I feel an answer should be possible”

Again, can it possibly be scripturally reasoned away that our *intentional* buying of products having blood components as a critical element does not support the wholesale abuse of blood?

Should we view processing of blood for commercial gain as acceptable, that is, since we support it by *voluntarily* purchasing some of its end products?

I feel an answer should be possible and that it would likely have a direct bearing on [JW] conduct.

“It seems the crux of the above quoted reasoning is that blood derivatives are ‘not eaten to nourish the body.’”

Further, you state:

“But if blood is taken from a body and, before it is disposed of, is broken down by a medical procedure and in the process a small fraction is extracted, not to eat or to nourish the body, but to immunize against a disease, could it be said that there is a clear violation of God’s law not to eat blood?”

From infancy I’ve been taught that transfusion of material intravenously is similar to eating, at least as far as abstention goes. ... I must conclude that ingestion of a blood fraction, intravenously or otherwise would be eating. What if the same medical blood derivative could be given orally? It’s still being given for immunization, would this then be eating?

It seems the crux of the above quoted reasoning is that blood derivatives are ‘not eaten to nourish the body.’ Does the administering of blood components like white cells nourish the body like a meal? Would they even be administered as a meal, or would they only be administered for medical purposes?

“I don’t see the instances ... as a matter of amount, but rather a matter of activity”

Someone starving could be saved if provided with food for ingestion, whether this be provided intravenously or by mouth. Would someone starving survive by having a blood component like white cells transfused into their veins? It seems white cells are used only for medical purposes, not to provide nutrition like a meal, but to increase the bodies ability to fight certain conditions.

Isn’t this similar to why other *acceptable* components are used? I understand from your letter that major components of blood carry *some* type of nourishment, but is it the same as eating a meal?

Would white cells provide *nourishing sustenance* if given intravenously similar to its going through the human digestive track?

I am quite sure that the 5% of blood which we tolerate acceptance of could be eaten for nourishment just as red cells or white cells could. Why does it become acceptable if this same material is ingested intravenously? Isn’t this similar to eating? After all, some of these components are prescribed and administered in substantial amounts, especially when they are infused regularly. ...

[You seem] to reason that size or amount somehow enters into the picture with the command to abstain from blood. I don’t see the instance above as a matter of amount, but rather a matter of activity.

“God gave *explicit prohibitions*, and *amount* had nothing whatsoever to do with the prohibition”

But things God *explicitly prohibited* were not tolerated, *not even when infringed upon in some minor way*. Could Eve had eaten just minor components from the forbidden tree and been acceptable to God? Would Achan have lived had he only intentionally taken minor components of spoil? In these cases God gave *explicit prohibitions*, and *amount* had nothing whatsoever to do with the prohibition.

God has said “abstain from blood.” Is there something in this command separating blood components? This prohibition is quite explicit, just as His commands to take no spoils from Jericho and not to eat from that one tree in the garden of Eden.

If we view acceptance of blood for medical purposes as breaking God’s command to abstain from blood, how can we justify acceptance of 5% of its components based on amount or nutritional value? ...

Another similar example is of “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.” This tree represented something *belonging to God*, it was his property, *it was sacred*, and humans were forbidden to “eat” from it. If it had been possible to take something from this tree and ‘break it down by a medical procedure thereby obtaining some fraction component able to fight disease’, would it have been acceptable for ingestion? Could we possibly conclude that this would not be eating from the tree?

Are we to understand that some components of blood belong to Jehovah and some do not, allowing [JW] tolerance of intentional ingestion of some blood fractions? When it comes to blood—God’s sacred symbol of life—are we to understand that [JWs] can distinguish and separate off the parts they want before giving the rest back to God?

“How do we explain this seeming contradiction in deduction?”

One summation in your letter is that the aspect of taking in blood which is scripturally objectionable is its *providing of nourishment*. You are specific that whole blood and major components carry nourishment to the body. Does this mean that the tolerated 5% of components carry no nourishment? If persons ate these components outright would they gain no nourishment from them?

Aren’t the immunization effects themselves nourishment just as the immunizing components of a mother’s milk are to her infant child?

Is it the major components themselves or the nutrition they carry which makes them objectionable?

We have used the transference of antibodies and proteins via the placenta as reason that some might conscientiously accept these components of blood. However, when it come to *nourishment* carried by the blood, doesn’t a fetus receive every bit of its nutrition—including water from the plasma—from the blood of the mother? How do we explain this seeming contradiction in deduction?

Elder Jensen’s “reluctance to continue blood specific conversations”

By now I’m sure you can see my reluctance to continue blood specific conversations with individuals in the healthcare field. I have found it difficult—if not impossible—to express scriptural reasons for our tolerance of *some* blood components and intolerance of other blood components. One physician has recently raised the subject but I quickly changed the topic for want of scriptural answer.

“Current teaching seems impossible to explain *scripturally*”

In view of the Bible’s explicit directive to abstain from blood, and our governing its use among ourselves, it would seem that either we should tolerate no *intentional* acceptance of blood regardless of the component, or that we view acceptance of blood for purely medical reasons differently from eating blood as a meal. Our current teaching seems impossible to explain *scripturally*, leaving *arbitrary reasoning* as our answer.

“I don’t understand your response”

Until now I have chosen not to share the information above with those to whom it was intended because I don’t understand your response as it is. I would ask your re-examination of my initial letter together with this reply. I express my deepest appreciation for your earnest efforts. Thanks in advance.

Keep up the good work!

Your brother in Jehovah’s service,

[Signed: R. Jensen]

Three weeks later, in August 1998, the WTS (Desk ECC:ECM) replied.

The following is the sum total of their response (bold emphasis supplied):

Dear Brother Jensen:

Your letter of July 31, 1998, has been received, and **we note your response** to our recent correspondence to you in connection with the Biblical view of blood fractions.

This is a matter that **you have obviously given much thought** to and we appreciate your concern in this regard. However, it seems that it would be appropriate at this time to **let the matter rest**. Of course, you are free to **make your own personal decision** in such matters, while at the same time **allowing others to exercise their own freedom** in making a personal choice.

It is a pleasure to be associated with you and our brothers worldwide in the grand work Jehovah is having done in the earth today. Please accept an expression of our Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

[Signed: Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of New York, Inc.]

This is a rude, arrogant and uncaring response from the WTS. They did not address any of Elder Jensen’s carefully considered concerns, which he clearly finds deeply worrying.

Instead of answering Elder Jensen and providing the scriptural basis for their instructions to the worldwide body of JW’s, the WTS employs its ‘Theocratic War Strategy’ to one of its own, telling Elder Jensen nothing more than to “let the matter rest” and “make your own decision”. No answers were provided, no information given. A policy of evasion was employed.

Elder Jensen waited 15 months until he could no longer contain his concerns. This was affecting his work as an Elder and damaging his conscience.

So in a letter dated November 15, 1999, Elder Jensen wrote again, first addressing the WTS’s instruction to “let the matter rest”.

Dear Brothers ...

On this topic your last correspondence to me dated 8/24/98 said, “...it would be appropriate at this time to let the matter rest.”

I fully realized the gravity of what I had addressed to you and understood that you perhaps needed some time to consider what I had said. In that respect I agreed that letting the matter rest was a good idea and thus I was content to wait for a future consideration of the subject.

In light of that, I confidently expected some forthcoming explanation to my questions in a *Watchtower* article or else personal correspondence.

I do not expect that letting a matter rest means letting it die nor do I think that was your intention. For that reason I have patiently waited. At this time I again ask for your consideration of my questions in those letters. ...

“How can I teach with conviction?”

As an Elder I am expected to teach with conviction and to impart understanding. ... How can I teach with conviction and impart understanding without reasons for the answers?

Besides responsibilities as an Elder I am also a husband and father. As a teacher, my foremost responsibility is to my family. ... What will my wife and child think? How can I build within them conviction for something that I cannot explain?

Circumstances have already put me in the difficult position of avoiding situations where my questions asked are likely to arise. I do not want circumstances where someone could be hurt or stumbled because of my truthful admission that I see no explanation for certain of our stances on what is or is not tolerated. ... The potential is there to cause stumbling, or discouragement at least, when they are already in a vulnerable position. ... Then there is the discussion with our family physicians, which is likewise problematic. ...

There remains my initial problem causing me to write you in the first place, that of being able to address this topic in our public ministry. Particularly is this problematic when the recipient is a healthcare professional fully aware of aspects of blood, medical procedures involving it and solutions derived from or utilizing components of it.

My conscience dictates that I not lay a stumbling block before my brothers, family or anyone else if I can help it. Again that puts me in a stressful position of limiting who I can turn to for answers to all that I have asked in my former correspondence to you. Who can I turn to for scriptural answers regarding an existing scriptural stance if not to you brothers? ...

“It is inconsistent that we tolerate some components of blood”

While patiently awaiting answers to my questions I have continued to pray and ponder over our stance of tolerance toward some blood components and intolerance toward other blood components as well as our overall teaching regarding medical infusion of blood. That prayerful pondering has led me to the idea that it is not proper to make or impose distinctions or applications if they are not so specified in the Bible. It is inconsistent that we tolerate some components of blood for medical purposes while being intolerant of the very donation making that possible.

It is contradictory that we denounce it when blood is stored for later consumption and then turn around and use blood components requiring massive amounts of blood stored as denounced. Without scriptural distinctions, it is inconsistent that we tolerate some components of blood when every component from blood is equally of blood. As far as I can see, making such scriptural distinctions is impossible.

Considering the aforementioned and that medical science will continue inventing various techniques for manipulating blood and dividing and using components of blood, it seems that we should apply the same onus toward all components of blood, either that of tolerating individual conscientious choice or that of intolerance of accepting any blood components.

“Please be assured of my love for you”

I hope the tenor of my letter is understood. I am not seeking to cause you brothers any distress. Indeed we all experience distress in these days and need for endurance. I support my entire association of brothers and am willing to give my life rather than needlessly stumble one of them. ...

Please be assured of my love for you and accept my appreciation for all your hard work in behalf of our neighbors, our brothers, my family and myself.

Your fellow servant,

[Signed: R. Jensen]

On February 21, 2000, the WTS (Desk ECA:ECN) responded. In part, the WTS wrote:

(WTS) “[Do] not seek to impose your deductions and conscience on others”

Care needs to be exercised, Brother Jensen, that you not seek to impose your deductions and conscience on others.

The WTS calls on the authority of the “faithful and discreet slave” operating on earth through its visible representative the “Governing Body”.

For some decades now, “the faithful and discreet slave” [*the use of quotation marks indicates the WTS actually means the “Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses”*] has been giving the matter of blood usage in medical procedures careful and prayerful consideration ...

Acceptance or nonacceptance of small fractions of blood is left for each one to decide conscientiously after weighing all factors having a bearing. In your case, if you find no basis for accepting any component from blood, no matter how small or for what purpose, in treating a medical condition, then that would be your decision before Jehovah. ...

The WTS then tells Elder Jensen that no matter what his decision is, he must still teach what the Governing Body is teaching

Whatever one’s decision is, this should not prevent him from helping others to understand what has been published by “the faithful and discreet slave”⁹⁰ on the subject. ...

(WTS) Non-JWs should respect the WTS’s religious teachings

Regarding those in the health-care field who do not always understand our position, we are sure you will agree that this is not unexpected. ...

(WTS) “This almost invariably absorbs any implicit demand that we explain what appear to be inconsistencies”

While individuals may not see the logic of a particular position or agree with our reasoning, we ask that they respect our religious position on this matter, which includes letting each one decide whether or not to accept a minor fraction of blood. This almost invariably absorbs any implicit demand that we explain what appear to be inconsistencies or why some of Jehovah’s Witnesses feel they can conscientiously accept certain small fractions while others do not. ...

Your brothers,

[Signed: Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of New York, Inc.]

⁹⁰ The WTS publishes what the “faithful and discreet slave” class teaches through the utterances of the Governing Body.

Two weeks later, on 1 March 2000 Elder Jensen responded with another letter, carefully detailing his concerns.

“You brothers [in the WTS] do not understand ... my concern”

I fear that you brothers do not understand the full measure—indeed specific requests—of my concern. ...

“I am not seeking to impose anything ... since I cannot explain scripturally the distinctions of our stance”

I am not seeking to impose anything on anyone, indeed I try hard to avoid such, nor am I inclined to do so. At this point I am not sure I could impose anything regarding medical use of blood components because I am unable to do so, which is part of my problem. For example, if a local friend chose to accept white corpuscles to bolster their immune system then as an Elder I would be expected to impose our stance, which prohibits acceptance of white corpuscles. Since I cannot explain scripturally the distinctions of our stance I could not impose that stance. ...

“My concerns have existed for some time now, they are not new or short lived”

I am not seeking scriptural clarifications regarding a “*new*” teaching, but rather one that has existed for decades. ... Is it unreasonable to request clarification of reasons/views offered regarding teachings decades old?

Is it unreasonable that someone asked to teach asks for an understanding of the “reasons behind [the] answers” or “the Scriptural reasons for [the] explanations”? (See Organized To Accomplish Our Ministry page 44; Our Kingdom Ministry, February 2000 page 8)

My concerns have existed for some time now, they are not new or short lived.

“I have asked for corresponding scriptural explanations”

I have asked you for scriptural clarifications. I have also waited, allowing time for your thorough consideration of my request. Regarding “*new*” views, we usually *do give* corresponding scriptural reasons for them. Whether we understand or not has more to do with our understanding of those *scriptural reasons* not just a “*new*” idea itself. ... What I have asked is for corresponding scriptural explanations regarding certain pertinent details of our stance. ...

“Contradictions/inconsistencies that appear indefensible”

Our stance on blood exhibits certain other contradictions/inconsistencies that appear indefensible. For example:

1. The contradiction of our utilizing donated and stored blood while simultaneously condemning the donation and storage of blood for medical use.
2. Saying that we abstain from blood when in fact our stance tolerates acceptance of some components of blood. Physicians or anyone else can simply say, “Jehovah’s Witnesses abstain from some parts of blood and but not all parts of blood.”

“My specific concerns are not addressed in your February 21, 2000 response”

In your February 21, 2000 reply you stated, “Your concern is why the accepting of some fractions of blood for medical treatment has been left as a matter of conscience.” Actually, regarding fractions, more accurately my concern is “Why is accepting certain fractions considered ‘a matter of conscience’ while acceptance of *other* fractions is not considered ‘a matter of conscience’”? I see no such distinction that can be made scripturally and **my specific concerns—detailed above—are not addressed in your February 21, 2000 response. ...**

I fear now that my concerns and questions raised about our present stance have no scriptural answers. If they existed I feel you brothers would have already shared them with me. This is very disheartening. ...

Acts 15, Acts 21 do not require taking of a life

The apostolic decree (Acts 15, Acts 21) does not require abstaining from medical transfusions of blood as practiced today because such does not require any taking of life. ...

“God’s *permission to eat flesh* likewise poses significant health risks”

We have imputed wisdom to refraining from medical transfusion of blood based upon dangers inherent to the practice. However, considering that God’s *permission to eat flesh* likewise poses significant health risks, such reasoning becomes problematic. *Like blood*, if flesh is exposed to virulent organisms or is not prepared or selected correctly it can—and has—caused significant loss of health and even death. Today even in developed lands thousands die annually from food poisoning. Since food poisoning victimizes health and causes death just as can medical use of blood then we cannot impute any unique wisdom associated with abstention of one versus the other based upon risk to health.

The WTS did not reply to this letter or to a subsequent letter of clarification.

This inaction displays elements of the WTS’s “Theocratic War Strategy”, such as being evasive, failing to provide all of the facts, withholding information, and so on.

About a year later, on January 3, 2001, Elder Jensen wrote again.

“The June 15, 2000 *Questions From Readers* ... increased the difficulties”

Initially I thought the June 15, 2000 *Questions From Readers* article (in *The Watchtower* magazine) contained a response to the inherent and internal difficulties of our stance on the subject. But after reading it I found no resolution or answer to those problems as outlined in my letter of March 1, 2000. To the contrary, I found that that article actually increased the difficulties. ...

“Jehovah’s Witnesses accept some parts of blood but reject other parts of blood”

The opening remark in that article states, “The fundamental answer is that Jehovah’s Witnesses do not accept blood.” But, based upon what the article goes on to say, a more precise fundamental answer is that Jehovah’s Witnesses accept some parts of blood but reject other parts of blood.

Calling a substance an ‘extract from blood components’ does not change the fact that some of those extracts are as unique to blood as other forbidden parts of blood. (What makes a tolerated *whole* protein component [like human albumin or factor VIII] inferior to a forbidden *whole* platelet component?)

Calling something an ‘extract of blood components’ does not recognize that some of the tolerated ‘extracts’ amount to a larger volume than other forbidden parts of blood.

“An arbitrary division of components ... the Bible makes no such distinction”

The June 15th article speaks of “extracts from blood components” only in respect to an arbitrary division of components namely white cells, red cells, platelets, and plasma. Those divisions are arbitrary because the Bible makes no such distinction of blood components as if an extract from one of them is less than a part of blood, a lesser part of blood or of lesser Biblical significance. Finally, calling something an ‘extract from blood’ in the context of that article avoids the fact that every single part of blood is intermingled with plasma. That means that forbidden components like platelets must be extracted from blood plasma as must other tolerated parts of blood if they are going to be administered or used separately. For that reason it is meaningless to call something an “extract of plasma” as if that action is a unique secondary extraction for certain components but not for others. ...

Our stance of accepting some parts of blood and rejecting other parts of blood is inherently flawed and so far as I can tell has no support in scripture.

No scriptural stance provided

I have also repeatedly asked for guidance to where such a stance can be reasoned from the scriptures yet none has been provided.

The idea conveyed in the June 15th (2000) article (of *The Watchtower*) that our stance is simple confounds the senses of persons who want to understand our stance from a scriptural perspective, including me. ...

“We abstain from some parts of blood but ... [not] from other parts.”

We teach that we abstain from blood yet more precisely stated our stance is that we abstain from some parts of blood but we do not abstain from other parts of blood. I cannot in good conscience tell a physician or anyone else that we abstain from all medical use of donated and stored blood and that is what is implied when we tell persons that we abstain from blood. ...

“A contradiction on a fundamental point of reason”

Particularly confusing/disturbing is a comparison between how the June 15th and October 15th articles treat the idea of pouring blood out on the ground. ... A comparison of the June 15th and October 15th articles indicates that one treats ‘pour blood out’ as *less than* an absolute standard and the other treats ‘pour blood out’ as an absolute standard. The two articles represent a contradiction on a fundamental point of reason. ...

Neither the June 15th nor the October 15th articles dealt at all with difficulties raised in my letters to you on the subject of blood and upholding righteous standards. ...and **at this time I request an answer from you on those concerns**. You may also want to review past letters between us on this same subject.

“Our stance is overall in error”

My letter of March 1, 2000 indicated my feelings that our stance is overall in error and that a significant change is in order. ...

As indicated in my letters of March 2000, please be assured that my faithfulness is intact and that I will remain patient on this subject. But while patiently waiting I would appreciate your replying to my questions, concerns and reasoning. Please accept my thanks for giving this request your attention.

Elder Jensen wrote three months later in a letter dated April 6, 2001.

It has been three months since I last wrote you on the subject of blood where I again addressed serious concerns and suggested a course that is scripturally reasoned.

On February 23, 2001 I called Brooklyn Bethel and asked to speak with someone in the Writing Department about my letter. I was transferred to the Writing Correspondence Department at Patterson. The brother taking the call said my letter had been received and that someone was “working on it.”

Effects of the WTS’s ‘Theocratic War Strategy’ on Elder Jensen

To date I have not heard back from you. That hurts, and it leaves me bewildered.

My sincere concerns are very serious ones, and your replies have not resolved them with the Bible.

... **it hurts that I now feel practically ignored.** It seems completely fitting and reasonable that I ask for your answers to questions—and a suggestion—that I have patiently waited over a year for. After allowing that length of time for your consideration, if I cannot talk back and forth with you brothers about these concerns then who should I go to?

The hurt and bewilderment is exacerbated because I have offered to answer any questions you may have; yet none have been asked of me.

I have even offered to visit you brothers in person if that would help. That you have made no inquires to me leads to the belief that my concerns and suggestion are understood by you, or at least that you do not believe you misunderstand them, or me.

The result is that my confidence is eroding. My faith and confidence in Jehovah and his holy word, the Bible feels strong.

What is suffering is my confidence that brothers who I look to for help will give a scripturally reasoned answer to the details of my concerns and suggestion; and I do not understand that because it goes contrary to my experience. This is very hurting and disconcerting.

This letter is not sent to aggravate or discourage anyone. If I thought my questions could be resolved another way I would do that instead of asking for your time and attention. ...

Only you men know why I have not already received scriptural answers from you on specifics.

As a spiritual man I work hard at helping all those asking for it, and do not understand why I am being made to feel as I do. ...

I continue to welcome any questions or concerns you may have on this matter.

A resolution is needed

I need some resolution on this subject, and it is hard to believe that need is unique to me. Surely all our brothers would benefit from seeing addressed the same serious and specific concerns I have raised.

In a reply dated May 30, 2001, the WTS wrote (in part here):

This letter follows a telephone conversation with you on May 17, 2001. ...

When you first wrote and shared your observations with us, you did not ask for a reply. Nevertheless, what you wrote was not ignored. All of your letters have been carefully considered. ...

(WTS) Decisions are made by the Governing Body

Each time this matter has come up for review by the “slave” class (Governing Body), taking all pertinent factors into consideration, including those discussed in your letters, the basic conclusion has been the same, that accepting a transfusion of whole blood, or of its four recognized primary components—red cells, white cells, platelets, or whole plasma—would clearly be contrary to the Scriptures.

(WTS) “As to accepting minor fractions of blood ...”

As to accepting minor fractions of blood, “Questions From Readers” in the June 1, 1974, issue of *The Watchtower*, states: “While refraining from approving or condemning in such areas where we believe the decision must be left to individual conscience, we do, nevertheless, urge all to seek to maintain their conscience clear before God, never showing deliberate disrespect for his Word.” ...

(WTS) “Decide matters in accord with the dictates of their consciences”

You contend that using even a small extract of a blood component would be tantamount to using whole blood. Some [JWs] draw this conclusion conscientiously and we encourage them to decide matters in accord with the dictates of their consciences.

Others reason differently, feeling beyond a certain point a blood fraction does not remain a significant part of one’s life blood. “The faithful and discreet slave” (Governing Body) has not felt that it can be dogmatic on this point but has left that as something each [JW] must decide for himself before God.—Galatians 6:5.

The WTS admits it did not deal completely with Elder Jensen’s concerns

While we have not dealt with all the details discussed in your letters, we trust that these additional comments will be helpful.

It is evident that matters pertaining to blood have caused you much concern. You have come to the point where you question seriously whether the position of Jehovah’s Witnesses is correct. You have presented your reasoning for consideration.

Once more Elder Jensen is told to "wait on Jehovah (instructing the Governing Body)."

When we have questions on matters that are not immediately resolved after doing research and seeking answers, the wise course is to **wait** humbly upon Jehovah. In our previous letter, we encouraged you to do that, as you continue to serve Jehovah conscientiously.

All the way through, WTS is concerned with loyalty, rather than with Scriptural Truth

Proceeding in this way, in some respects, **will put to the test your faith and trust in Jehovah and the way he is directing his organization today through "the faithful and discreet slave."**

Two weeks later, on June 9, 2001, Elder Jensen wrote "one last letter on the subject".

The letter opens with their perceived "Law of Noah". That discussion relates to the internal doctrines of the JW's and their controlling body.

Continuing ...

I noticed that your letter does not comment on the conflicting matter addressed in my letter, and discussed on the telephone, about us using from the donated and stored blood supply but forbidding the replenishing of the very same thing we deplete.

In conversation it was stated to me that it is a personal conscience matter whether a [JW] decides to donate blood that will be used in fractionated forms, the same fractionated forms that we likewise leave to personal conscience as to acceptance. I was told that this act being left up to each [JW's] conscience naturally follows from what we have already published about decisions to accept fractions of blood.

If put on the spot and asked about this issue, I will repeat the same thing told me, that each one must decide this matter for themselves before God as a matter of personal conscience. If asked for verification on this point, I can only show what our publications have stated, and what naturally follows from that.

There was no reply from the WTS to Elder Jensen's letter.

On January 10, 2003, Elder Jensen submitted his letter of resignation as an Elder.

Dear Brothers

By now you know this letter is about my resignation as an Elder. ... Starting in February 1998 I expressed specific and important questions to you brothers about important aspects of what we teach on blood. After a few letters my correspondence dated March 1, 2000 explained in painstaking detail why my questions had not been soundly answered.

"My questions have asked for sound biblical reasons for important details of what we teach and impose"

In spite of this letter and future pleas begging for help and answers to important questions neither was forthcoming beyond mere recognition by sentences like:

“Each time this matter comes up for review by the “slave” class, taking pertinent factors into consideration, including those discussed in your letters, the basic conclusion has been the same, that accepting a transfusion of whole blood, or of its four recognized primary components—red cells, white cells, platelets, or whole plasma—would be contrary to scripture.”

Replies like this from you brothers do not answer important requests for detailed and sound scriptural reasons for what we teach, nor does saying that some feel one way and others feel differently provide a biblical answer for imposing what we do. Statements such as that only say what I already know, that we teach what we teach, that our stance is what our stance is. I know what our religious position is. My questions have asked for sound biblical reasons for important details of what we teach and impose. Alluding to pertinent factors without identification and logical construction of those factors to a sound conclusion is no answer.

“Being given no better replies until now has simply exasperated me”

Given the time, attention and patience I have afforded this subject and you brothers, the inherent importance of the subject, and my sincere and pleading expression of need on the subject, being given no better replies until now has simply exasperated me on this very important subject, one that has often had life sacrificing consequences. Resulting disappointment is something unfamiliar to me given the source, but this only intensifies the distress. ...

“The continued absence of sound scriptural answers to questions asked has begun hurting my conscience as an Elder.”

There is no way for me to know why things have happened as they have. I only know my questions and concerns are sincere and were presented honestly and out of loyalty to Jehovah. With one important exception circumstances now remain the same as when I wrote of my inability to teach without knowing reasons for answers. The exception is that the continued absence of sound scriptural answers to questions asked has begun hurting my conscience as an Elder since publishers expect us to have reasons for our answers, and teachers should know the reasons for answers to the same detail they teach them, and certainly to the extent they impose them. I do not know those reasons on very important and telling aspects of our stance on blood though I have sought very hard for them.

“It is inappropriate to ask people to wait.”

It is my conviction that today we should have reasons for answers we teach today. Furthermore, we should have reasons for those answers to the same detail that we teach and impose them. Otherwise we should wait before we teach those answers or details. This is waiting on Jehovah. It is inappropriate to ask people to wait for reasons to answers we are already teaching. ...

1 Corinthians 12:14-26

The following rendition of 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 illustrates this and offers guidance regarding independent members.

14 For the blood, indeed, is not one member, but many. 15 If the water [of blood] should say: “Because I am not hemoglobin, I am no part of the blood,” it is not for this reason no part of the blood. 16 And if the platelets should say: “Because I am not a white cell, I am

no part of the blood," it is not for this reason no part of the blood. 17 If the whole blood were white cells, where would the platelets be? If it were all platelets, where would the protein factors be? 18 But now God has set the members in the blood, each one of them, just as he pleased. 19 If they were all one member, where would the blood be? 20 But now they are many members, yet one blood. 21 The white cells cannot say to the hemoglobin: "I have no need of you"; or, again, the red cells [cannot say] to the water: "I have no need of YOU." 22 But much rather is it the case that the members of the blood which seem to be weaker are necessary, 23 and the parts of the blood which we think to be less honorable, these we surround with more abundant honor, and so blood's unseemly parts have the more abundant comeliness, 24 whereas blood's comely parts do not need anything. Nevertheless, God compounded the blood, giving honor more abundant to the part which had a lack, 25 so that there should be no division in the blood, but that its members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it; or if a member is glorified, all the other members rejoice with it.

Just as a fleshly body consists of members functioning together to make a body, so too blood consists of members that function together to make blood.

The rendering above therefore demonstrates how no member of blood equals blood just as no member of the body equals a body. Verse 19 even asks the question, "If they were all one member, where would the blood be?" In view of verse 14 the answer is, if there was only one of the many necessary members then there would be no body, or in this case no blood. There would be only an independent member, not a body, or blood in this case.

Just as each member of the body is necessary to the functioning of the body as Jehovah intended likewise each member of blood is necessary for blood to be what it is. Just as with the body, no matter the size or distinction of members of blood, all of them are just as much part of the blood as every other part.

[Signed R. Jensen]

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: 1984 "MEDICAL ALERT" CARD

Your Life, Your Integrity and the Card

41200
+ 1300

MEDICAL ALERT

I direct that no blood transfusions be administered to me, even though others deem such necessary to preserve my life or health. I will accept non-blood expanders. This is in accord with my rights as a patient and my beliefs as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I hereby release the doctors and hospital of any liability for damages attributed to my refusal. This document is valid even if I am unconscious, and it is binding upon my heirs or legal representatives.

Robert Brown
SIGNATURE

Robert Brown Jan. 1, 1985
PRINT NAME DATE

Mary Bevan *James Johnson*
WITNESS WITNESS

[Wife] [Minister]

“WHEN ills approach, a prudent man is hidden; but the simple pass on to their sorrow.”—Proverbs 27:12, *Septuagint*, by Charles Thomson.

That inspired proverb bears out the value of forethought. One ‘ill,’ or calamity, that God’s servants want to avoid is a violation of their integrity. For some years Jehovah’s Witnesses have diligently been doing that as regards God’s command that Christians ‘abstain from blood.’—Acts 15: 28, 29.

Christians realize that after an accident they might be unconscious or unable to give a detailed explanation of why they cannot accept blood transfusions. Even if an injured Witness could speak and say that—in line with the principle of informed consent—he did not want blood administered, doctors or hospital person-

nel might worry that a lawsuit could result if they did not follow standard treatment. So for some years Jehovah’s Witnesses have carried a Medical Alert card. This is a signed, witnessed document that relieves physicians and hospital officials of liability for any complications that might seem to result from knowing about the refusal of blood. A new card is signed and dated each year; thus, the document is always current and valid.

If you want to obey God’s law on blood, do you regularly carry one of these documents? Do you make sure that it is current and, if possible, is signed by your next of kin? Note from the following letter why you should do so:

“My husband and I want to thank you so much for providing us with spiritual food at the proper time and instructional mate-

THE WATCHTOWER—DECEMBER 1, 1984 25

APPENDIX 2: "ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE/RELEASE" ISSUED DURING 2001

ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE/RELEASE

I, _____, make this advance directive as a formal statement of my wishes. These instructions reflect my resolute and informed decision.

I direct that *no allogeneic blood transfusions* (whole blood, red cells, white cells, platelets, or blood plasma) be given to me under any circumstances, even if physicians deem such necessary to preserve my life or health. I will accept nonblood expanders and pharmaceuticals that control hemorrhage and stimulate the production of red blood cells and other nonblood management.

This legal directive is an exercise of my right to accept or to refuse medical treatment in accord with my deeply held values and convictions. I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I make this directive out of obedience to commands in the Bible, such as: "Keep abstaining . . . from blood." (Acts 15:28, 29) This is, and has been, my unwavering religious stand for _____ years. I am _____ years old.

I also know that there are various dangers associated with blood transfusions. So I have decided to avoid such dangers and, instead, to accept whatever risks may seem to be involved in my choice of alternative nonblood management.

I release physicians, anesthesiologists, and hospitals and their personnel from liability for any damages that might be caused by my refusal of blood, despite their otherwise competent care.

I authorize the person(s) named on the reverse to see that my instructions set forth in this directive are upheld and to answer any questions about my absolute refusal of blood.

Signature

Address

Date

Telephone

Witness

Witness

md-E 6/01 Printed in U.S.A.

The 2001 Advance Medical Directive (md-E 6/01)

In May 2001, the Watchtower Society issued the 2001 Advance Medical Directive (md-E 6/01). In December 2001, congregations were advised to stop using the 2001 Directive and to revert to the one issued in 1999. They were to destroy all 2001 Directives.


The 2001 Directive states (in part): "I direct no **allogeneic** blood transfusions be given to me", whereas the preferred 1999 Directive does not use the word "allogeneic".

The 2001 Directive states (in part): "I will accept nonblood expanders **and pharmaceuticals that control hemorrhage and stimulate the production of red cells** and other nonblood management". The preferred 1999 Directive states: "I will accept nonblood expanders **(such as dextran, saline, Ringer's solution, or hetastarch)** and other nonblood management".

APPENDIX 3: WTS DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE FOR ALABAMA, USA

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care

(Alabama Code § 26-1-2)



(1) I, _____
(Print full name)
 am of sound mind, and I voluntarily execute this document. Part 1 sets forth my health-care instructions for physicians and other medical personnel. Part 2 appoints someone as an agent to make health-care decisions for me on matters not covered in my instructions, and this role shall take effect upon my incapacity.

PART 1—Health-Care Instructions (for physicians and other medical personnel)

(2) I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Based on my firmly held religious convictions, founded on Bible directions such as at Acts 15:28, 29, and my awareness of the health risks of blood, I absolutely, unequivocally, and resolutely refuse allogenic blood (another person's blood) and stored autologous blood (my blood) under any and all circumstances, no matter what my medical condition. This means that no whole blood and none of the primary components (red cells, white cells, platelets, or plasma) be given to me, no matter what the consequences. Even if health-care providers believe that only blood transfusions will preserve my life or health, I do not want such. Also, I refuse to predonate any of my blood for storage and later infusion into me or anyone else.

(3) I give no one any authority to disregard or override my refusal of blood. Some family members, relatives, or friends may disagree with my decision. However, any such disagreement should in no way be construed to create doubt about the strength or substance of my refusal. Any such disagreement is legally and ethically irrelevant, since it is my personal decision that controls.

(4) I request and will accept alternative nonblood medical management to build up or conserve my own blood, to avoid or minimize blood loss, to replace lost circulatory volume, or to stop bleeding. Hence, such volume expanders as dextran, saline solution, Ringer's lactate solution, and hetastarch are acceptable to me.

(5) Medical products [initial one of the three choices below]
 (a) I refuse all fractions derived from any primary component of blood.
 (b) I accept all fractions derived from any primary component of blood.
 (c) I want to qualify either 5a or 5b, and my instructions about this are as follows:

(6) Medical procedures involving my own blood that do not involve storage of my blood for later infusion into me or someone else [initial one of the three choices below]
 (a) I refuse any procedure involving the use of my blood during an operation or ongoing therapy.
 (b) I accept any procedure involving the use of my blood during an operation or ongoing therapy.
 (c) I accept only the following procedures involving my blood:

(7) Respecting the providing, withholding, or withdrawing of life-sustaining procedures at the end of life. **CHOOSE:** [initial one of the three choices below] (As to pregnancy, see note after 7c.)
 (a) **NOT TO PROLONG LIFE.** That is, if to a reasonable degree of medical certainty my condition is considered hopeless (for example, if I have an incurable and irreversible condition that will result in my death within a relatively short time, if I am unconscious and will not regain consciousness, or if I have brain damage or a brain disease that makes me unable to recognize people or communicate and my condition will not improve), I do not want my life to be prolonged. In such a situation, I do not want mechanical respiration (ventilation), cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), tube feeding (artificial nutrition or hydration), and so forth. I do, however, want palliative care—treatment for comfort.
 (b) **TO PROLONG LIFE.** That is, I want my life to be prolonged as long as possible within the limits of generally accepted health-care standards, though I realize this means that I might be kept alive on machines for years.

____ (c) OTHER. [If you do not completely agree with either 7a or 7b, you can initial here and write below your own end-of-life instructions.] _____

NOTE ON PREGNANCY: If I am pregnant and there is a reasonable chance that my unborn child could survive, I want my life to be prolonged for the sake of my unborn child. In no way does this change my wishes about refusing blood for myself and my unborn child. After any efforts to save my unborn child, my instructions above again control.

(8) Other health-care instructions (my wishes regarding current medication, allergies, other medical problems, and so forth):

(9) I primarily am concerned that my refusal of blood and choice of alternative nonblood management be respected regardless of my medical condition. My rights under federal and state law require health-care providers to respect and comply with my treatment decisions. My rights are not dependent on, and do not vary with, my medical condition. Thus, my decision to refuse blood and choose nonblood management must be respected even if my life or health is deemed to be threatened by my refusal. *Stamford Hosp. v. Vega*, 674 A.2d 821 (Conn. 1996) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by state common law right of bodily self-determination); *In re Dubrow*, 629 So. 2d 819 (Fla. 1993) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by state constitutional rights of personal privacy and religious freedom); *Norwood Hosp. v. Mowat*, 564 N.E.2d 1017 (Mass. 1991) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by state common law right of bodily self-determination and federal constitutional right of personal privacy); *Fornise v. Nicoles*, 551 N.E.2d 77 (N.Y. 1990) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by state common law right of bodily self-determination); *In re E.G.*, 549 N.E.2d 322 (Ill. 1989) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by state common law right of bodily self-determination); *Public Health Trust v. Power*, 541 So. 2d 96 (Fla. 1989) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by state constitutional rights of personal privacy and religious freedom); *In re Milton*, 505 N.E.2d 255 (Ohio 1987) (non-Witness patient's religion-based refusal of treatment protected by 1st Amendment guarantee of free exercise of religion); *In re Brown*, 478 So. 2d 1033 (Miss. 1985) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by state constitutional rights of personal privacy and religious freedom); *In re Osborne*, 294 A.2d 372 (D.C. 1972) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by 1st Amendment guarantee of free exercise of religion); *In re Estate of Brooks*, 205 N.E.2d 435 (Ill. 1965) (Witness patient's refusal of blood protected by 1st Amendment guarantee of free exercise of religion).

The United States Supreme Court has said that "the 'liberty' specially protected by the Due Process Clause [of the 14th Amendment] includes the right[. . . to bodily integrity." *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702, 720 (1997); *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833, 849 (1992) ("It is settled now . . . that the Constitution places limits on a State's right to interfere with a person's most basic decisions about . . . bodily integrity."). The Supreme Court has "also assumed, and strongly suggested, that the Due Process Clause protects the traditional right to refuse unwanted lifesaving medical treatment." *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. at 720; see also *Pacco v. Quill*, 521 U.S. 793, 807 (1997) (Supreme Court's "assumption of a right to refuse treatment was grounded . . . on well established, traditional rights to bodily integrity and freedom from unwanted touching").

In *Crozae v. Missouri Dep't of Health*, 497 U.S. 261 (1990), the Supreme Court said it was indisputable that "the Due Process Clause [of the 14th Amendment] protects an interest in life as well as an interest in refusing life-sustaining medical treatment." *Id.* at 281; see also *id.* at 278 ("The principle that a competent person has a constitutionally protected liberty interest in refusing unwanted medical treatment may be inferred from our prior decisions."). Thus, the Oregon Court recognized "that the right to refuse unwanted treatment was so rooted in our history, tradition, and practice as to require special protection under the Fourteenth Amendment." *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. at 721 n.17. Similarly, the Supreme Court has held that prison inmates suffering from mental disorders possess "a significant liberty interest in avoiding the unwanted administration of antipsychotic drugs under the Due Process Clause." *Wash-*

Jegou v. Harper, 494 U.S. 210, 221-22 (1990). "The forcible injection of medication into a nonconsenting person's body represents a substantial interference with that person's liberty." *Id.* at 229.

(10) [This paragraph applies to pregnant women only.] In the case of *In re Fetus Brown*, 689 N.E.2d 397 (Ill. App. Ct. 1997), the court ruled that "the State may not override a pregnant woman's competent decision, including refusal of recommended invasive medical procedures, to potentially save the life of a viable fetus." *Id.* at 405. The *Fetus Brown* case involved a pregnant woman's refusal of blood. In addition, the United States Supreme Court has said that women cannot be exposed to increased medical risks for the sake of their fetuses and that the State's interest in the potential life of the fetus is insufficient to override the mother's interest in preserving her own health. *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists*, 476 U.S. 747, 768-71 (1986); see *Schwaberg v. Carhart*, 120 S. Ct. 2597, 2609 (2000); *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833, 846 (1992). Finally, the Supreme Court also has said that "viability marks the earliest point at which the State's interest in fetal life is constitutionally adequate to justify a legislative ban on therapeutic abortions." *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. at 860. Thus, as a woman has the right to abort her pregnancy before viability, *Schwaberg v. Carhart*, 120 S. Ct. at 2604, a woman necessarily has the lesser right to refuse blood transfusions before viability. I therefore demand that my refusal of blood and choice of alternative nonblood management be followed and that my doctors manage my care and the care of my fetus without transfused blood.

(11) In sum, based on federal and state law, I demand that the instructions set forth in this document be followed regardless of my medical condition. Any attempt to administer blood to me contrary to my instructions will be a violation of my Fourteenth Amendment liberty interest in bodily self-determination, my First Amendment right of religious free exercise, my state constitutional rights of personal liberty or privacy and religious freedom, and my state common law rights of bodily self-determination and personal autonomy.

PART 2—Appointment of Health-Care Agent

(12) I hereby appoint the following person as my health-care agent: [NOTE: You may choose any adult to be your agent, but it is recommended that you not choose your physician, any of your physician's employees, or any employee of a hospital or nursing home where you might be a patient, unless the individual is related to you by blood, marriage, or adoption.]

Agent's full name: _____

Agent's address: _____

Work telephone: (____) _____ Home telephone: (____) _____ Other: (____) _____

(13) If the agent appointed above is unavailable, unable, or unwilling to serve or continue to serve, then I appoint the following alternate agent to serve with the same powers: [See "Note" in paragraph above.]

Alternate agent's full name: _____

Alternate agent's address: _____

Work telephone: (____) _____ Home telephone: (____) _____ Other: (____) _____

(14) To the extent that this document sets forth my health-care instructions, there is no need or reason to look to my agent for a decision. However, I grant my agent full power and authority to ensure that the decisions expressed in this document are followed by health-care providers. Further, I grant my agent full power and authority to make health-care decisions for me on matters not covered by this document. My agent's authority is effective as long as I am incapable of making my own health-care decisions.

(15) In harmony with the limitations in the preceding paragraph, my agent's authority shall include but not be limited to the following:

- (a) To consent to, refuse, or withdraw consent to any or all types of medical treatment, surgical procedures, diagnostic procedures, medication, and the use of other mechanical or procedures related to health care. This authorization includes the power to consent to pain-relieving medication for relief of severe and intractable pain.
- (b) To request, review, and receive any information, oral or written, regarding my physical or mental health, including but not limited to medical and hospital records, and to consent to the disclosure of this information.
- (c) To employ or discharge my health-care providers; to authorize my admission to or discharge from any hospital, nursing home, mental health or other medical care facility; and to take any lawful actions that may be necessary to carry out my wishes, including the granting of releases from liability to health-care providers.

(16) A copy of this document shall be as valid as the original. I ask that a copy of this document be made part of my permanent medical record. I have provided copies of this document to my health-care agent and alternate agent. It is my clear intention that this document be honored in any jurisdiction in which it is presented and that it be construed liberally to give my agent the fullest discretion in making health-care decisions on my behalf consistent with my instructions.

(17) If my health-care providers cannot respect my wishes as expressed in this document or as otherwise known to my agent and a transfer of care is necessary to effectuate my wishes, I direct my health-care providers to cooperate with and assist my agent in promptly transferring me to another health-care provider who will respect my wishes. In such circumstances, I direct my health-care providers to transfer promptly all my medical records, including a copy of this document, to the other health-care providers.

(18) This document revokes any prior living will, health-care power of attorney or health-care proxy executed by me.

(19) The provisions of this entire document are separable, so that the invalidity of one or more provisions shall not affect any others.

(20) I understand the full import of this document, and I am emotionally and mentally competent to execute it.

(21) SIGNED: _____
Signature Date

Address

(22) THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE WITNESSED BY TWO PERSONS:

STATEMENT BY WITNESSES

The principal (the person who signed this document) is personally known to me and I believe him or her to be of sound mind. I did not sign the principal's signature above for or at the direction of the principal. I am 18 years of age or older and I am not related to the principal by blood or marriage. In addition, I am not entitled to any portion of the estate of the principal according to the laws of intestate succession or under any will of principal or codicil thereto nor am I directly financially responsible for principal's medical care.

| | |
|--|--|
| _____ Signature of witness one / Date | _____ Signature of witness two / Date |
| _____ Print name | _____ Print name |
| _____ Address | _____ Address |