

# Are Jehovah's Witnesses competent to resolve the issue of blood transfusion?

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A small guidebook for the medical community  
and criticism of the Watchtower Society's teachings

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Włodzimierz  
Bednarski

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**A small guidebook for the medical community  
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teachings**

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Translation: Joanna Sznur-Oleksiewicz  
Editor: Szymon Matusiak

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Contact: [szymon.pm@gmail.com](mailto:szymon.pm@gmail.com)

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## Introduction

The Watchtower Society, founded in 1881 in the United States, today represents all Jehovah's Witnesses around the world. This organization was registered in 1884 as Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (changed to: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania). In 1879, C. T. Russell (1852-1916), the founder of the Society, began publishing the magazine *the Watchtower*, which Jehovah's Witnesses use until today. This semi-monthly (formerly a monthly magazine) contains and provides almost all of the teachings and guidelines for the publishers of this organization (published in over 300 languages!). The entire organization of Jehovah's Witnesses is now controlled by the so-called Governing Body, consisting of several people, whose legal and publishing tool is the aforementioned Society.

The Watchtower Society quite often changes its interpretation of the Bible, teachings and habits. Along with Szymon Matusiak, we have pointed them out in our book *Zmienne nauki Świadków Jehowy* (2012), in which we discussed hundreds of doctrinal changes made between 1879-2011 year (English electronic version *Ever-changing teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. The most important changes in the doctrine of the Watchtower Society in the years 1879-2015*, Gdańsk 2016).

However, very few people realize that the Watchtower Society has repeatedly changed since the early 1920s its approach towards medicine and treatment. These changes introduced by Jehovah's Witnesses shocked themselves, including their families which did not belong to the organization, as well as public opinion.

In our study, we will clearly point out that this variability in medical issues makes the Watchtower Society an incompetent organization in this field, and especially regarding its determination of refusing blood transfusions.

In this book we also discuss the problem of vaccinations, transplants and blood fractions. It is only after looking at these issues that everyone can judge whether Jehovah's Witnesses are a reliable religious group in any medical matter and how much their medical habits are made on the basis of science. The Watchtower Society usually, as we will prove, first develops a new religious motive for its change and then tries to support it with medical authorities.

It is also worthwhile to introduce at this step a short extract from the Watchtower Society publications to illustrate how this organization reasoned its changes of beliefs (the so-called "new light") and what happens to those who would not accept them:

*Wrong attitudes, beliefs, and practices have gradually been cleared out, and any who have chosen to cling to these have gone with them. (Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom 1993 p. 641).*

*Why have there been changes over the years in the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses? (...) Increased knowledge often requires adjustments in one's thinking. Jehovah's Witnesses are willing humbly to make such adjustments. (Reasoning From the Scriptures 1989 p. 205).*

*We, then, must avoid the snare of jealously trying to protect our own cherished ideas or ways that are not solidly based on God's Word. We do well to accept the fresh light shed on the Word of God through the channel that Jehovah is using today. (The Watchtower October 15, 2002 p. 30, emphasis added).*

In our publication we skip the discussion of religious issues and arguments from the Bible, which Jehovah's Witnesses invoke to justify their changes in the field of medicine. Our intention is to solely show their behavior, determination and unscriptural argumentation.

We want to help the medical community to learn more about the

attitude of Jehovah's Witnesses toward medical treatments to contrast this with what is being conveyed to them by the so-called *Hospital Liaison Committees* (established in 1979), along with the basic and new publications of the Watchtower Society.

We believe that our study will allow others to understand a bit a regular Jehovah's Witness who is influenced by the changing teachings of the Watchtower Society and the Governing Body that oversees it.

Note: This book in the Polish edition is available for free in electronic form at the following address:

<http://piotrandryszczak.pl/vademecum/czy-swiadkowie-jehowy-sa-kompetentni-w-orzekaniu-o-transfuzji-krwi.html>

## Vaccinations, vaccines

One of the public's shameful cases was the Jehovah's Witnesses' rejection of immunization. The Watch Tower Society had had three positions in its history regarding vaccines. Initially, they accepted it, then sharply negated them and finally (in 1952) allowed the vaccines again.

### Vaccines accepted until 1921

Until 1921, the Watchtower Society did not raise any criticism towards the vaccines. Their journal *The Golden Age* dated April 27 1921 (English edition), published an article that praised the vaccine. In this article the invention of the vaccines was considered as a proof of the invisible return of Christ, which supposedly occurred in 1874 (today Jehovah's Witnesses teach that this event occurred in 1914, not in 1874):

*Your readers will not fail to notice that it is only since our Lord's Return in 1874 A.D., that the above wonderful discoveries in medicine were made. (The Golden Age April 27, 1921 p. 441).*

*In recent years our knowledge regarding the specific bacterial anti-bodies produced by inoculation has greatly increased. The immune substance develops slowly and increases gradually in quantity as the result of successive inoculations, and when once produced it is eliminated slowly from the system, so that the immunity lasts from three months to several years. It may be assumed that the success which has so far been achieved from the use of these detoxicated vaccines represents only the beginning of the ultimate possibilities of the immunizing agents in the prevention and cure of disease. (The Golden Age April 27, 1921 p. 442).*

It must be stressed here, that in the early years of the Watchtower Society, various inventions, and those in the field of medicine, were counted among the characteristic signs of a 'new day' for the earth that came. Along with the invisible return of the Messiah in 1874.

*It was in the year 1874, the date of our Lord's second presence, that the first labor organization in the world was created. From that time forward there has been a marvelous increase of light, and the inventions and discoveries have been too numerous for us to mention all of them here, but mention is made of some of those that have come to light since 1874, as further evidence of the Lord's presence since that date, as follows: Adding machines, aeroplanes, aluminum, antiseptic surgery, artificial dyes, automatic couplers, automobiles, barbed wire, bicycles, carborundum, cash registers, celluloid.... (The Harp of God 1921 pp. 234-235).*

## **Vaccines negated between 1921-1952**

In the same year of 1921, a few months later, the Watch Tower Society radically rejected the immunization. The criticism of the vaccines was carried out by the organization for many years until the end of 1952. Over that period of time they were discouraging its members from vaccination, citing above all the law of God:

*Vaccination never prevented anything and never will, and is the most barbarous practice of an otherwise civilized nation. (...) We are in the last days; and the devil is slowly losing his hold, making a strenuous effort meanwhile to do all the damage he can, and to his credit can such evils be placed. (...) Use your rights as American citizens to forever abolish the devilish practice of vaccination. (The Golden Age October 12, 1921 p. 17).*

*Thinking people would rather have smallpox than vaccination, because the latter sows the seed of syphilis, cancers, eczema, erysipelas, scrofula, consumption, even leprosy and many other loathsome affections. Hence the practice of vaccination is a crime, an outrage and a delusion. (The Golden Age May 1, 1929 p. 502).*

*The Sacredness of Human Blood (...) REASONS WHY VACCINATION IS UNSCRIPTURAL*

*(...) This plainly suggests that much of the looseness of our day along sexual lines may be traceable to the easy and continued violation of the divine commands to keep human and animal blood apart from each other. With cells of foreign blood racing through his veins man is not normal, not himself, but lacks the poise and balance which make for self-control. (...) Vaccination is a direct violation of the everlasting covenant that God made with Noah after the flood. (The Golden Age February 4, 1931 p. 293).*

*Vaccination has never saved a human life. It does not prevent smallpox. (...) The man that makes it his business to pollute the blood of man with all manner of filth taken from the blood of animals is committing one of the most criminal offenses toward God that was ever committed by man. (The Golden Age February 4, 1931 pp. 294-295).*

#### *Vaccination – Why Not?*

*Of all the inventions that have been foisted upon mankind for their defilement the most subtly devilish is that of vaccination. (The Golden Age February 4, 1931 p. 295).*

#### *Syphilitic Symptomal After-Effects*

*There is a striking similarity in the aftereffects of vaccination to the constitutional derangements resulting from venereal syphilis. The only comparative difference would seem to be a usual absence of the marked scrofulous symptoms often met with in sufferers from this disease. (The Golden Age February 4, 1931 p. 295).*

#### *Its Dementializing Influence*

*One of the noticeable marked effects of vaccination upon the human system is that of mental and moral degeneration. However, not an who are vaccinated perceptibly experience these degenerating influences. The reason for this is that the exercise of the mind and win in proper channels tends to resist dementializing and moral degenerating influences. But sometimes even with such, dementializing influences are too strong and insanity results. And insanity has had a tremendous impetus since vaccination and serum*

*treatments became general. (The Golden Age February 4, 1931 p. 298).*

*The theory that vaccination results in a blood poison related to venereal syphilis is not a mere opinion. And while it is usually of a somewhat milder form, it has, nevertheless, an insidious weakening effect upon constitutional vitality and, what is even worse, an apparent influence towards mental deterioration. This influence in the young would in many cases naturally cause a moral reflex toward crime and immorality through a dulling of the moral senses in its paralyzing influence upon the higher brain cells. (The Golden Age February 4, 1931 p. 299).*

*The life is in the blood, and as vaccination is a direct injection of animal matter in the blood stream, vaccination is a direct violation of the holy law of Jehovah God. (The Golden Age April 24, 1935 p. 471).*

*While the ecclesiastics inoculate the people with spiritually poisonous doctrines, the medicos vaccinate them with deadly serums. How the Devil must laugh at the cruel hoax by which bodies are said to be made healthy through the injection of diseased tissues, and immunity to disease is obtained by corrupting the blood-stream! (Consolation May 31, 1939 p. 3, article „The Crime of Vaccination”).*

In addition, short texts against vaccination were published. The title of the second one listed below is self-explanatory and repeated in 1939:

*Vaccination and Sleeping Sickness (The Golden Age August 10, 1927 p. 712).*

*The Crime of Vaccination (The Golden Age October 16, 1929 p. 48).*

## Vaccines approved again since December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1952

Since December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1952, the Watchtower Society has rejected its prejudice against vaccination. During those days even the organization's missionaries were the subject of the immunization injections.

Sometimes the mass vaccination could not be served to all, due to the shortage of the vaccines available.

*Is vaccination a violation of God's law forbidding the taking of blood into the system? (...) The matter of vaccination is one for the individual that has to face it to decide for himself. Each individual has to take the consequences for whatever position and action he takes toward a case of compulsory vaccination, doing so according to his own conscience and his appreciation of what is for good health and the interests of advancing God's work. And our Society cannot afford to be drawn into the affair legally or take the responsibility for the way the case turns out. After consideration of the matter, it does not appear to us to be in violation of the everlasting covenant made with Noah, as set down in Genesis 9:4, nor contrary to God's related commandment at Leviticus 17:10-14. Most certainly it cannot reasonably or Scripturally be argued and proved that, by being vaccinated, the inoculated person is either eating or drinking blood and consuming it as food or receiving a blood transfusion. Vaccination does not bear any relationship to or any likeness to the intermarriage of angelic "sons of God" with the daughters of men, as described in Genesis 6:1-4. Neither can it be put in the same class as described at Leviticus 18:23, 24, which forbids the mingling of humans with animals. It has nothing to do with sex relations. Hence all objection to vaccination on Scriptural grounds seems to be lacking. The only proper objection that some persons could raise to it would be on the matter of the health risks involved or of keeping their blood stream clean from diseased matter coming from a foreign source, whether from an animal sore or from a human sore. Medical science, in fact, claims that vaccination actually results in building up the vitality of the blood to resist the disease against which the*

*person is inoculated. But, of course, that is a question for each individual concerned to decide for himself and as he sees it to be Jehovah's will for him. We merely offer the above information on request, but can assume no responsibility for the decision and course the reader may take. (The Watchtower December 15, 1952 p. 764).*

*Vaccination or Inoculation Not Feeding on Blood; Not Connected with Sex Relations ("Make Sure of All Things" 1953, 1957 p. 48).*

These words are clearly a polemic with the previous point of view represented in the past. It looks like the organization was arguing against its own previous views.

*Often vaccinations or inoculations, which are not made from blood, are required when children enter school or when tourists or missionaries travel to foreign countries. The objective is to stimulate the producing of antibodies in advance to prevent a person from contracting a certain disease should he be exposed to it. (The Watchtower June 1, 1974 p. 351).*

*Although the Kingdom work was still under ban in Portugal, thousands there prepared to travel through Spain to Toulouse, France. Their spirits were high. Then news came of a cholera outbreak in Spain. Only those vaccinated against cholera could travel through that country. However, there was insufficient vaccine available for all from Portugal who wanted to attend the convention. (2000 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses pp. 76).*

Vaccinations were even called "good news for millions of people":

*In 1955, when Dr. Jonas E. Salk discovered a vaccine that was effective in preventing paralytic polio, that, too, was received by millions as good news, but neither was that the top news story of our time. (The Watchtower February 15, 1962 p. 100).*

After releasing the ban on vaccinations, even N. Knorr (the president of the Watchtower Society, died 1977) emphasized that he used them while travelling to other countries:

*At last the health officer decided that any holding a certificate showing inoculation for yellow fever could be passed through to go on their way. I had such a certificate, but Brother Franz was without one, as he had not expected to go to any territory where yellow fever prevailed. Therefore he and about fifteen other passengers lacking the certificate (very rarely needed, except in certain parts of Africa) were detained. (The Watchtower May 15, 1957 p. 300).*

Interestingly, before 1952 the vaccines could somehow be provided for travelling visitors and missionaries of the Watchtower Society. Could it be that they were allowed to receive them, and ordinary followers were not?

### **Stipulation applying to the use of vaccines**

Obviously, after allowing the practice of vaccination among Jehovah's Witnesses, the Watchtower Society stipulated it. The condition was that only such vaccines should be used which did not contain ingredients of blood, but that fact sometimes makes vaccination impossible. The article of *Awake!* August 8, 1993 pp. 22-25 *Should My Family Be Immunized?* mentions several types of vaccines which should be avoided by Jehovah's Witnesses, because some vaccines contain ingredients of blood:

#### *Immunizations Not Derived From Blood*

*Baby shots (DPT, OPV, MMR)*

*Hib vaccine*

*Pneumovax*

*Toxoids*

*Flu shots*

*Recombivax-HB*

#### *Immunizations Derived From Blood*

*Heptavax-B*

*Rhogam*

*Antitoxins*

*Antivenins (for snake and spider venom)*  
*Immune globulins (for various diseases)*  
*Gamma globulin*  
*Hyperimmune serum preparations (antirabies serum, for example)*  
(Awake! August 8, 1993 p. 24).

The other publication gave the following reply to the question: “*Would it be proper to accept a vaccination or some other medical injection containing albumin derived from human blood?*”:

*Frankly, each Christian must personally decide on this.(...) Other medical preparations may come into use in the future that involve a comparatively small amount of albumin, since pharmaceutical companies develop new products or change the formulas of existing ones. Christians may thus want to consider whether albumin is part of a vaccination or other injection that a doctor recommends. If they have doubts or have reason to believe that albumin is a component, they can inquire of their physician. (Watchtower October 1, 1994 p. 31).*

# Transplants

One of the strange behaviors the Jehovah's Witnesses were cultivating was the rejection of transplantation. The Watchtower Society had three positions in its history regarding this matter. Initially, they had accepted them, later on denied them and called "cannibalism", and finally in 1980, the organization allowed its followers to undergo the transplants.

## Transplants accepted until 1967

Until 1967, the Watchtower Society did not criticize transplants, what's more, they had positively spoken about them, even mentioning Creator:

*Just as a well-equipped repair shop carries stocks of extra parts for the machines it services, so the modern hospital has on hand not only natural spare parts but also many substitute materials with which to rebuild and fix up human machinery. (Awake! December 22, 1949 p. 19).*

*Replacing exterior parts of the human body is wonderful enough, but when machines can take over the duties of organs on the inside it is little short of a miracle. (Awake! December 22, 1949 p. 20).*

*Even a grafted kidney, although its nerves are cut, starts to work at once to give man efficient and unfailing service. Such marvels inspire praise to man's Creator. (Awake! February 22, 1963 p. 18).*

*Is there anything in the Bible against giving one's eyes (after death) to be transplanted to some living person? (...) The question of placing one's body or parts of one's body at the disposal of men of science or doctors at one's death for purposes of scientific experimentation or replacement in others is frowned upon by certain religious bodies. However, it does not seem that any Scriptural principle or law is involved. It therefore is something that each*

*individual must decide for himself. If he is satisfied in his own mind and conscience that this is a proper thing to do, then he can make such provision, and no one else should criticize him for doing so. On the other hand, no one should be criticized for refusing to enter into any such agreement. (The Watchtower August 1, 1961 p. 480).*

## **Transplants negated between 1967-1980**

At the end of 1967, Jehovah's Witnesses changed their minds about transplants. Continuously, throughout the 1967-1980, the Watchtower Society criticized transplants, even calling them "cannibalism":

*Is there any Scriptural objection to donating one's body for use in medical research or to accepting organs for transplant from such a source? (...) Humans were allowed by God to eat animal flesh and to sustain their human lives by taking the lives of animals, though they were not permitted to eat blood. Did this include eating human flesh, sustaining one's life by means of the body or part of the body of another human, alive or dead? No! That would be cannibalism, a practice abhorrent to all civilized people. (...) Those who submit to such operations are thus living off the flesh of another human. That is cannibalistic. (The Watchtower November 15, 1967 p. 702).*

*But men today contemplate wholesale 'cannibalizing' of bodies. And even that seems too mild a term—for cannibals never maintained "farms" of human bodies to be "harvested." This shows where things can lead once men begin to violate Bible standards, including its prohibition of taking the blood of another creature into one's own body.—See Deuteronomy 12:23; Acts 15:28, 29. (The Watchtower November 15, 1974 p. 684).*

The term *cannibalism* in association with transplants was used in several other publications:

*Awake!* January 22, 1968 p. 30;

*Awake!* June 8, 1968 pp. 21-22;

*Awake!* October 22, 1969 p. 4.

*[Jesus] He used no human or animal donors for organ transplants. Instead he restored to health the very organs or body parts afflicted. (Is the Bible Really the Word of God? 1969 p.185).*

*It has long been known that heart-transplant patients have a higher-than-average amount of postoperative psychiatric problems. But it seems that the same is true with regard to some other vital organ transplants, such as kidney transplants. (...) A peculiar factor sometimes noted is a so-called 'personality transplant.' That is, the recipient in some cases has seemed to adopt certain personality factors of the person from whom the organ came. One young promiscuous woman who received a kidney from her older, conservative, well-behaved sister, at first seemed very upset. Then she began imitating her sister in much of her conduct. Another patient claimed to receive a changed outlook on life after his kidney transplant. Following a transplant, one mild-tempered man became aggressive like the donor. The problem may be largely or wholly mental. (The Watchtower September 1, 1975 p. 519).*

The Watchtower Society spoke about the risks associated with transplants in their other publications:

*Awake!* February 22, 1974 pp. 30-31;

*Awake!* March 22, 1974 pp. 21-23;

*The Watchtower* November 15, 1974 p. 684.

During that period, Jehovah's Witnesses could not even give their bodies to other people to save their lives:

*What should be done, though, when a Christian is asked to provide an organ for use in another person or to allow the body part of a deceased loved one to be so used? We might ask, If a Christian decided personally that he would not sustain his own life with the flesh of another imperfect human, could he conscientiously allow part of his flesh to be used in that way to sustain someone else? Even from a medical standpoint there is some question as to the wisdom*

*and ethicalness of some transplants. (The Watchtower November 15, 1967 p. 703).*

*The day before surgery was due the chairman of the kidney transplant team came in and asked if I would agree to making the kidney I was relinquishing available to a young patient whose kidneys had failed. It appears that though the artery leading to my kidney was not functioning, the kidney itself was in good shape. The doctor was keen to have my kidney, but I explained to him that as one of Jehovah's witnesses I must abide by what God's law indicates in such a matter. I told him he would get a frank and thorough answer to his inquiry after we had had a family discussion of God's Word on the issue. Later that day we informed him of our Biblical position with respect to human flesh and its use and quoted the relevant passages of God's Word. He asked if I could retain a good conscience after denying my kidney to his young patient. In reply I pointed out that my kidney was not mine to give, and must be used in harmony with the will of the One who created it. And he was compelled to admit that even with the kidney he could not guarantee the survival of his patient. (The Watchtower November 15, 1969 p. 701).*

## **Transplants accepted again since 1980**

In the 1980, the Watchtower Society accepted transplants, although it says that some of its followers still considered them to be "cannibalism":

*Regarding the transplantation of human tissue or bone from one human to another, this is a matter for conscientious decision by each one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Some Christians might feel that taking into their bodies any tissue or body part from another human is cannibalistic. (...) Other sincere Christians today may feel that the Bible does not definitely rule out medical transplants of human organs. (...) It may be argued, too, that organ transplants are different from cannibalism since the "donor" is not killed to supply food. In some cases persons nearing death actually have willed body parts to be used for transplants. (...) While the Bible specifically forbids consuming blood, there is*

*no Biblical command pointedly forbidding the taking in of other human tissue. For this reason, each individual faced with making a decision on this matter should carefully and prayerfully weigh matters and then decide conscientiously what he or she could or could not do before God. It is a matter for personal decision. (Gal. 6:5) The congregation judicial committee would not take disciplinary action if someone accepted an organ transplant. (The Watchtower March 15, 1980 p. 31).*

*The Witnesses do not feel that the Bible comments directly on organ transplants; hence, decisions regarding cornea, kidney, or other tissue transplants must be made by the individual Witness. (Awake! June 22, 1982 p. 26).*

*The Witnesses do not feel that the Bible comments directly on organ transplants; hence, decisions regarding cornea, kidney, or other tissue transplants must be made by the individual Witness. (How Can Blood Save Your Life? 1990 p. 28).*

## **Stipulations to the use of transplants**

Interestingly, the new light wasn't unconditional. Immediately after the formal permission was given, stipulations were added. The condition is to carry out the transplants "without using blood", which often prevents them:

*Of course, if a transplant should require taking in another person's blood, undeniably that would be contrary to God's command.—Acts 15:19, 20. (The Watchtower March 15, 1980 p. 31).*

*The conscience of some Witnesses permits them to accept organ transplants if done without blood. A report of 13 kidney transplants concluded: "The overall results suggest that renal transplantation can be safely and efficaciously applied to most Jehovah's Witnesses." (Transplantation, June 1988). (How Can Blood Save Your Life? 1990 p. 16).*

*Could a Christian accept a bone-marrow transplant, since blood is made in the marrow? (...) Of course, marrow used in human marrow transplants is from live donors, and the withdrawn marrow may have some blood with it. Hence, the Christian would have to resolve for himself whether—to him—the bone-marrow graft would amount to simple flesh or would be unbled tissue. Additionally, since a marrow graft is a form of transplant, the Scriptural aspects of human organ transplants should be considered.(...) Finally, writing in Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine (Update I, 1981, page 138), Dr. D. E. Thomas observes that "virtually all marrow transplant recipients will require platelet transfusions" and many are given "packed red blood cells." So the Christian should consider what additional issues he would have to face if he submitted to a marrow transplant.—Proverbs 22:3. Though a personal decision has to be made on this matter, the Bible's comments about blood and marrow should help the individual to decide. (The Watchtower May 15, 1984 p. 31).*

## **Blood fractions**

Before we go into the problem of blood transfusion, we first want to say a few words about the blood components and fractions itself. We find it important for the reader to go into more details to illustrate how unstable and unpredictable are the interpretations that the Watchtower Society has been propagating for many years.

Blood components were rejected and forbidden by the Watchtower Society from 1944-1945, and it remains unchanged until now. However, the policy concerning blood fractions is a different story. They were rejected since the 1944-1945, but from the late 1960s, and especially the 1970s, blood fractions have been accepted.

### **Blood fractions negated**

Initially, the Watchtower Society did not allow its followers to accept the “blood fractions” as well as its basic components and blood transfusion. This view was in force from the mid-1940s:

*We are told it takes one and a third pints of whole blood to get enough of the blood protein or “fraction” known as gamma globulin for one injection. And since from the foregoing it must be admitted that such use of human blood is highly questionable, what justification can there be for the use of gamma globulin? Further, those interested in the Scriptural aspect will note that its being made of whole blood places it in the same category as blood transfusions as far as Jehovah’s prohibition of taking blood into the system is concerned. – See Leviticus 17:10-14; Acts 15:20, 28, 29. (Awake! January 8, 1954 p. 24).*

*While this physician argues for the use of certain blood fractions, particularly albumin, such also come under the Scriptural ban. (Awake! September 8, 1956 p. 20).*

*Although Jehovah's witnesses will not eat blood as a food, nor in medical use consent to any kind of blood transfusion or, in place of it, an infusion of any blood fraction or blood substance, this does not rule out all medical treatment. (Blood, Medicine and the Law of God 1961 p. 39).*

*Is God's law violated by such medical use of blood? Is it wrong to sustain life by infusions of blood or plasma or red cells or the various blood fractions? Yes! (The Watchtower September 15, 1961 p. 558).*

*In the case of other products, a similar procedure may be followed. If you have reason to believe that a certain product contains blood or a blood fraction, ask the one who sells it. If he does not know, write to the manufacturer. Sometimes labels show whether a blood fraction is used, but not always. For example, a label may say that a certain product contains albumin. Does that mean that it contains a blood fraction? Look up the word albumin in a good reference book, perhaps an encyclopedia in your local library or even a good dictionary. You will learn that albumin is found, not only in blood serum, but also in milk and eggs. The only way to find out the source of the albumin in the particular product in question is to make inquiry of those who prepare it. However, if the label says that certain tablets contain hemoglobin, similar checking will reveal that this is from blood; so a Christian knows, without asking, that he should avoid such a preparation. Clearly, these are matters that each individual can best check on locally. (The Watchtower November 1, 1961 p. 669).*

*Or the doctor may tell him, "What you need is red cells to carry oxygen. We have red cells that we can use. How about that?" The Christian may not be well versed in medical matters. Shall he call his congregation servant or the Society? That should not be necessary if he is prepared to carry his own load of responsibility. He need only ask the doctor: "From what was the plasma taken?" "How are the red cells obtained?" "Where did you get this substance?" If the answer is "Blood," he knows what course to take, for it is not just whole blood but anything that is derived from blood and used to*

sustain life or strengthen one that comes under this principle. (*The Watchtower* February 15, 1963 p. 124).

*In a letter that Dr. Jerome H. Kay of Los Angeles wrote to Awake! magazine in November 1973, he also noted that his team now performs bloodless open-heart surgery on the majority of all his patients. Dr. Kay added: "It has been a pleasure operating upon patients who are Jehovah's Witnesses. We do not give these patients any blood or blood substitutes." (Awake! June 22, 1974 p. 20).*

Interestingly, at least in one statement from the late 1950s the Watchtower Society allowed the use of blood fractions. Moreover, they admitted they changed its standpoint on this:

*Are we to consider the injection of serums such as diphtheria toxin antitoxin and blood fractions such as gamma globulin into the blood stream, for the purpose of building up resistance to disease by means of antibodies, the same as the drinking of blood or the taking of blood or blood plasma by means of transfusion? (...) No, it does not seem necessary that we put the two in the same category, although we have done so in times past. (...) The injection of antibodies into the blood in a vehicle of blood serum or the use of blood fractions to create such antibodies is not the same as taking blood, either by mouth or by transfusion, as a nutrient to build up the body's vital forces. While God did not intend for man to contaminate his blood stream by vaccines, serums or blood fractions, doing so does not seem to be included in God's expressed will forbidding blood as food. It would therefore be a matter of individual judgment whether one accepted such types of medication or not. (*The Watchtower* September 15, 1958 p. 575, emphasis added).*

## **Blood fractions accepted**

Especially in the 1970s, the Watchtower Society gradually began to change the decision and allow to use some of the blood fractions, e.g. those included in medicines. With time this change has been extended to all fractions:

*Is it proper for a Christian to accept medical treatment involving a serum prepared from blood? (...) We believe that here the conscience of each Christian must decide. Some may feel that accepting such a serum does not constitute an act of disrespect for the sacredness of life and of God as the life Source, that it does not constitute a flouting of God's expressed will concerning the use of blood to feed the body. On the other hand, the conscience of others may call on them to reject all such serums. (The Watchtower June 1, 1974 pp. 351-352).*

*It acknowledged that the medical profession is increasingly turning from the use of whole blood transfusions. Instead, human blood is being separated into primary components that can be transfused—red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma. On this we said: "We believe that the use of blood as a [life-sustaining] transfusion, or the use of a blood component to accomplish a similar purpose, is obviously in conflict with the Scriptural command to 'abstain . . . from blood.' (Acts 15:20)"*

*What, however, about accepting serum injections to fight against disease, such as are employed for diphtheria, tetanus, viral hepatitis, rabies, hemophilia and Rh incompatibility? This seems to fall into a 'gray area.' Some Christians believe that accepting a small amount of a blood derivative for such a purpose would not be a manifestation of disrespect for God's law; their conscience would permit such. (Compare Luke 6:1-5.) Others, though, feel conscientiously obliged to refuse serums because these contain blood, though only a tiny amount. Hence, we have taken the position that this question must be resolved by each individual on a personal basis. We urge each one to strive to have a clear conscience and to be responsive to God's guidance found in His Word. (The Watchtower June 15, 1978 pp. 30-31).*

*While these verses are [from the Bible – the author's note] not stated in medical terms, Witnesses view them as ruling out transfusion of whole blood, packed RBCs, and plasma, as well as WBC and platelet administration. However, Witnesses' religious understanding does not absolutely prohibit the use of components such as albumin, immune globulins, and hemophiliac*

*preparations; each Witness must decide individually if he can accept these. (Awake! June 22, 1982 p. 25).*

*While these verses are not stated in medical terms, Witnesses view them as ruling out transfusion of whole blood, packed RBCs, and plasma, as well as WBC and platelet administration. However, Witnesses' religious understanding does not absolutely prohibit the use of components such as albumin, immune globulins, and hemophiliac preparations; each Witness must decide individually if he can accept these. (How Can Blood Save Your Life? 1990 p. 27).*

*The above material shows that Jehovah's Witnesses refuse transfusions of both whole blood and its primary blood components. (...) Beyond that, when it comes to fractions of any of the primary components, each Christian, after careful and prayerful meditation, must conscientiously decide for himself. (The Watchtower June 15, 2000 p. 31).*

*Are fractions also covered by the command to abstain from blood? We cannot say. The Bible does not give specific direction on the subject of fractions. Of course, many fractions are derived from blood that has been donated for medical purposes. Each Christian should make a conscientious decision as to whether he or she will accept or will reject the medical use of these substances. When making such decisions, consider the following questions: Am I aware that refusing all blood fractions means that I will not accept some medications, such as certain ones that fight viruses and diseases or that help blood to clot in order to stop bleeding? Could I explain to a physician why I reject or accept the use of certain blood fractions? (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 11, 2006 p. 3).*

In the book “*Keep Yourselves in God's Love*” (2008), on page 216 reader can find the table that lists the blood fractions (obtained from red blood cells, white blood cells, blood platelets and plasma), that can be ingested by “personal decision”. See the following paragraph below:

*Should Christians accept therapies incorporating blood fractions? The Bible does not give specific details, so each one must make his own conscientious decision before God. Some would refuse all fractions, reasoning that God's Law to Israel required that blood removed from a creature be poured "out on the ground." (Deuteronomy 12:22-24) Others, while refusing transfusions of whole blood or its major components, might accept treatments involving a fraction. They may reason that at some point fractions that have been extracted from blood cease to represent the life of the creature from which the blood was taken. ("Keep Yourselves in God's Love" 2008 pp. 215-216).*

Jehovah's Witnesses cannot become blood donors (for those who do not share JW's views), even if the blood would be solely used to obtain a blood fraction or produce medicine made out of blood:

*At times the request is for blood that is to be used in giving blood transfusions. However, it is our understanding of the Bible's command to "abstain . . . from blood" that it should not be eaten or used in any other way. Therefore, as a matter of conscience, we do not give or accept blood.—Genesis 9:4-6; Leviticus 17:10-14; Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29. (School and Jehovah's Witnesses 1983 p. 25).*

Although Jehovah's Witnesses do not donate blood themselves, referring to the Bible, they use blood products derived from stored and processed blood from honorary blood donors.

## Past beliefs on blood transfusion

Until 1944, the Watchtower Society did not express any criticism against blood transfusions. On the contrary, they praised the benefits of it. Organization followed and seemed to be captivated by all the new facts in this field.

Here are a few texts that show that positive attitude towards blood transfusion.

### *Remarkable Tale of Womanly Heroism*

*The remarkable story comes from California of an automobile accident involving a man, his wife, and his niece. The automobile went over the side of a cliff, killing the man. His wife and his niece, injured, lay in the bottom of the canyon for three days, awaiting discovery. Fearing the death of the child, the woman deliberately cut her arms and breast with glass from the windshield of provide blood to keep the child alive during the cold nights. The child will recover, but the heroine is expected to die. (The Golden Age December 12, 1924 p. 163).*

*“Blood of deceased ones saves lives of dying people” Currently, blood transfusion is in everyday use and there is no fear of harmful results, since they were not discovered for a long time (...) Many people could feel disgusted of undergoing such a macabre operation. But when we reflect on it, we come to conclusion that this kind of invention can give humanity great services. The blood of one deceased person can save lives of a dozen or so dying people. This one consideration should convince everyone to this kind of operation, which in its essence is nothing wrong. (New Day, Polish edition, No. 3, 1936 p. 48).*

### *The Mending of a Heart*

*In New York city a housewife in moving a boarder's things accidentally shot herself through the heart with his revolver. She was rushed to a hospital, her left breast was cut around, four ribs were cut away, the heart was lifted out, three stitches were taken, one of*

*the attending physicians in the great emergency gave a quart of his blood for transfusion, and today the woman lives and smiles gaily over what happened to her in the busiest 23 minutes of her life. (Consolation December 25, 1940 p. 19).*

*Some persons, however, object to changes in viewpoint, changes in understanding of certain scriptures or procedures. For example, since the 1940's Jehovah's witnesses have refused to give or accept blood transfusions, whereas prior to that they did not take this position. (The Watchtower August 15, 1972 p. 501, emphasis added).*

The above excerpts clearly show that Jehovah's Witnesses have had a positive approach towards transfusion, but they has changed it in diametrical way.

# Development of procedures for dealing with blood transfusion

Changes in Jehovah's Witnesses' attitude towards blood transfusion.

## Until 1944

The Watchtower Society admitted that until 1944, regarding the blood transfusion, Jehovah's Witnesses "they did not take this position" (i.e. the ban on such practice):

*Some persons, however, object to changes in viewpoint, changes in understanding of certain scriptures or procedures. For example, since the 1940's Jehovah's witnesses have refused to give or accept blood transfusions, whereas prior to that they did not take this position. (The Watchtower August 15, 1972 p. 501, emphasis added).*

## Years 1944-1945

Nowadays the Watchtower Society lists two dates regarding the rejection of the treatment by blood transfusion: 1944 and 1945.

*Earlier discussions of the sanctity of blood appeared in The Watch Tower of December 15, 1927, as well as The Watchtower of December 1, 1944, which specifically mentioned blood transfusions. (Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom 1993 p. 183).*

*So the sanctity of blood applies to all Christians, as shown in The Watchtower of July 1, 1945. That means not just refusing to eat animal blood, as in blood sausage, but also abstaining from human blood, as in the case of blood transfusions. (The Watchtower May 15, 1995 p. 23).*

*Not only as a descendant of Noah, but now also as one bound by God's law to Israel which incorporated the everlasting covenant regarding the sanctity of life-sustaining blood, the stranger was forbidden to eat or drink blood, whether by transfusion or by the*

mouth. (*Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10-14*). (*The Watchtower* December 1, 1944 p. 362).

*In the wake of World War II, during which it had become standard practice to treat wounded soldiers with blood transfusions, there was increased light on the sanctity of blood. The July 1, 1945, issue of The Watchtower encouraged “all worshipers of Jehovah who seek eternal life in his new world of righteousness to respect the sanctity of blood and to conform themselves to God’s righteous rulings concerning this vital matter.” (The Watchtower February 15, 2006 p. 29).*

### **Year 1951**

In 1951, probably for the first time, the Watchtower Society equated the blood transfusion with cannibalism (see *the Watchtower* July 1, 1951 p. 414). Since then, it has been called this way many times:

*Are you one to whom disobeying God’s law is repulsive? Then the taking of blood is just as despicable to you as cannibalism. Think of eating of the flesh of another human creature! It is shocking! Is drinking human blood any different? Does bypassing the mouth and putting it directly into the veins change it? Not at all! (*The Watchtower* July 1, 1966 p. 401).*

### **Year 1961**

In 1961, the Watchtower Society tightened up its policy on blood transfusion, by introducing disfellowshipping from the congregation of those who would accept it. Interestingly, there was no such sanction in this organization before that:

*Consistent with that understanding of matters, beginning in 1961 any who ignored the divine requirement, accepted blood transfusions, and manifested an unrepentant attitude were disfellowshipped from the congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (*Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom* 1993 pp. 183-184).*

*However, congregations have never been instructed to disfellowship those who voluntarily take blood transfusions or approve them. We let the judgment of such violators of God's law concerning the sacredness of blood remain with Jehovah, the Supreme Judge. (...) Since an individual is not disfellowshipped because of having voluntarily taken a blood transfusion or having approved of a dear one's accepting a blood transfusion, you have no right to bar this sister from the celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal. (The Watchtower August 1, 1958 p. 478).*

Interestingly enough, in the same year in which they introduced disfellowshipping for receiving transfusion, they admitted that the original Christian church did not think of a “thing as the modern blood transfusion”:

*Nevertheless, although the twelve apostles and their fellow members of the Jerusalem congregation may not have had such a thing as the modern blood transfusion in mind, yet the decree handed down by them included such a thing in its scope. (The Watchtower January 15, 1961 p. 63).*

More recently the similar statement appeared:

*Yet, would what the Bible says about blood rule out modern medical uses, such as transfusions, which clearly were not used in Noah's day or in the apostles' time? (The Watchtower June 15, 1991 p. 9, emphasis added).*

*Would the Biblical prohibition on blood cover medical uses, such as transfusions, which certainly were not known in the days of Noah, Moses, or the apostles? (How Can Blood Save Your Life? 1990 p. 6, emphasis added).*

## **1970's**

The Watchtower Society recalls that Jehovah's Witnesses began to protect themselves against a possible unexpected and unwanted

transfusion:

*By the 1970's, they made it a general practice to carry on their person a card to alert medical personnel to the fact that no blood was to be administered to them under any circumstances. (Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom 1993 p. 185).*

### **Year 2000 (2010)**

In the manual for the elders, issued in 2010, disfellowshipping for accepting blood transfusion, has been changed to “disassociation” which, however, has the same consequences for the culprit:

*Actions that may indicate disassociation include the following: (...) Willingly and unrepentantly taking blood. If someone willingly takes blood, perhaps because of being under extreme pressure, the committee should obtain the facts and determine the individual's attitude. If he is repentant, the committee would provide spiritual assistance in the spirit of Galatians 6:1 and Jude 22, 23. Since he is spiritually weak, he would not qualify for special privileges for a period of time, and it may be necessary to remove certain basic privileges. Depending on the circumstances, the committee may also need to arrange for an announcement to the congregation: “The elders have handled a matter having to do with [name of person]. You will be glad to know that spiritual shepherds are endeavoring to render assistance.” On the other hand, if the elders on the committee determine that he is unrepentant, they should announce his disassociation. (“Shepherd the Flock of God” – 1 Peter 5:2 2010 pp. 110, 111-112).*

This arrangement (concerning “disassociation”) has been already in use since 2000 in an internal letter addressed to travelling overseers. It has probably been implemented tactically, to please the “world” and especially secular authorities, in order that nobody could tell that Jehovah's Witnesses “throw away” (disfellowship) their members for receiving blood transfusion.

Here it is a quote from the letter dated April 26, 2000, that instructed to inform its congregational elders as follow:

*If a baptized person willfully and unrepentantly takes blood, he shows that he rejects God's standard. Thus he would have chosen to disassociate himself from the congregation. – Letter addressed to all travelling overseers.*

The consequences of “disassociation” have been described in the Watchtower Society’s literature even much earlier:

*In contrast, if a person who is a Christian chooses to disassociate himself, a brief announcement is made to inform the congregation, stating: “[Name of person] is no longer one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Such a person is treated in the same way as a disfellowshipped person. (Organized to Do Jehovah’s Will 2015 p. 142. See Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry 1983, 1989 p. 150, emphasis added).*

A “disassociated” Jehovah’s Witness is in a much worse situation, and he has even less rights than the “disfellowshipped” one, because there is no way to appeal against the decision of congregational leaders.

## **Blood transfusion – determination in avoiding it by Jehovah’s Witnesses and their children, and methods of the Watchtower Society used to fight it**

Below, we have listed the most popular methods of avoiding blood transfusions used by Jehovah’s Witnesses. In many cases, such methods are accepted and supported by the Watchtower Society, which propagates them in its publications. For most people, they may seem unconventional, but for Jehovah’s Witnesses, they are quite normal.

### **Carrying a card with a statement against transfusion, valid “even after losing consciousness”**

Jehovah’s Witnesses instructed by the Watchtower Society began to protect themselves against possible unexpected and unwanted transfusion:

*By the 1970’s, they made it a general practice to carry on their person a card to alert medical personnel to the fact that no blood was to be administered to them under any circumstances. After consultation with doctors and lawyers, the nature of the card was adjusted in order to make it a legal document. (Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom 1993 p. 185).*

*As recommended by medical experts, each Witness carries a Medical Document card. This is renewed annually and is signed by the person and by witnesses, often his next of kin. (How Can Blood Save Your Life? 1990 p. 18).*

*Even if a person is not a baptized minister of Jehovah’s Witnesses and does not have this document, he can prepare a similar written (preferably typewritten) statement. This ought to outline his wishes regarding medical treatment, state any limitations, and indicate who*

*should be contacted in case of an emergency. (Awake! March 8, 1991 pp. 4-5).*

The cited magazine, on pages 4-5, provides more detailed instruction regarding said statement.

Another publication also extensively discusses the matter, introducing it by self-explanatory title: *New Provision to Assist Us to Abstain From Blood:*

*The Governing Body has approved combining the essential elements of the durable power of attorney (DPA) document and the Advance Medical Directive/Release card into a single legal document, which we shall refer to generally as a DPA card. A DPA card has been prepared for each state. The actual title of the DPA card varies from state to state. You will need to fill out the DPA card for your state of residence only. (...) Before folding the DPA card, make good-quality photocopies for your health-care agent, alternate health-care agent, and doctor as well as for your own records. You may also want to provide copies for other family members and the congregation secretary. Copies should be single-sided on standard-size (8 ½" x 11") paper, with the DPA card centered on the page. The original DPA card, not a photocopy, should be kept on your person. (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 12, 2004 p. 7).*

## **Carrying always and everywhere children's "identification card" against transfusion**

The Watchtower Society demands parents to make sure their children keep their "identification card" with themselves all the time, including play time and entertainment.

*First, make sure all in the family have their personal medical directive document thoroughly filled out—dated, signed, and witnessed. Some brothers arriving at a hospital with an undated and/or unwitnessed document have had its validity challenged. And do all our unbaptized children have their filled-out identification*

*cards? If not, in an emergency involving your child, how do hospital personnel know your position on blood and whom to call? Then see to it that all keep these documents with them AT ALL TIMES. Check this with your children before they go to school each day, yes, even before they go to a playground or recreational area. All of us should be sure that these documents are with us at work, when on vacation, or at a Christian convention. Never be without them! (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 11, 1990 p. 3).*

*The Identity Card with the print date of 3/99 for unbaptized children of Witness parents has not changed. Parents should ensure that a card for each minor child is properly filled out and signed and that the child carries it at appropriate times. (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 12, 2004 p. 7).*

## **Updating medical files with the statement “I don’t wish a blood transfusion”**

The Watchtower Society recommends its followers to prepare and submit an appropriate medical statements against transfusion and ensure it is stored in their medical files:

*In order to prevent needless confrontations in emergency situations, early in the 1960’s Jehovah’s Witnesses began to make special visits to their doctors to discuss their position and provide them with appropriate literature. Later they requested that a written statement be placed in their individual medical files stating that no blood transfusions were to be given to them. (Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom 1993 p. 185).*

## **Take your child from hospital, even against the law**

The example below, of taking a child from the hospital, may be a role model for some Jehovah’s Witnesses how the “problem” can be solved. Especially, that the Watchtower Society did not condemn this

misbehaviour in their article (!):

*However, in Denmark there is one area where feelings have been running high, perhaps more so than in other places. This involves the stand taken by Jehovah's Witnesses with reference to blood transfusions. This question was dramatically publicized in March 1975, when a young couple took their three-year-old son from the children's hospital in Copenhagen. They did so because the doctor, in order to administer a blood transfusion against the wishes of the parents, had legal custody taken away from them. Knowing that they most likely would be pursued by the police, the parents sought refuge with some of their fellow believers. At the same time, they tried to find a doctor who was willing to treat the child without the use of blood. A national police hunt, with raids, ransacking and border controls, took place. This was accompanied by a veritable persecution campaign in the press, with headlines such as "Child Killers," "Religious Fanatics" and "Cynical Parents." Even bomb threats and cases of outright violence occurred. A couple of clergymen and a member of Parliament raised the question of whether the authorities should not take action against Jehovah's Witnesses. Meanwhile, the parents did find a doctor who was willing to respect their faith and to use alternate methods of treatment. Today the boy is alive and healthy. (The Watchtower March 1, 1981 p. 11).*

In another publication the Watchtower Society states that everyone can decide how to defy the transfusion:

*The extent to which a Christian will resist the administration of a blood transfusion in his case or in the case of a dependent is something for that person to decide and his congregation to examine. (The Watchtower August 15, 1967 p. 511).*

## **Possible participation of a patient in breaking the Divine Law or “independent” decision to “resist transfusion”**

In the article: *Is a Christian obligated to submit to a blood transfusion simply because a court orders it?* the Watchtower Society arouse guilt feeling in its followers by putting a blame if they don't follow “the law of God” and at the same time proclaiming they can make independent decision. Independent in the tight borders...:

*Is a Christian obligated to submit to a blood transfusion simply because a court orders it? (...) It is true that the court bears the responsibility for what it does, if it orders blood; but if any Christian tells a judge that, while he would not agree to a transfusion, he would not resist if the court ordered it, he is in actuality cooperating with them in violating God's law. Is that what he wants to do? If a Christian is firmly resolved to obey God's law on blood, it is difficult to see how he could simply be passive about the matter. The extent to which a Christian will resist the administration of a blood transfusion in his case or in the case of a dependent is something for that person to decide and his congregation to examine. (The Watchtower August 15, 1967 p. 511).*

### **Escape from a hospital**

In their text: *How strenuously should a Christian resist a blood transfusion that has been ordered or authorized by a court?* the Watchtower Society suggested that their followers could simply “escape” from the hospital, as a method to resist a blood transfusion:

*How strenuously should a Christian resist a blood transfusion that has been ordered or authorized by a court? (...) Jesus withdrew from the area when a crowd wanted to make him king. Similarly, if a court-authorized transfusion seemed likely, a Christian might choose to avoid being accessible for such a violation of God's law. (Matthew 10:16; John 6:15) At the same time, a Christian should wisely seek alternative medical treatment, thus making a genuine*

*effort to maintain life and to regain full health. If a Christian did put forth very strenuous efforts to avoid a violation of God's law on blood, authorities might consider him a lawbreaker or make him liable to prosecution. If punishment did result, the Christian could view it as suffering for the sake of righteousness. (The Watchtower June 15, 1991 p. 31).*

## **24 hours watch over a patient at risk from transfusion**

According to the Watchtower Society, elders and family members should watch (an adult or a child) and help them to continuously reject the blood transfusion:

*And you have your brothers and sisters in the local congregation who can give you much help and support. When there is a crisis, elders may consider it advisable to arrange a 24-hour watch at the hospital, preferably by an elder with the patient's parent or another close family member. Blood transfusions often are given when all relatives and friends have gone home for the night. (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 9, 1992 p. 4).*

## **Lawsuits against doctors for binding a willful patient to a bed and removal of protesting family members handcuffed**

Still after a court order regarding a transfusion, some Jehovah's Witnesses (family or caregiver of children) are continuing to protest and have to be handcuffed, and still doctors are being prosecuted for it:

*A Long Island case in which a Witness was tied down and transfused while her husband was hauled away in handcuffs has been taken to the New York High Court by the Watchtower Society's Legal Department. A ruling in favor of the personal rights of*

*Jehovah's Witnesses was obtained, and the case is now proceeding through the pretrial process in a civil lawsuit. (Awake! September 22, 1992 p. 12).*

*A lawsuit on behalf of a 16-year-old and his mother in federal court in Atlanta is nearing trial. The young boy was tied up and transfused for eight hours. The hearing to obtain a court order authorizing this conduct was held in the hospital and obtained without notice to the boy or his mother. (Awake! September 22, 1992 p. 12).*

Here is another example, a six-year-old child could not take a blood transfusion:

*Jenala Mukusao's six-year-old grandson, Michael, whom she cared for, was admitted to the hospital with severe anemia. Doctors ordered a transfusion. Sister Mukusao's refusal to give consent resulted in four days of intimidation and abuse. She said: "I pleaded with them and showed them my Medical Directive card, but they were not willing to listen. The nurses accused me of being a witch who wanted to kill my grandchild." (2006 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses p. 197).*

## **Speaking out, shouting, crying, psychological and physical methods**

In the text: *Is a person free from accountability for violating God's law about the sanctity of blood if he receives a transfusion as a result of a court order that overrides his decision not to take blood?* the following methods are listed, useful to fight against transfusion:

*Is a person free from accountability for violating God's law about the sanctity of blood if he receives a transfusion as a result of a court order that overrides his decision not to take blood? (...)*

*What, then, could bring accountability in such cases of court-ordered transfusions? A patient's failure to speak with conviction*

*when he had the opportunity, and then later failure to offer resistance, could contribute to his receiving an unwanted blood transfusion. (...) Of course, in some cases a person may have exhausted all mental and physical means to prevent such violation of God's law; he may even be unconscious. If, despite his every effort, a transfusion is forced on him, he must leave the matter in Jehovah's hands, trusting in his mercy. His position in this case is comparable to that of a woman who may be raped despite her continuous screams and physical efforts to resist her assailant. According to the Mosaic law, such a woman was guiltless. (Deut. 22:25-27) However, if she failed to scream, she was not blameless. (Deut. 22:23, 24) Accordingly, God would expect Christians today to take every step possible (that is not contrary to God's Word) in order to avoid being party to a violation of His law on blood. (The Watchtower September 1, 1973 pp. 543-544).*

## **Blood transfusion equated with rape**

In the text: *How strenuously should a Christian resist a blood transfusion that has been ordered or authorized by a court?* blood transfusion was equated with rape and the following reasoning was presented:

*How strenuously should a Christian resist a blood transfusion that has been ordered or authorized by a court? (...) We can appreciate, then, why the young Christian mentioned on page 17 told a court that "she considered a transfusion an invasion of her body and compared it to rape." Would any Christian woman, young or old, passively submit to rape, even if there were a legal grant that the fornication by sexual assault be carried out? (The Watchtower June 15, 1991 p. 31).*

## **Struggling, screaming, plucking the needle, destroying blood pouch**

In the text: *How strenuously should a Christian resist a blood transfusion that has been ordered or authorized by a court?* we find the following advice:

*How strenuously should a Christian resist a blood transfusion that has been ordered or authorized by a court? (...) Similarly, the 12-year-old quoted on the same page left no doubt that 'she would fight any court-authorized transfusion with all the strength she could muster, that she would scream and struggle, that she would pull the injecting device out of her arm and would attempt to destroy the blood in the bag over her bed.' She was firmly resolved to obey the divine law. (The Watchtower June 15, 1991 p. 31).*

In an article titled *Wisdom Beyond Her Years*, the Watchtower Society described a 12-year old girl that has rejected the blood transfusion and thus set her as role-model for Witnesses:

*She said she would strenuously and physically resist any effort to give her a blood transfusion. Her simple and bold statement touched everyone's heart. (Awake! October 22, 1987 p. 18).*

### **Polemics with doctors and judges**

The Watchtower Society recommends to prepare for polemics with doctors, hospital directors and judges:

*You should know that there are some questions that doctors and others pose that are not always asked with good motive. The one most frequently asked by doctors (and by some judges) is:*

*"Would you rather die (let your child die) than accept a 'lifesaving blood transfusion'?"*

*If you say yes, that would be correct in a religious sense. But that reply is often misunderstood and at times even produces adverse court decisions. You must remember that you are not in the ministry*

*in this situation. Rather, you are talking about needed medical treatment. Hence, you must adapt to your audience, medical or legal.—Ps. 39:1; Col. 4:5, 6. To a doctor, a judge, or a hospital administrator, “yes” can mean you want to be a martyr or want to sacrifice your child for your faith. Telling them about your strong faith in the resurrection in this situation will not usually help. They will brand you a religious fanatic, unable to make rational decisions when life is at stake. In the case of children, they will see you as a negligent parent who refuses so-called “lifesaving” medical treatment. (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 11, 1990 p. 6).*

## **Looking for another surgeon**

It is recommended (by the Watchtower Society) to search for “another physician” and thus use this as an excuse to leave the hospital and postpone transfusion:

*If surgery is needed, it will be important to discuss with the doctors ahead of time the Christian stand on blood, so as to obtain their assurance that under no circumstances will blood be administered before, during or after the operation. And if a particular doctor does not feel that he can perform the surgery without resorting to blood, by the Christian’s knowing that beforehand he can seek the services of another physician. (Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Question of Blood 1977 p. 60).*

## **Calling out for elders and the Hospital Liaison Committee**

The presence of congregational elders and members of Hospital Liaison Committee has great impact on the steadfastness of visited patient in his or her rejection of blood transfusion:

*If any medical situation deteriorates seriously to the point where a transfusion is being threatened, check this box as to what you should do:*

- 1. Call elders in your congregation to assist you.*

2. *Have elders call the nearest Hospital Liaison Committee if needed.*

3. *The Hospital Liaison Committee can assist you in speaking to doctors and others.*

4. *The Hospital Liaison Committee can help you contact other doctors for consultation with present surgeons as to alternatives.*

5. *The Hospital Liaison Committee can also help you get transferred to a more respectful facility for needed treatment. (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 11, 1990 p. 5).*

## **Lawsuits against doctors and hospitals**

The Watchtower Society informs its publishers they can sue the doctors and hospitals for trying to save their lives (!) through blood transfusion.

*When respect for their religious belief regarding the sanctity of blood could not be assured by other means, Jehovah's Witnesses have, on occasion, taken doctors and hospitals to court. They have usually sought simply a restraining order or an injunction. In recent years, however, they have even filed damage suits against doctors and hospitals that have acted high-handedly. (Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom 1993 p. 185).*

## **Instructing “infants” about the ban on blood transfusion?**

One of the methods used to prevent blood transfusion is to teach children this approach from their infancy (!):

*While our offspring are babies or too young to understand, Jehovah God can view them as clean and acceptable on the basis of our devotion. (1 Corinthians 7:14) So it is true that infants in a Christian household may not yet have understood and made a choice about obeying God's law on blood. Are we, however, doing our best to instruct them in this vital matter? (The Watchtower June 15, 1991 p. 15).*

## **Playing a scene on the topic of transfusion, involving a child of Jehovah's Witnesses, a doctor and a judge**

It is recommended for Jehovah's Witnesses to play at home a scene on the topic of transfusion, involving their child and a doctor and a judge:

*If you have children, are you sure that they agree with and can explain the Bible-based stand on transfusions? Do they truly believe this stand to be God's will? Are they convinced that to violate God's law would be so serious that it could put at risk a Christian's prospect for everlasting life? Wise parents will review these matters with their children, whether they be very young or almost adults. Parents may hold practice sessions in which each youth faces questions that might be posed by a judge or a hospital official. The goal is not to have a youth repeat by rote selected facts or answers. It is more important that they know what they believe, and why. Of course, at a court hearing, the parents or others might present information about the risks of blood and the availability of alternative therapies. But what a judge or an official would likely seek to learn from speaking with our children is whether they maturely understand their situation and options and also whether they have their own values and firm convictions. (The Watchtower June 15, 1991 p. 18).*

## **Blood transfusion equated with cannibalism**

Since the Watchtower Society equates blood transfusion with cannibalism, many Jehovah's Witnesses, for this reason, reject it in very radical way:

*Are you one to whom disobeying God's law is repulsive? Then the taking of blood is just as despicable to you as cannibalism. Think of eating of the flesh of another human creature! It is shocking! Is drinking human blood any different? Does bypassing the mouth and putting it directly into the veins change it? Not at all! (The Watchtower July 1, 1966 p. 401).*

*Humans were allowed by God to eat animal flesh and to sustain their human lives by taking the lives of animals, though they were not permitted to eat blood. Did this include eating human flesh, sustaining one's life by means of the body or part of the body of another human, alive or dead? No! That would be cannibalism, a practice abhorrent to all civilized people. (The Watchtower November 15, 1967 p. 702, emphasis added).*

*But men today contemplate wholesale 'cannibalizing' of bodies. And even that seems too mild a term—for cannibals never maintained "farms" of human bodies to be "harvested." This shows where things can lead once men begin to violate Bible standards, including its prohibition of taking the blood of another creature into one's own body.—See Deuteronomy 12:23; Acts 15:28, 29. (The Watchtower November 15, 1974 p. 684).*

Because the Watchtower Society equates consuming blood with blood transfusion, its other words probably refer to blood transfusions:

*Eating human flesh and drinking blood would be cannibalism, a violation of God's law. (Genesis 9:3, 4; Leviticus 17:10) (The Watchtower February 15, 2003 p. 15).*

*Furthermore, eating actual human flesh and blood would be cannibalism. (Insight on the Scriptures 2015, Vol. 2, p. 271).*

## **Doctors who are Jehovah's Witnesses can carry out blood transfusions**

The biggest paradox in the Watchtower Society's teachings is that although publishers of this organization cannot accept blood transfusion, they can carry out transfusion on other people (!):

*Some doctors who are Jehovah's witnesses have administered blood transfusions to persons of the world upon request. However, they do not do so in the case of one of Jehovah's dedicated witnesses. In harmony with Deuteronomy 14:21, the administering of blood upon request to worldly persons is left to the Christian doctor's own conscience. This is similar to the situation facing a Christian butcher or grocer who must decide whether he can conscientiously sell blood sausage to a worldly person. (The Watchtower November 15, 1964 pp. 682-683).*

It seems that this has never been called off and there is no prohibition to perform blood transfusions on people "of the world."

As the reader could see, there are various ways to avoid blood transfusions suggested by the Watchtower Society. These include sporadic escapes from the hospital, resisting surgery, carrying appropriate documents, lawsuit, etc. The pressure put on Jehovah's Witnesses by the community members, especially the elders of the congregation, is also important. At the same time, this organization allowed its publishers to transfuse blood to people who do not belong to their community! It is not right for Jehovah's Witnesses, but it is acceptable for the rest of the world and what's more – they can administrate that treatment.

## **Blood transfusion: consumption or transplantation?**

From the very beginning, when in 1944-1945 The Watchtower Society began to reject the transfusion, they started to even equate it with “eating” or “nutrition”. This trick supposed to advocate the biblical passages about abstaining from blood or drinking it, along with rejection of blood transfusions.

At the same time, the Watchtower Society teaches that blood transfusion is a “tissue graft”!

Either something is food or transplantation! How it can be both? Below we have collected the most important fragments from the publications of Jehovah’s Witnesses, which clearly show their dual teaching about the blood transfusion. Our text consists of two parts:

*Blood transfusion: “food” and “nutrition”*  
*Blood transfusion: “tissue graft”*

Once again, can blood transfusion be one thing and the other at the same time?

### **Blood transfusion: “food” and “nutrition”**

From the very beginning, when the Watchtower Society began to criticize the transfusion, it associated it with blood “eating”. Here are the words they typically use to describe blood transfusion:  
*Eating, drinking, nutrition, feeding and consumption.*

Below the reader can find the most characteristic fragments illustrating the above mentioned fact:

*Not only as a descendant of Noah, but now also as one bound by God’s law to Israel which incorporated the everlasting covenant*

*regarding the sanctity of life-sustaining blood, the stranger was forbidden to eat or drink blood, whether by transfusion or by the mouth. (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10-14). (The Watchtower December 1, 1944 p. 362).*

*Just because the blood is transfused directly into the donee's blood stream instead of directly into his stomach to find its way eventually into his blood stream does not say it is not eating blood (...) It is eating another's blood in order to replenish a depleted blood stream and to do so in a hurry. (The Watchtower December 1, 1949 p. 368).*

*Many say receiving a transfusion is not like eating blood. Is this view sound? A patient in the hospital may be fed through the mouth, through the nose, or through the veins. When sugar solutions are given intravenously, it is called intravenous feeding. So the hospital's own terminology recognizes as feeding the process of putting nutrition into one's system via the veins. Hence the attendant administering the transfusion is feeding the patient blood through the veins, and the patient receiving it is eating it through his veins. After all the artful contrivings and reasonings and quibblings are over, the bald fact remains that a goodly quantity of one creature's blood has been deliberately taken into the system of another. That is what is forbidden by God, regardless of method. (The Watchtower July 1, 1951 p. 415).*

#### *Blood Transfusion DEFINITION*

*Transferring blood from the veins or arteries of one person to another. As in intravenous feeding, it is a feeding upon blood. An unscriptural practice. ("Make Sure of All Things" 1953, 1957 p. 47).*

*Blood transfusion is the same as intravenous feeding; it is a feeding upon blood. (The Watchtower September 1, 1957 p. 532).*

*It has no bearing on the matter that the blood is not introduced to the body through the mouth but through the veins. Nor does the argument that it cannot be classed with intravenous feeding because its use in the body is different carry weight. The fact is that it*

*provides nourishment to the body to sustain life. (Blood, Medicine and the Law of God 1961 p. 14).*

*The medical profession today admits that blood transfusion is a direct feeding of the blood vessels of the human body with blood from another person or other persons that the practitioner of blood transfusion says is necessary for the survival of the recipient. (The Watchtower January 15, 1961 pp. 63-64).*

*God's law definitely says that the soul of man is in his blood. Hence the receiver of the blood transfusion is feeding upon a God-given soul as contained in the blood vehicle of a fellow man or of fellow men. (The Watchtower January 15, 1961 p. 64).*

*It is of no consequence that the blood is taken into the body through the veins instead of the mouth. Nor does the claim by some that it is not the same as intravenous feeding carry weight. The fact is that it nourishes or sustains the life of the body. In harmony with this is a statement in the book *Hemorrhage and Transfusion*, by George W. Crile, A.M., M.D., who quotes a letter from Denys, French physician and early researcher in the field of transfusions. It says: "In performing transfusion it is nothing else than nourishing by a shorter road than ordinary—that is to say, placing in the veins blood all made in place of taking food which only turns to blood after several changes." (The Watchtower September 15, 1961 p. 558).*

*Someone may argue with you that the Scriptures are referring to the "eating" of blood but that blood is not taken into the digestive system during a transfusion. True, but the fact is that by a direct route the blood serves the same purpose as food when taken into the stomach, namely, strengthening the body or sustaining life. (...) Blood is given to a weak or sick person to build him up, just as food is given to nourish him. (The Watchtower February 15, 1963 p. 124).*

*Some persons may reason that getting a blood transfusion is not actually "eating." But is it not true that when a patient is unable to eat through his mouth, doctors often feed him by the same method in*

*which a blood transfusion is administered? (The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life 1968, 1981 p. 167).*

*However, they do not accept therapy that conflicts with Bible requirements, such as a blood transfusion. The Bible specifically forbids the taking of blood to nourish the body. (The Watchtower July 1, 1975 p. 415).*

*Dr. Ruth Macklin is a philosopher at Albert Einstein College of Medicine (New York). (...) In response, Dr. Macklin said: "We may believe very strongly this man is making a mistake. But Jehovah's Witnesses believe that to be transfused is to 'eat blood' and that eating blood [may] result in eternal damnation. We are trained to do risk-benefit analyses in medicine but if you weigh eternal damnation against remaining life on earth, the analysis assumes a different angle."—The New York Times, January 23, 1984. (Awake! July 8, 1984 p. 14).*

*Let us take another example. Occasionally you may hear someone question whether the Scriptural prohibition against eating blood really applies to transfusions. But what is behind that reasoning? Is it fear—fear of possibly losing one's present life or the life of a loved one? Is hope in the resurrection fading? Faithful Christians do not compromise on God's law or look for ways to water it down. Abstaining from blood to nourish the body is just as necessary as abstaining from fornication and idolatry... (The Watchtower March 15, 1986 p. 18).*

*What, then, about taking a blood transfusion? Some persons may reason that getting a blood transfusion is not actually "eating." But is it not true that when a patient is unable to take food through his mouth, the doctor often recommends feeding him by the same method in which a blood transfusion is given? The Bible tells us to "abstain from . . . blood." (Acts 15:20, 29) What does this mean? If a doctor were to tell you to abstain from alcohol, would that simply mean that you should not take it through your mouth but that you could transfuse it directly into your veins? Of course not! So, too,*

*‘abstaining from blood’ means not taking it into your body at all. (You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth 1982, 1989 p. 216).*

*Is a transfusion really the same as eating blood?*

*In a hospital, when a patient cannot eat through his mouth, he is fed intravenously. Now, would a person who never put blood into his mouth but who accepted blood by transfusion really be obeying the command to “keep abstaining from . . . blood”? (Acts 15:29) To use a comparison, consider a man who is told by the doctor that he must abstain from alcohol. Would he be obedient if he quit drinking alcohol but had it put directly into his veins? (Reasoning From the Scriptures 1989 p. 73).*

*Does the command to abstain from blood include blood transfusions? Yes. To illustrate: Suppose a doctor were to tell you to abstain from alcoholic beverages. Would that simply mean that you should not drink alcohol but that you could have it injected into your veins? Of course not! Likewise, abstaining from blood means not taking it into our bodies at all. So the command to abstain from blood means that we would not allow anyone to transfuse blood into our veins. (What Does the Bible Really Teach? 2005, 2014 p. 130).*

*Jehovah’s Witnesses refuse to accept blood transfusions. This refusal is based on Bible commands, the earliest of which says: “Only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat.” (Awake! No. 6, 2009 p. 30).*

*See What Can the Bible Teach Us? 2015 p. 140.*

We see that the Watch Tower Society from its early days, when they started to criticize blood transfusions (and that continues nowadays), claim that such transfusion is either eating, drinking or nutrition according to their interpretation.

But if transfusion is a food, can it be a “tissue graft”?

Watchtower Society often changes its previous teaching to support new light on some matters. When they approved the vaccination, they called off its earlier argument that it was a “blood-feeding”:

*Vaccination or Inoculation Not Feeding on Blood; Not Connected with Sex Relations* (“*Make Sure of All Things*” 1953, 1957 p. 48).

## **Blood transfusion: “tissue graft”**

Along with the teaching that transfusion is “eating”, “drinking” or “nutrition”, the Watchtower Society claims it is a “tissue graft”!

If they are right about the second claim, then they cannot be right at the same time about the first teaching.

Some of Jehovah’s Witnesses’ opinions on the above topic are as follows:

*Consequently, whether having religious objections to blood transfusions or not, many a person might decline blood simply because it is essentially an organ transplant that at best is only partially compatible with his own blood. (Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Question of Blood 1977 p. 111).*

At that time there was some ‘logic’ and consistency in it, as the transplants and transfusions were “tissue grafts” and both practices were then considered a “cannibalism”:

*Are you one to whom disobeying God’s law is repulsive? Then the taking of blood is just as despicable to you as cannibalism. Think of eating of the flesh of another human creature! It is shocking! Is drinking human blood any different? Does bypassing the mouth and putting it directly into the veins change it? Not at all! (The Watchtower July 1, 1966 p. 401).*

*Humans were allowed by God to eat animal flesh and to sustain their human lives by taking the lives of animals, though they were not permitted to eat blood. Did this include eating human flesh, sustaining one’s life by means of the body or part of the body of another human, alive or dead? No! That would be cannibalism, a practice abhorrent to all civilized people. (The Watchtower November 15, 1967 p. 702).*

However, in 1980, the Watchtower Society accepted transplants:

*Regarding the transplantation of human tissue or bone from one human to another, this is a matter for conscientious decision by each one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Some Christians might feel that taking into their bodies any tissue or body part from another human is cannibalistic. (...) Other sincere Christians today may feel that the Bible does not definitely rule out medical transplants of human organs. (...) It may be argued, too, that organ transplants are different from cannibalism since the "donor" is not killed to supply food. In some cases persons nearing death actually have willed body parts to be used for transplants. (...) While the Bible specifically forbids consuming blood, there is no Biblical command pointedly forbidding the taking in of other human tissue. For this reason, each individual faced with making a decision on this matter should carefully and prayerfully weigh matters and then decide conscientiously what he or she could or could not do before God. It is a matter for personal decision. (Gal. 6:5) The congregation judicial committee would not take disciplinary action if someone accepted an organ transplant. (The Watchtower March 15, 1980 p. 31).*

*The Witnesses do not feel that the Bible comments directly on organ transplants; hence, decisions regarding cornea, kidney, or other issue transplants must be made by the individual Witness. (Awake! June 22, 1982 p. 26).*

See *How Can Blood Save Your Life?* 1990 p. 28.

It seemed that then there could be a breakthrough in the blood transfusion teaching, since simultaneously it was considered a "tissue graft". Unfortunately, nothing has changed and transfusion, considered to be a tissue transplant, continued to be a forbidden medical treatment.

What's more, transfusion is still recognized as tissue graft, so that there is certain inconsistency of the position presented by the organization:

*When doctors transplant a heart, a liver, or another organ, the recipient's immune system may sense the foreign tissue and reject it. Yet, a transfusion is a tissue transplant. (How Can Blood Save Your Life? 1990 p. 8).*

*In an article on the risks of blood transfusion, the Clinical Excellence Commission, New South Wales (Australia) Health, states: "A blood transfusion is a living tissue transplant. With any transplant the human body is innately primed to react to something foreign. The safety implications of this are significant." (Awake! No. 8, 2015 p. 15).*

It is clear from the above examples how inconsistent and incoherent tactics the Watchtower Society applies to its medical "science".

The Watchtower not only classifies the transfusion as "nutrition" with blood and "tissue graft", but after accepting the practice of transplantation, they separate blood transfusion as tissue graft from the accepted treatment of transplantation!

## Jehovah's Witnesses and "non-transfusion" hospitals

The Watchtower Society, since they have introduced a blood transfusion ban (1944-1945), pays high attention to discouraging people, especially Jehovah's Witnesses, from going in to it. In their publications they try to sell the substitutes and provide with the "arguments" for harmful effects of transfusion.

Let's see, what Watchtower Society has done for bringing and developing the alternative to blood transfusions.

We would not blame Jehovah's Witnesses for not having or building their clinics or hospitals, but they articulate and emphasize their analytical contention about the blood transfusion and criticise the entire word for using it. We have no other option, but to say a few words about that.

An example of the different behaviour to the one represented by Jehovah's Witnesses are the Seventh-day Adventists. A religion not much bigger in its membership than Jehovah's Witnesses, known among other things for not eating foods that the Old Testament describes as unclean (e.g. pork), for not drinking coffee, black tea and alcohol.

Adventists write about themselves as follows:

"The new health approach, expressed in the Adventist program of health reform (...), manifests itself (...) secondly – in organizing and running preventive care facilities (i.e. sanatoriums, clinics, medical centres) and hospitals; thirdly, in running their own medical education (medical academies, nursing and dietary schools); fourthly – in running food factories of foodstuffs and fifth – in running a wide range of sanitary education" (*The Adventism*, Z. Łyko, Warsaw 1970, p. 212).

“According to 1969 data, the Church ran 136 sanatoriums and hospitals, as well as 320 clinics and other care facilities, in which approximately 22,000 healthcare workers were employed. These institutions provided medical assistance to about 5 million people that year. (...) On the top, the medical school preparing the future healthcare staff, called Loma Linda University...” (*The Adventism*, Z. Łyko, Warsaw 1970, p. 214).

The same Adventist, Z. Łyko wrote in much newer publication:

1. Number of hospitals and sanatoriums.....162
2. Number of nursing homes.....102
3. Number of medical care facilities.....361
4. Number of orphanages and orphan care units.....25
5. The annual number of patients.....9 299 792
6. The number of healthy food factories.....27

*The Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Z. Łyko, Warsaw 2000, p. 462.

Arguable, patients served by Adventists with medical treatment are not fed the food they forbid to eat themselves. And, what is worth to emphasize – they serve everyone, regardless they are their followers or not.

Baptists and Methodists also build and run their clinics. For example, Baptists provide medical care at their Northeast Baptist Hospital in San Antonio (Texas, USA), where they treat without using blood (see <http://www.jg-teksten.nl/noblood.html>). This is the first “bloodless” hospital in San Antonio, where even complex heart surgeries take place without blood transfusions. Doctors ensure that only safe procedures are used, none of them is an experimental one. It is estimated that the cost of surgery without blood transfusion amounts to over 16 thousand dollars, while the price of the operation using transfusion reaches 23 thousand dollars and more. Raymond Talbert, a blind Jehovah’s Witness who underwent a surgery on the heart without a blood transfusion, left the hospital four days after the surgery. Meanwhile, patients who have had blood transfusion must

stay in the hospital averagely for 15-22 days. (In this hospital, blood transfusions are used only in extreme cases). During the operation of Talbert, a Cell Saver machine was used (a machine that transfers the patient's blood back).

What did the Watchtower Society do about the non-transfusion treatment?

Well, let's list: they built hundreds of assembly halls around the world (each of them can host over 1,000 listeners). They opened, in almost every country where Jehovah's Witnesses are present, their centres (called Bethel Homes), and in many countries advanced printing factories. Numerous farms were erected only in the USA. Thousands of people were employed in these facilities... for free. The beauty of those buildings and the surroundings are shown and praised in the Watchtower Society's publications. For example, the book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* (1993), includes dozens of pictures of those objects from the whole globe, including interiors of the purchased hotel in New York (see pages 352-401).

Then, it is fair to ask if Jehovah's Witnesses could not afford to build even one hospital which cures people without blood transfusions, equipped with modern medical equipment. No one would probably require them to cure "people from the world" in them, who are not their followers.

Taking into consideration the fact that they represent relatively small population and that blood transfusion is not very frequent treatment, one symbolic hospital would be enough. Surely, with the funds collected throughout the years they would definitely be in a position to build and run at least one hospital, even for themselves.

Every year, the Watch Tower Society spends millions of dollars on internal needs:

*During the 2016 service year, Jehovah's Witnesses spent over \$213 million in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and circuit overseers in their field service assignments. Worldwide, a total of 19,818 ordained ministers staff the branch facilities. All are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses. (2017 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses p. 177 [in 2015 "over \$236 million" – 2016 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses p.176], emphasis added).*

Without a doubt, even bigger amount of money is spend to build more Kingdom Halls, assembly halls, to buy properties and publish over 100 million copies of *the Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines every month!

Or maybe they just want to perturb the public when they protest against (alleged) violations of the human rights/patient rights, while the blood is transfused to a Jehovah's Witness, against his/her will or consciousness? Isn't it better to cure than to disturb people? It's better to have a hospital than to threaten doctors with lawsuits for saving Jehovah's Witnesses life when the Watchtower Society does not accept a treatment. For them it seems to be enough to create a Hospital Liaison Committees, that instruct doctors how to cure and suggest what is better for a patient.

If Jehovah's Witnesses have deep knowledge about medical treatments, would it not be better for them to offer professional cure to their fellow believers and help themselves, and others (if JWs want to do that). After all, we cannot forget, some of them have medical education and experience.

Or maybe, the Watchtower Society does not build non-transfusion hospitals, because they don't want to take responsibility for the possible death of its publishers treated without blood?

## The inconsequent position on the basic components of blood

The Watchtower Society lists the four basic components of blood and teaches that accepting any of them “violates God’s law”:

*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. Depending on the condition of the patient, physicians might prescribe red cells, white cells, platelets, or plasma. Transfusing these major components allows a single unit of blood to be divided among more patients. Jehovah’s Witnesses hold that accepting whole blood or any of those four primary components violates God’s law. (The Watchtower June 15, 2004 pp. 29-30).*

Yet, in another publication, Jehovah’s Witnesses state in details about one of the forbidden blood component, i.e. plasma. It seems that this was the only time they went into that level of details. Let’s see what they wrote and then assess how it can harm anything....

*Blood fractions are elements from blood that are extracted through a process called fractionation. For example, plasma, one of the four major components of blood, can be divided into the following substances: water, about 91 percent; proteins, such as albumins, globulins, and fibrinogen, about 7 percent; and other substances, such as nutrients, hormones, gases, vitamins, waste products, and electrolytes, about 1.5 percent. Are fractions also covered by the command to abstain from blood? We cannot say. The Bible does not give specific direction on the subject of fractions. (Our Kingdom Ministry No. 11, 2006 p. 3).*

Can receiving water, proteins and other substances be a real “violation” of anything? Which of those fractions, taken all together, are so harmful to the Watchtower Society that by using them one violates “God’s law”?

The same could be said about the other three components of blood.

## **Jehovah's Witnesses' strange questions and doubts regarding blood**

Jehovah's Witnesses write that they did not have any issue with blood even until 1945:

*Some persons, however, object to changes in viewpoint, changes in understanding of certain scriptures or procedures. For example, since the 1940's Jehovah's witnesses have refused to give or accept blood transfusions, whereas prior to that they did not take this position. (The Watchtower August 15, 1972 p. 501).*

However, when in 1944-1945 the Watchtower Society introduced the ban on blood transfusions, Jehovah's Witnesses began to feel uneasy any time the topic of blood came out. Therefore, they had started to raise multiple questions related to it. They ask about animal's transfusion, blood in medicines, fertilizers, meat and fish. They deal with the issue of leeches and lecithin and the human umbilical cord and placenta.

It seems like Jehovah's Witnesses would be most pleased if humans did not have blood in their veins at all, or even... if blood and its constituents would not be found anywhere in nature. Unfortunately, it is the other way round.

The followers of the Watchtower Society continue to feel guilty and raise endless questions about blood and transfusion. One can venture to state that the organization indirectly induces doubts by the publishing following thoughts about blood components:

*Not only is blood being used in connection with modern medical practices, but it is reported that blood is now being used in a variety of products, such as adhesives for making plywood, particle board, hardboard, bottle crowns, furniture and musical instruments. Blood is also being used in polymerization of rubber compounds,*

*insecticidal binder, settling compound for industrial waste treatment, clear water purification (paper industry), uranium purification, foaming agent for lightweight cellular concrete, fire foaming agent, wine clarifying agent, paper coatings and binders, paper flocculants and sizes, replacement of casein in latex emulsions, emulsified asphalt, cork composition, photoengraving platemaking solutions, leather-finishing operations, water-resistant binder of pigments for print dyeing on cotton cloth, fertilizers, animal foods, and amino acid production, such as histidine and histamine, for example. Perhaps additional uses of blood will come to light in the future. (The Watchtower November 15, 1964 p. 681).*

*Christian may feel that it would be fine if the Watch Tower Society would make up a list of all the food products and medical preparations that contain blood. But the Society has not done so for good reasons. There are many substances found in blood that are also found elsewhere. This is to be expected, since human and animal bodies are not the only creations produced from the earth. For example, while lecithin is found in blood, it is also derived from soybeans, which happen to be the common commercial source of most lecithin. If there is doubt about a product, it is up to the individual to investigate by inquiring of the manufacturer. He cannot expect a brother in the congregation to rule on the matter for him; the brother did not make the product and neither did the Society. The substance may have been derived from blood or it may not. He must bear his own load of responsibility. (The Watchtower February 15, 1963 pp. 123-124, emphasis added).*

Below we list the most important questions that publishers have, along with the answers, all published in the Watchtower publications. Let's note how this organization is toying with the biblical prohibitions about blood consumption in order to apply them to blood transfusion. They extend their interpretation to animals with the same ease.

## **Vitamins and nutrients**

*In view of God's law prohibiting the eating of blood, is there any objection to using vitamins containing red bone marrow, desiccated liver and similar organic derivatives? (...) This makes it clear that there is no objection to using animal products, provided that God's law respecting blood has been obeyed. If a person has any doubts about whether certain vitamins and other products are produced from animals that have not been properly bled, he would do well to investigate the matter personally by writing to the manufacturer of the items in question. (The Watchtower January 15, 1972 pp. 63-64).*

## **Leeches**

*Would it be wrong for a Christian, under medical treatment, to allow leeches to be applied to him to draw off some blood? (...) However, though leeches parasitically feed on blood in their natural state at present, it would not be proper for a Christian to permit leeches to draw his blood. (Proverbs 30:15) Even where this was urged for medical reasons and the leeches would later be disposed of, the use of leeches would involve deliberately feeding blood to these creatures. That would conflict with the Bible's indication that blood, being sacred and representing life, should be disposed of if it is removed from a body. (The Watchtower June 15, 1982 p. 31).*

## **Dead animals**

*Might the Bible's prohibition about blood apply only to blood from a victim killed by man, not to unbled meat of an animal that died of itself or blood from a live animal or human? (...) Consequently, true worshipers today will not eat unbled meat, whether from an animal that some man killed or from a creature that died in another way. Nor will they sustain their lives by taking in blood from living creatures, animal or human. They recognize Jehovah as their Life-Giver and are determined to obey him in all respects. (The Watchtower April 15, 1983 pp. 30-31).*

## **Blood substitutes. Artificial blood**

*Is there any Scriptural reason why Jehovah's Witnesses should not accept blood substitutes or "artificial blood"? (...) However, Jehovah's Witnesses have no religious objection to replacing lost blood with nonblood solutions. Some of these more commonly used are saline solution, Ringer's lactate, dextran and Hespan. (...) In recent years there has been experimentation with a fluorinated blood substitute (so-called artificial blood) that seems to be able to transport oxygen to body cells. There is a calculated risk in using this until such time as it has been fully tested. But it is not made from blood and so its use would not conflict with a Christian's Bible-trained conscience. (The Watchtower January 15, 1984 p. 31).*

## **Placenta and umbilical cord**

*According to news reports, after a baby is delivered, some hospitals save the placenta and umbilical cord to extract things from their blood. Should this concern a Christian? (...) Christians who are hospitalized understand that biological products removed from them are disposed of, whether the products be body wastes, diseased tissue, or blood. Granted, a doctor might want certain tests to be done first, such as a urinalysis, a pathological examination of tumorous tissue, or tests on the blood. But thereafter, the products are disposed of in accord with local law. The hospital patient hardly needs to make special requests to this effect because it is both reasonable and medically prudent to discard such biological products. If a patient had valid reason to doubt that such a normal practice was going to be followed, he or she could mention it to the physician involved, stating that for religious reasons he or she wanted all such products disposed of. However, as mentioned, this is seldom a concern for the average patient because in many places such salvage and reuse of the afterbirth or other biological products is not even considered, much less practiced routinely. (The Watchtower February 1, 1997 p. 29).*

## **Marrow**

*Could a Christian accept a bone-marrow transplant, since blood is made in the marrow? (...) Of course, marrow used in human marrow transplants is from live donors, and the withdrawn marrow may have some blood with it. Hence, the Christian would have to resolve for himself whether—to him—the bone-marrow graft would amount to simple flesh or would be unbled tissue. Additionally, since a marrow graft is a form of transplant, the Scriptural aspects of human organ transplants should be considered. See “Questions From Readers” in our issue of March 15, 1980. Finally, writing in Harrison’s Principles of Internal Medicine (Update I, 1981, page 138), Dr. D. E. Thomas observes that “virtually all marrow transplant recipients will require platelet transfusions” and many are given “packed red blood cells.” So the Christian should consider what additional issues he would have to face if he submitted to a marrow transplant.—Proverbs 22:3. Though a personal decision has to be made on this matter, the Bible’s comments about blood and marrow should help the individual to decide. (The Watchtower May 15, 1984 p. 31).*

## **Fish and insects**

*In view of the Bible command on abstinence from blood, how are fish and insects to be prepared in order to be acceptable for food? (...) Of course, the amount of blood contained in these creatures may be very small, so that it is impossible to pour out their blood; yet that is what was required to make the meat of a creature acceptable for food. (Lev. 17:13) It was not required that the meat be squeezed or that it be soaked; simply that the blood be poured out. If there is not enough blood to pour it out, Christians are not under obligation to take extreme measures to be sure that some blood is extracted. Of course, if, on cutting the creature open, an accumulation of blood is clearly in evidence, this can easily be removed, and it would be proper to do so. (The Watchtower November 1, 1961 p. 670).*

*Must fish be bled before they are eaten? (...) There being no Scriptural stipulation to squeeze or soak meat to remove blood, no one is under obligation to take extreme measures to extract blood from fish. Of course, the blood of every sort of creature represents its life and is therefore sacred. So, if, on cutting a fish open, a person sees an accumulation of blood, he should remove it. (The Watchtower April 1, 1973 p. 224).*

## **Lecithin**

*Lecithin is found in blood. And many processed foods have lecithin as an ingredient. Is such lecithin obtained from blood? (...) The fact is, then, that commercial lecithin does not come from blood. So Christians need not be concerned about blood when they see "lecithin" listed on the label of some food product. (The Watchtower March 15, 1979 p. 31).*

## **Blood transfusion for animals**

*Would it be a violation of the Scriptures for a Christian to permit a veterinarian to give blood transfusions to a pet? And what of animal food? (...) How, then, must we answer the question, Would it be a violation of the Scriptures for a Christian to permit a veterinarian to give blood transfusions to a pet? By all means, to do so would be a violation of the Scriptures. To use blood for transfusion purposes, even in the case of an animal, would be improper. The Bible is very clear in showing that blood should not be eaten. It should not be infused, therefore, to build up the body's vital forces, either in the case of a human or in the case of a pet or any other animal under the jurisdiction of a Christian. In harmony with this, surely a Christian parent could not rationalize to the effect that a pet belongs to a minor child and thus this unbaptized child might, on its own, authorize a veterinarian to administer the blood. No. The baptized parent bears the responsibility, for that parent has authority over the child and over the pet and should control the entire matter. That is the parent's obligation before God. (The Watchtower February 15, 1964 p. 127).*

## **Food with blood**

*Would it be a violation of the Scriptures for a Christian to permit a veterinarian to give blood transfusions to a pet? And what of animal food? May it be used if there is reason to believe there is blood in it? (...) What, then, of animal food? May it be used if there is reason to believe there is blood in it? As far as a Christian is concerned, the answer is No, on the basis of principles already mentioned. Therefore, if a Christian discovers that blood components are listed on the label of a container of dog food or some other animal food, he could not conscientiously feed that product to any animal over which he has jurisdiction. He could not conclude that doing so would be excusable, for this would not be a case of an animal killing another animal and helping itself to the blood of that creature. No, this would be a direct act on the part of the Christian, making him responsible for feeding blood to a pet or other animal belonging to him. Of course, if there is no indication on the label of a package of animal food that the product contains blood, a Christian might conclude that it could be used. Still, his conscience might trouble him. In that case he should put his conscience to rest by making reasonable inquiry and acting in accord with the information he receives, for a Christian surely desires to have a good conscience before God. (The Watchtower February 15, 1964 pp. 127-128).*

## **Fertilizers with blood**

*Also, is it permissible to use fertilizer that has blood in it? (...) But now, what about fertilizer that has blood in it? One who is going to show respect for God's law on blood would not use it. (The Watchtower February 15, 1964 pp. 127-128).*

## **Fertilizers and food for animals**

*How should a Christian view using blood as fertilizer, as animal food or in some other way that does not involve his eating it? (...) Consider, for instance, the use of blood as fertilizer. When an*

*Israelite hunter poured an animal's blood out on the ground it was not in order to fertilize the soil. He was pouring it on the earth out of respect for blood's sacredness. So, would a Christian with a similar appreciation of the significance of blood deliberately collect it from slaughtered animals so that he could use it as fertilizer? Hardly, for such commercialization of blood would not be in accord with deep respect for the life-representing value of blood. Of course, Christians cannot tell non-Christians that they must not use blood in making fertilizers or other commercial products. Hence, if most fertilizers on the market contained some blood, the Christian would have to decide for himself what to do. He could consider factors such as the Bible's counsel to "abstain . . . from blood," the availability of alternative products, the proddings of his Bible-trained conscience and the feelings of others.—Compare 1 Corinthians 8:10-13. Another situation that sometimes arises involves feeding blood to animals. It is true that at present many animals in the wild do not live on vegetation as the Bible says they did originally. (Gen. 1:30) Rather, they eat other creatures, blood and all. Nonetheless, would a Christian who knows God's law on blood intentionally feed blood to animals under his care? Would that harmonize with what he knows about how blood was handled under the Law? Finally, questions have arisen about disposing of animal carcasses that have blood in them. In Israel a person who found a carcass of an animal that died of itself could sell it to a foreigner who was not interested in keeping God's law. (Deut. 14:21) It is noteworthy, however, that this provision was not made so that an Israelite might make a regular business of trafficking in blood or unbled meat. Nor was the Israelite deliberately killing an animal and leaving the blood in it because some persons liked the taste of unbled meat or so that the carcass would weigh more. Rather, he was simply disposing of a carcass that he could not use for food and that had to be removed. Accordingly, a farmer today might have to get rid of an unbled carcass, such as a cow that he found dead so that it was no longer possible to drain the blood. Or a hunter might find a dead animal in a trap. What could he do with such an unbled animal? Sell the carcass to a rendering plant? Sell the dead animal to a non-Christian who had some personal or commercial use for the flesh? The individual Christian would have to decide for himself after considering what the law of*

*the land requires and factors such as those discussed above, including the value of having a good conscience before God and men. (The Watchtower October 15, 1981 pp. 30-31).*

### **Draining the meat of blood, especially from poultry and rabbits**

*To what extent is a householder obligated to see to it that the meat he purchases is drained of blood? Should a guest, knowing it is the custom of the country not to drain the blood from certain meats, such as fowl and rabbit, keep silent and eat, or should he mention that the practice is unscriptural and refrain from eating? (...) In countries where it is the general practice to drain the blood from butchered animals it hardly seems necessary to make specific inquiry at the time of purchase, or when eating meat prepared in a home or restaurant of such lands. However, if it is the custom of a country not to drain the blood from certain meats, the purchaser would be aware of this and could hardly disclaim responsibility for eating the blood. A variety of excuses and flimsy reasonings may be offered in justification of eating things strangled or unbled, but none of them are valid in view of the explicit Bible ruling: “For the holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to keep yourselves free from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things killed without draining their blood [from things strangled, margin] and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!”—Acts 15:28, 29, NW. If you are a guest in a home where meat “from things strangled” is served, you should not eat it. If the host or hostess is not a witness of Jehovah you may not choose to state your reason, or you may, depending on circumstances known to you. However, if the one serving the meat is one of Jehovah’s witnesses it is proper to call the wrong practice to his attention, for his own spiritual welfare as well as in explanation of why you are not partaking. (The Watchtower February 1, 1956 p. 95).*

## **Storage and transfusion of one's own blood**

*Although it is unscriptural for a Christian to accept another person's blood in transfusion, would it be allowable for a dedicated Christian to have some of his own blood removed and then put back into his body during an operation? (...) On the other hand, if the blood were stored, even for a brief period of time, this would be a violation of the Scriptures. The use of another person's blood to "prime" any device employed in surgery is objectionable. In this case the blood would circulate through the system of the patient, becoming mixed with his own. Again, if one's own blood would have to be withdrawn at intervals and stored until a sufficient amount had accumulated to set a machine in operation, this too would fall under Scriptural prohibition. The ones involved in the matter are in the best position to ascertain just how the blood would be handled and must bear responsibility before Jehovah for seeing that it is not handled unscripturally. (The Watchtower October 15, 1959 p. 640).*

*A doctor said that prior to surgery a patient could have some blood withdrawn and stored, in the event that a transfusion is needed during surgery. How should a Christian view such use of his own blood? (...) And he can refer to the pointed command that Christians 'abstain from blood.' In view of this, how could he allow his blood to be collected in a blood bank for later transfusion into himself or another person? (The Watchtower June 15, 1978 pp. 30-31).*

## **Heart-lung and artificial kidney**

*What about a device such as a heart-lung pump or a dialysis (artificial kidney) machine? Might a Christian use such? (...) Some Christians have conscientiously reasoned that the blood is flowing continuously and that the external circuit might be viewed as an extension of the circulatory system. They have considered it comparable to a piece of tubing that might be implanted in the body to shunt blood around a blockage in a vessel. Of course, each Christian should weigh what is involved in the use of these and similar devices. He could consider whether he views the blood*

*involved to be blood that clearly has left his body and so should be disposed of or as blood that, basically, is still part of his circulatory system. (Deut. 12:16) Then he can make a decision that will leave him with a clear conscience before God. (The Watchtower June 15, 1978 p. 30).*

## **Serum**

*Are serum injections compatible with Christian belief? (...) Some Christians believe that accepting a small amount of a blood derivative for such a purpose would not be a manifestation of disrespect for God's law; their conscience would permit such. (...) Others, though, feel conscientiously obliged to refuse serums because these contain blood, though only a tiny amount. Hence, we have taken the position that this question must be resolved by each individual on a personal basis. We urge each one to strive to have a clear conscience and to be responsive to God's guidance found in His Word. (The Watchtower June 15, 1978 pp. 30-31).*

## **Blood for analysis**

*Would it be wrong to submit to a blood test? Based on their knowledge of the Scriptures, most of Jehovah's Witnesses, if not all, do not object to such tests. The small quantity of blood removed from the body is not eaten or injected into someone else. It is merely examined or tested before being disposed of.—Deut. 15:23. (The Watchtower June 15, 1978 p. 30).*

## **Food with blood content or its components**

*How concerned should a Christian be about blood in food products? (...) But what about food products that may contain blood or some blood component, such as plasma protein? (...) What is the conscientious Christian to do in such cases? He could make inquiry of the butcher or the producer. It is reported that in response to such inquiries, some producers in one Scandinavian land readily gave assurance that blood is not an ingredient in their processed meats; they do not want to lose business. But, in some places, Witnesses who*

*inquired of butchers or meat producers were given vague or questionable replies. It may be noted that, even if the law permits companies to add some blood without stating it, this does not necessarily mean that all or even most of them do so. Therefore, Christians, individually, must decide what to do. The consciences of some may move them to avoid anything about which they have serious questions or to make such inquiry as is needed to settle their consciences. (Rom. 14:23) In instances where it does not seem possible to get absolute information through reasonable inquiry, other Christians may conclude: 'Where there is no substantial reason for me to think that blood is present or there is no definite way that I can determine it, I can with a clear conscience "keep eating."' They should, however, consider the conscientious feelings of others, even as Paul counseled. (...). True Christians ought not to be indifferent about blood. They should do what they can to avoid a clear violation of God's law. A deep respect for that law is of central importance. By doing all that they reasonably can to "keep themselves . . . from blood," God's people manifest appreciation for the sanctity of life and of the blood representing it. (The Watchtower June 15, 1978 p. 31).*

### **Blood leftovers in meat**

*How can one tell if meat purchased from a butcher or in some other market has been properly bled? Also, how can one tell if cold-meat loaves, pastry or preparations sold by druggists contain any blood or blood fractions? (...) If the bleeding of butchered animals is not the regular practice in your locality, or you are not sure what is the customary handling of the matter where you live, the best way to find out if meat has been properly bled is to make personal inquiry. In most cases, even if the one who sells the meat does not personally do the slaughtering, he is acquainted with the men with whom he does business and he knows their practices or at least the laws that govern them. If he is confident that the meat is properly prepared, the Christian may feel free to use it. However, if the one selling the meat does not know, simply ask: "Who can give me the information? It is important to me for religious reasons." Then write a letter, if that is the only way to get in touch with the one who can answer your*

*question. If for some reason one does not feel that he is being told the truth, he can always do business elsewhere, or he can buy live animals and arrange for the slaughtering himself, if he feels that is necessary. Simply the fact that meat appears to be very red or even has red fluid on the surface does not mean that it has not been bled. There may remain in the meat some very small amounts of blood even after proper bleeding has been done. Then, too, the fluid that runs out of the meat may simply be interstitial fluid. The important thing is that respect has been shown for the sanctity of blood, regard has been shown for the principle of the sacredness of life. (The Watchtower November 1, 1961 p. 669).*

*When meat is cut in the course of preparation for cooking, or when it is sliced after it has been cooked, a reddish fluid may run out of it. Is such meat suitable for eating by a Christian? (...) Of course, even the meat from properly bled animals may appear to be very red or may have red fluid on the surface. This is because bleeding does not remove every trace of blood from the animal. But God's law does not require that every single drop of blood be removed. It simply states that the animal should be bled. Then, too, there is extravascular fluid in the meat. This fluid may mix with traces of blood and take on a red color. The extravascular fluid filling the spaces between the cells is known as interstitial fluid and resembles blood plasma. But it is not blood and therefore does not come under the prohibition respecting blood. Hence the presence of a reddish fluid does not in itself make meat unsuitable for food. As long as an animal has been properly bled, its meat may Scripturally be used for food. There may be times, however, when a Christian has reason to believe that an animal may not have been bled properly. If there is no way for him to get the facts, he may choose not to eat the meat and thus avoid disturbing his conscience. (The Watchtower September 1, 1972 p. 544).*

## **Meat poorly drained of blood and vegetarianism**

*If a Christian learns that his butcher does not give attention to the draining of the blood, then he will look for another place to do business or even refrain from eating meat if nothing else is available. Likewise, a conscientious person will not eat meat in a restaurant if he knows that it is customary locally not to give attention to proper bleeding. Under such circumstances, a Christian who wants to eat meat may have to buy a live animal or bird and arrange to have the killing done himself. (The Watchtower September 15, 1961 p. 557).*

### **Questions from English Watchtower**

Below we list nine other questions Jehovah's Witnesses had, published by *The Watchtower* on July 1, 1951 on pages 414-416 (we skip the answers):

*What are the Scriptural grounds for objecting to blood transfusions? (p. 414).*

*Do not these prohibitions about blood apply only to animal blood, and not to human blood? (p. 414).*

*Since the blood donor does not die and no life is lost, why do the Scriptural prohibitions apply to transfusions? (p. 414).*

*Since Christians are not under the Law of Moses that emphasizes these restrictions on blood, why be bound by such ordinances? (p. 414).*

*Leviticus 3:17 states: "Eat neither fat nor blood." So why shun blood while eating fat? (p. 415).*

*Why do not Jehovah's witnesses refuse to eat meat, inasmuch as some blood remains therein even though the animal has been properly bled? (p. 415).*

*Many say receiving a transfusion is not like eating blood. Is this view sound? (p. 415).*

*If the transfusion does good, perhaps even saves a life, is it not a Christlike service rendered? Did not Jesus say, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"?' (p. 415).*

*Then are we to conclude that Jehovah's witnesses oppose the people's use of transfusions? (p. 416).*

### **Advice for meat traders and transfusion operators**

Here we present some tips for Jehovah's Witnesses related to the transfusion and trade of products including blood. The ones that relate the blood transfusion are directed to doctors, nurses and laboratory staff who are in contact with transfusion or its helpers (notice that doctors carrying out transfusions are compared to butchers!):

*So whether a Christian who works in a store will dispose of blood goods, such as blood sausage, by selling such goods to persons of the world who are willing to pay for them is a matter of conscience. It is also a personal matter as to whether another Christian will sell blood items to worldly persons in a drugstore or will spread blood fertilizer on the field of a worldly employer at his request. Naturally, a Christian could not properly encourage persons to obtain blood goods rather than those free from blood and he could not advocate any misuse of blood. However, we must leave it up to the conscience of the individual Christian as to what he will do when it comes to matters of this nature in handling such products. (The Watchtower November 15, 1964 pp. 681-682).*

*Some doctors who are Jehovah's witnesses have administered blood transfusions to persons of the world upon request. However, they do not do so in the case of one of Jehovah's dedicated witnesses. In harmony with Deuteronomy 14:21, the administering of blood upon request to worldly persons is left to the Christian doctor's own conscience. This is similar to the situation facing a Christian butcher or grocer who must decide whether he can conscientiously sell blood sausage to a worldly person. (The Watchtower November 15, 1964 pp. 682-683).*

*Some Christians working in hospitals have had to consider this factor of authority. A physician might have authority to order medications for or medical procedures on a patient. Even if a patient*

*did not mind, how could a Christian doctor in authority order a blood transfusion or perform an abortion, knowing what the Bible says on such matters? In contrast, a nurse employed at the hospital might not have such authority. As she performs routine services, a doctor might direct her to perform a blood test for some purpose or to care for a patient who came for an abortion. In line with the example recorded at 2 Kings 5:17-19, she might conclude that since she is not the one with authority who orders a transfusion or performs an abortion, she could carry out human services for a patient. Of course, she still would have to consider her conscience, so as 'to behave before God with a clear conscience.' (The Watchtower April 15, 1999 p. 29).*

*Certain employment may be in a "gray area," so to speak. And sometimes, while one's basic work is unobjectionable, one may be asked occasionally to do something questionable. So conscience can be involved. For example, there are employment problems involving blood. (...) But what if, on your job you were asked to handle blood or blood products occasionally? Would your conscience permit that? A Witness in Colorado worked in a hospital as the chief medical technician running tests of various types on body tissue and fluid. Among the many things he was expected to test were blood samples. Sometimes it was simply to check a patient's blood for the level of sugar or cholesterol. But at other times it was to cross match for transfusion purposes. Could he do that? This Christian gave careful thought to the matter. It could be seen that it would not be right for a Christian to work exclusively for a blood bank, where everything was devoted to an end that was in violation of God's law. But that was not his situation; he ran tests of many kinds. Also, if one were a doctor responsible for the decision, one could not order a blood transfusion for a patient, any more than a Christian store owner could order and stock idols or cigarettes. However, this technician realized that in connection with blood he was merely running a test, even as a nurse might have taken the sample, a messenger might have delivered it to the laboratory and someone else might administer a transfusion or other medication on a doctor's orders. He reflected on the principle at Deuteronomy 14:21. According to that text a Jew finding a carcass of an animal that died of itself could*

*clear it away by selling it to a foreigner who was not under the Law's restrictions about animal flesh not drained of its blood. So the technician's conscience at that time allowed him to run blood tests, including those of blood for transfusions to patients who did not care about God's law on blood. (The Watchtower April 1, 1975 pp. 215-216).*

We can see from the above, that Jehovah's Witnesses do have a lot of life problems related to blood. It seems that only when the Watchtower Society changes its doctrine, as in the case of vaccinations and transplants, they will be freed from their remorse and doubts.

## **Former unconventional methods of treatment offered by the Watchtower Society**

In its early years of existence, the Watchtower Society tried to advertise themselves by recommending unconventional methods of treatment. We describe them below.

### **A cure for cancer**

C. T. Russell (dec. 1916) asked in 1915 about the controversial advertisements in their Watchtower magazine, replied the following, mentioning, among others, the “treatment of cancer”:

*Once we put into THE WATCH TOWER a notice about Miracle Wheat. Many of you saw it. We believe we did right in putting that notice in. We also put in a notice about some kind of beans and one about some special cotton. Some of the friends were benefited by each of these notices. We also put in a notice recently about a cure for cancer. We have had hundreds of letters come in from Truth friends, and hundreds from others; and a great many have reported good results. To some extent this has helped forward the Truth. People saw that we were not trying to get their money, saw that we were trying to do them good, and became interested (The Watchtower July 15, 1915 p. 5729, reprints).*

One of that adverts was published in the Watchtower in 1913:

#### **A CURE FOR SURFACE CANCER**

*Cancer troubles are becoming more numerous. We know of no remedy for internal cancers except surgery. Even then a cure is doubtful. We have recently learned of a very effective and simple remedy for cancers which show themselves on the surface of the body. We are informed that a physician, after testing this remedy, paid \$1,000 for the information, and that he has established a*

*Cancer Hospital which is doing good work. The recipe has come to us free and we are willing to communicate the formula, but to those only who are troubled with surface cancers and who will write to us directly, stating particulars. No fee will be charged, but in order to protect the sufferers, we require a promise that they will not sell the formula to others, nor receive pay for the use of it, nor communicate the formula to anybody. Any one known to be a sufferer can be informed of the terms on which the prescription is obtainable through us. (The Watchtower July 1, 1913 p. 5268, reprints).*

After C. T. Russell's death such activity was discontinued.

### **A cure for appendicitis**

C. T. Russell also published the following information about the medicine against appendicitis and typhoid fever:

#### **CURE FOR APPENDICITIS**

*It is known that only about three out of every one hundred operated upon for appendicitis really have a diseased appendix needing removal. We give below a simple cure for appendicitis symptoms. The pain in the appendix region is caused by the biting of worms near the junction of the transverse colon with the small intestines, low down on the right side of the abdomen. This remedy is recommended also for typhoid fever, which is also a worm disease. The medicine is Santonine: dose, 3 grains, an hour before breakfast; repeated for four mornings, or until all the symptoms disappear. Then one dose per month for three months to eradicate all germs. This recipe is of incalculable value. Not only will it save the surgeon's and hospital fees of perhaps \$200, but it saves weeks of ill health, inconvenience, convalescence and loss of salary. (The Watchtower January 15, 1912 p. 4963, reprints).*

### **A healing radio**

The Watchtower Society got so fascinated by the invention of radio, that they not only claimed that soon resurrected Abraham

would be broadcasting, but they also considered the radio as healing device for many diseases, in those days, as well as in the future. Soon after the Watchtower Society had set up their own radio station they started advertising that listening to the radio could have special healing power.

*Thus on February 26, 1922, Brother Rutherford delivered his first radio broadcast, in California. Two years later, on February 24, 1924, the Watch Tower Society's own radio station WBBR, on Staten Island, New York, began broadcasting. Eventually, the Society organized worldwide networks to broadcast Bible programs and lectures. By 1933 a peak of 408 stations were carrying the Kingdom message to six continents! (Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom 1993 p. 80).*

*With great improved broadcasting stations we can expect Abraham from Mount Zion to direct the affairs of the whole earth. (A Desirable Government 1924 p. 30).*

*Radio has been directly employed in the treatment of cases of rheumatism, neuritis, pneumonia, and deafness. Men that have not heard a sound in thirty years have been able to hear when the radio headpieces were attached. Leo Kuehn, of Detroit, a deaf-mute twenty-eight years of age, an intelligent, educated man, learned to speak after a few lessons by radio. His first uttered words were: Holy, holy, holy." It was a well-chosen tribute to the Author of his blessings. (The Golden Age March 12, 1924 p. 365).*

*Disease will wither and die. Plagues will be swept from the earth. How? by radio vibrations streaming across the earth of such infinite strength that they will kill and shatter germ life. The air we breathe will be teeming with health. We all know how clear and invigorating the air is after an electric storm. Radio will cause it always to be so. (The Golden Age March 12, 1924 p. 365).*

Nowadays, the Watchtower Society no longer promotes this kind of a treatment, because it sold its radio station:

*By the mid-1950's, the growing ranks of Kingdom publishers were reaching more people right at the doors of their homes. This proved to be far more effective than the radio in helping individuals understand Bible truth. So in 1957 it was decided to sell WBBR and direct our resources to the expanding missionary work in other lands. (The Watchtower August 1, 1994 p. 25).*

## **Radio Biola – detects and cures diseases**

In the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Watchtower Society began to advertise the Radio Biola – a device, that was supposed to detect and treat diseases:

*I am exclusively announcing in THE GOLDEN AGE prior to its general publication elsewhere, The Electronic Radio Biola, which means life renewed by radio waves or electrons. The Biola automatically diagnoses and treats diseases by the use of the electronic vibrations. The diagnosis is 100 percent correct, rendering better service in this respect than the most experienced diagnostician, and without any attending cost. This little instrument automatically measures the body energy, its power of resistance to disease and, if disease exists or if the energy of the body is below par, corrects it. This is done by radio vibration, which makes the human body its own dynamizer, or anti-toxin manufacturer. It restores underbalance in diseased tissues, accomplishing the work gradually. The "balance" in the life cells is completely restored. The operation of the Biola is such that it discovers and locates disease processes in their very beginning, before great damage has been done, rearranges the electrons and the body equilibrium, and enables nature to restore the organs or parts to normal. (...) This is a great step forward, marking the Biola as the most valuable treatment apparatus obtainable today, and well worthy of notice in the columns of a magazine like THE GOLDEN AGE, which looks forward to perfect days ahead. (...) In conclusion, the Biola is unquestionably a wonderful addition to the science of medicine, some of its greatest advantages being: (...) These things in themselves furnish undoubted evidence that we are entering the Golden Age, so longed for by all of*

*earth's inhabitants, where each will have his heart's desire for life, liberty and happiness under perfect conditions. (The Golden Age April 22, 1925 pp. 454-455).*

On page 479 of the above-mentioned publication, a reader could find the advertisement of the Radio Biola, its price and the information how to order it.

Positive opinions about Radio Biola were also published in another magazine, where several letters with praising words from users were cited. (see *The Golden Age* December 2, 1925 pp. 140-141).

### **Electrical ring eliminates disasters and germs**

For many years, the Watchtower Society taught that the “electrical ring” would drop soon to the ground, that would kill all bacteria, diseases and bring health to people. This prophecy has been described many times, especially in the 1920s:

*There are scientists who claim that the Earth still has one ring about it, an electrical ring which, falling, will in a few years destroy fermentation, microbes and parasites, and greatly assist plant and animal life. (Scenario of the Photo-Drama of Creation 1914 p. 2).*

See also: *The Golden Age* June 23, 1920 p. 594; *The Golden Age* July 5, 1922 p. 623; *The Golden Age* December 20, 1922 p. 178; *The Golden Age* October 8, 1924 p. 25.

After many years, the Watchtower Society has withdrawn their words and replaced by new light, writing since then about the destructive nature of the electrical ring. They have classified it now a “pseudoscientific hearsay”:

*A report persists in circulating that there is a destructive electrical ring descending toward the earth, and that, when it hits, life not miraculously preserved by Jehovah will be wiped out. Did not the Awake! magazine comment on this some years ago? (...)*

*Yes, the Awake! of July 8, 1952, in its article entitled “Our Atmosphere, Man’s Stairway to the Stars,” had a subheading called “Does Electrical Ring Threaten Us?” It pointed out that while there are electrical layers in the ionosphere, the harmful radiations are prevented from reaching earth by the ozone layer. Nor is there any danger that the ozone layer will be destroyed, leaving us vulnerable to this bombardment, because the ultraviolet rays that, along with cosmic rays, cause the electrical layers of the ionosphere also create this ozone layer by their action on the oxygen in the earth’s atmosphere. In other words, the rays create the roadblock. As long as the rays are there the preventive layer will be there. So it seems that the electrical layers above us offer nowhere near the threat that the idle rumors about them do, which are parroted about without any scientific basis. Certainly it is worse than fruitless to occupy our time spreading such rumors when that time is urgently needed to preach the unquestionable warnings of Jehovah’s Word. So we should use our time to preach about what we know, based on God’s sure Word, rather than preaching pseudoscientific hearsay that is advanced by those who yearn to be sensational. (The Watchtower August 15, 1955 p. 511, emphasis added).*

### **A scientific diet classified as “providential leadings”**

At some point in time, the Watchtower Society, on the basis of “science” and “providential leadings”, set a specific plant diet. All other foods, medicines and drinks (except wine) were classified as “poisons”. By doing so they also referred to the “Golden Age”:

#### *The Scientific Basis of Longevity*

*From its basic standpoint longevity has in the past been a much neglected subject, as it was once supposed to be rather too deep for human understanding. But through providential leadings in the preparation for the glorious Golden Age scientific research has uncovered many of the mysteries surrounding human destiny, among which are some of the basic principles controlling the span of human life. The dispensational message of the day which, boiled down into few words, is “millions now living will never die”, has awakened an*

*intense interest in this subject. (The Golden Age January 14, 1925 p. 244).*

*The majority of people are still using a radically abnormal diet; and probably ninety percent, or even more, are drug addicts in some form. Tea, coffee and tobacco are all drugs, and are rushing the race into the abyss of mental imbecility and insanity. No stimulative foods and drinks have any value to the human system in their stimulative properties. In meat the evil effects of its stimulative properties are practically offset by its nourishing qualities. In olden days, when fresh acid fruits were scarce and modern methods of preserving were unknown, wines, temperately used, were beneficial, and their stimulative effects were more than made up for the release of potassium into the system. Drug foods and stimulative and refined foods must all be discarded in a regenerative diet, and a vegetable diet adhered to mostly, with the exceptions of eggs and dairy products. Perhaps some forms of sea foods can for a time be used and even be beneficial, as they are rich in certain elements of food value. There is no question that present dietetic light is amply sufficient for a decisive start towards permanent longevity. In this, faddism must be avoided; such as restricted diet, fasting, the selection of special foods because of their supposed vitamine value, etc. (The Golden Age January 14, 1925 p. 247).*

In time, the Watchtower Society stopped to propagate its diet recommendations, except the food that contained blood. Since 1927 its consumption was prohibited.

## **Grape treatment and enema can cure cancer and sclerosis**

*Their chief resort is the knife, the efficacy of which is liable to prove only temporary, at best, since the growth may come again. Radium is used as a curative agent, though to a rather limited extent. (...) My attention was first called to the subject of cure for cancer about eighteen years ago when I was staying in Norwich, Connecticut, for about two months in the summertime. While there I met a lady, a resident of the city, somewhat less than fifty years of age, who had been cured of malignant cancer of the breast by living*

*on grape juice and taking every day a high enema of plain warm water; temperature of comfortable warmth, from 100° to 105°. (...) Within the last two or three years I have heard of a few well-authenticated cases of cure of cancer by remedies made from herbs in some cases and by the grape juice cure in others. In no case have I heard of fever or vomiting or other symptoms of discomfort after the cure had begun to work. It is probable that the daily high enema would tend to relieve the patient of such distressing conditions. (...) While staying in Norwich I met, besides the two cancer patients, a minister from Pennsylvania who had come to Norwich to take the fruit juice treatment for the cure of arteriosclerosis. He claimed to be entirely cured. He had been able to be up and around and to take a walk each day while taking the treatment and said he had lost very little flesh and no strength whatever. Another case which I was told about as a remarkable cure was that of a truck driver who had cut the flesh of his right hand or arm and blood poisoning had set in. The physicians he consulted could not prevent the poison from spreading, and decreed that his right arm would have to be amputated. He was a man about forty years of age, and the loss of his arm would have meant loss of work for him, possibly for the rest of his life. He heard of the grape juice cure as something which would prove efficacious in cases of impurity of the blood. He decided to try it, and did so with complete success. In these cases, as in the cancer cases, the high enema every day was an essential part of the treatment; and as also in the cancer cases the treatment lasted a little less than forty days, when the tongue cleared, which indicated that the curative process had completed its work and that the patient was in a condition to begin to take solid food. (The Golden Age April 2, 1930 pp. 434-436).*

During that time, even Frederick W. Franz (1893-1992; the later president of the Watchtower Society), described a meeting with a sick man named Christophel who got inspired by an article in *the Golden Age* propagating the grape treatment. Franz recommends him another book to read and then quotes Christophel's letter in which he describes the miraculous recovery from a cancer due to this diet. F. Franz does not personally comment on the effectiveness of the diet,

but writes that he gladly publishes this interesting letter for readers (*The Golden Age* December 24, 1930 p. 216)

In the last 20s of the twentieth century, several articles were published discussing the grape treatment: *The Golden Age* December 26, 1928 pp. 206-207; *The Golden Age* May 29, 1929 pp. 563-564; *The Golden Age* August 7, 1929 p. 722; *The Golden Age* November 13, 1929 pp. 104-105; *The Golden Age* November 27, 1929 pp. 144-145.

## **Pathogenic microbes are superstition**

### *Germs, the Modern Superstition*

*Do you know that the germ theory has never been proven? And it cannot be proven either. If it had been proven, it would not be a theory. It has been truly said that “knowledge without evidence is superstition”; and that applies to the germ theory also. It is a leftover superstition of a past age, when man feared that the earth was inhabited with hideous monsters that were hiding everywhere, in the air, in the sea, in the darkness, etc., always ready to jump out and devour him or make life otherwise miserable for him. (...) However, the medical profession have accepted the theory as though it were a proven fact, probably because it is the most profitable part of their repertory. (...) Germs do not cause disease as the most of you people have been led to believe. This theory of the cause of disease is very much misunderstood by the masses. (The Golden Age March 18, 1931 p. 404).*

Another article published in 1931 (*The Golden Age* October 14, 1931 pp. 23-26) agrees that microbes are “superstitions”. It provided answers to a number of related issues and supported it with the Bible. To be more convincing, authors draw the attention to the ungodly behavior among doctors and scientists.

## Final thoughts

Although this book is not meant to be a scientific textbook, we hope it will be kindly welcomed by the medical community as a contribution to a better understanding of the problem Jehovah's Witnesses do create as patients refusing blood transfusions.

Despite how strongly they speak against blood transfusion and its supposed violation of God's Law, we have clearly proved in the contents of this book how unreliable they are as far as medical matters are concerned.

The low credibility of the Jehovah's Witnesses' teaching office is demonstrated in many forms, from a ban on preventive vaccination (later reversed), changed opinions about transplantations, through diametrically fluctuating assessments on blood transfusion and hesitations concerning blood fractions. There is also no confidence in levelling the blood transfusion with the cannibalism or (oral) consumption.

Jehovah's Witnesses, like any other patients, deserve good medical care. One must, however, be aware that their imperturbable refusal to accept a blood transfusion is not really rooted in the Bible as such, nor derived from its solid exegesis, or in-depth medical knowledge.

On the contrary, it comes from the leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses, the so called Governing Body. Each and every faithful follower of the Watchtower religion must show an absolute obedience to it, set as the only source of truth, a channel supposedly providing information from God.

Many former and present Jehovah's Witnesses acknowledge that members of the Watchtower organization are expected to fully accept teachings provided through the Watchtower magazine and other publications of the Watchtower Society.

Dear reader, please consider the above facts, because they help to judge whether we can talk about the competence of Jehovah's Witnesses' leaders in medical matters, or whether we are dealing with the strong religious leaders who do not have professional and reliable medical knowledge, but do exercise their power on the followers.

What is noteworthy in such considerations is the fact that the Witnesses are still dying because of refusing blood transfusions, and that the full number of such deaths is not accurately recorded in any statistics, though from time to time the secular media and even Watchtower Society's publications mention several people who die in such a way. So the issue that counts is human life, and it often involves lives of young children who have the right to live and grow despite the radical religious beliefs of their parents.

May this humble work help to save even one human life.

## **Information about the original Polish edition**

In this place, in Polish version of the book, both in paper and electronic form, there are *Appendices*, not included in the present English edition. Publications included here are almost unavailable in Polish, but its English counterparts can be easily found in the internet. However, we mention the titles of such additional parts of the book and basic information included in them:

### **Appendix A Letters and documents of the Watchtower Society**

[In that part we publish photocopies of letters and documents of the Watchtower Society, which discuss the issue of blood transfusion in years from 2006 to 2016].

### **Appendix B Blood transfusions in the media**

[Each year media reveal drastic examples of losing life because of the refusal of blood transfusion by Jehovah's Witnesses. We could cite many examples of such tragedies, but we will reduce them to the most characteristic from the several recent years].

After discussing several cases of losing life because of refusal of the blood transfusion by Jehovah's Witnesses in Poland, we published the following *Summary*:

The above reports speak for themselves. We are convinced by them that the problem of refusal of blood transfusion by Witnesses is an issue related to medicine, law, ethics, sociology and religion.

Concerning medical perspective, it should be considered if doctors should gain better arguments in order to refute erroneous convictions of Jehovah's Witnesses and their representatives – members of

## *Hospital Liaison Committees.*

As for the law, we should not expect significant changes and restrictions, because the present tendency is decidedly liberal and gives bigger rights to individual.

When we look at the discussed matter from the viewpoint of ethics and social sciences, the following questions arise: Does the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses really provide its members with full and reliable information, so that their refusal of blood transfusions is truly a decision based on solid foundations? Or maybe the issue is the fear of leaders of the Watchtower organization that they could be sued with many several million dollars compensations when facts would force them to reverse their strict position on the matter of blood? Could we suspect that in that organization we find a phenomenon of mind control, governing minds of the members by indoctrination based on selective citations from the Bible and scientific publications, aimed to force followers to act in definite ways? Is that true that an average Jehovah's Witnesses refusing blood transfusion is in fact a person manipulated by a deceptive propaganda?

Looking at the matter from the religious viewpoint, readers could assess, if tragedies of Witnesses dying because of the ban on blood transfusions, are not a proof that extremely literal interpretation of the Bible, neglecting its spirit, may be a lethal thing. One may recall the words of the Apostle Paul: "for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6, *English Standard Version*). It is worthwhile to remind that God's Law is in its nature a lifegiving thing, not a lethal one: "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which *if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD*" (Leviticus 18:5, ESV, emphasis added, except the word *am*). In the purpose of Creator a man who obeys his commandments could *live* by doing this. Unfortunately, the leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses organization interpret the message of the Bible in such a way, that many members of that community, because of obeying its bans still unnecessarily *die*.

## **Appendix C Jehovah's Witnesses' various opinions on health care**

In the last section of the book we present several photocopies of the earlier issues of the Watchtower Society's magazines, which prove that the position of the Watchtower Society on protective vaccinations, transplants or blood transfusions was fluctuant.

Polish edition includes photocopies of some publications, accompanied by important fragments.



The original in English:

*The Sacredness of Human Blood*

*(...) This plainly suggests that much of the looseness of our day along sexual lines may be traceable to the easy and continued violation of the divine commands to keep human and animal blood apart from each other. With cells of foreign blood racing through his veins man is not normal, not himself, but lacks the poise and balance which make for self-control. (...) Vaccination is a direct violation of the everlasting covenant that God made with Noah after the flood. (...) Vaccination has never saved a human life. It does not prevent smallpox. (...) The man that makes it his business to pollute the blood of man with all manner of filth taken from the blood of animals is committing one of the most criminal offenses toward God that was ever committed by man. (The Golden Age February 4, 1931 pp. 293-295).*



*another human, alive or dead? No! That would be cannibalism, a practice abhorrent to all civilized people. (...) Those who submit to such operations are thus living off the flesh of another human. That is cannibalistic. (The Watchtower November 15, 1967 p. 702, underline is added).*



kilkunastu umierającym. Ten jedynie wzgląd powinien już przekonać wszystkich do tego rodzaju operacji, która w istocie swojej nie ma nic zdrożnego (Nowy Dzień [New Day], No. 3, 1936 p. 48, article entitled *Krew zmarłego ratuje życie umierającym*).

English counterpart of the article is lacking. Here is our translation:

“Currently, blood transfusion is in everyday use and there is no fear of harmful results, since they were not discovered for a long time (...) Many people could feel disgusted of undergoing such a macabre operation. But when we reflect on it, we come to conclusion that this kind of invention can give humanity great services. The blood of one deceased person can save lives of a dozen or so dying people. This one consideration should convince everyone to this kind of operation, which in its essence is nothing wrong.” (*New Day*, Polish edition, No. 3, 1936 p. 48, article entitled *Blood of deceased ones saves lives of dying people*).

## Blood transfusion accepted

Polish edition of *the Watchtower* (Strażnica) Rok XCIV [1973] No. 11 p. 17.

**JEHOWA** jest nieocyn-  
ny. Jest wielkim Na-  
uczycielem i wodzem  
swojego ludu (Ps. 143:1  
10). Study Boży nat-  
omiast są czymś i  
nigdy nie osiągną  
takiego stanu, w któ-  
rym by rozumieli ab-  
solutnie wszystko.  
Bóg objawia im praw-  
dę stopniowo, dzięki  
czemu wyrabiają sobie  
coraz jaśniejszy jej  
obraz i sami coraz  
lepiej odzwierciedla-  
ją chwałę Boga, a tak-  
że bardziej upodoba-  
niają się do Niego  
(2 Kor. 3:18). Pasa-  
żem do coraz bliżej.  
Potrzeby ich są w pełni  
zaspokajane; otrzy-  
mują wszystko, co jest  
niezbędne dla ich pożyteczności du-  
chowej (Filip. 4:19). Ale takie cią-  
głe robienie postępów wymaga zmian,  
wymaga korygowania poglądów.  
Niktąm ludzkie trudno jest  
zmienić ras przyzwyczajone zapatrywa-  
nia. Mają naszczenia do zmian w  
rozumieniu pewnych tekstów biblij-  
nych czy określonego sposobu postę-  
powania. Na przykład porównamy od  
lat czterdziestych bieżącego stule-  
cia świadkowie Jehowy nie godzą się  
na oddawanie swej krwi ani na przy-  
zwyczajanie transfuzji, podczas gdy  
przedtem nie robili z tego żadnej  
kwestii. Od roku 1962 rozumieją, że  
„władze zwierzcnie”, wspomniane w  
Lidzie do Rzymian 13:1 (NP), to  
przedstawiciele rządów świeckich,  
zatem od roku 1929 aż do owej  
chwili znaczący podawali tę sprawę.  
Przykładów takich można by przyto-  
czyć więcej. Czy to jednak znaczą,  
że świadkowie Jehowy nie posiadają  
prawdy? Czy podważa podstawowe na-  
sady ich wierzeń?

W żadnym wypadku. Świadkowie Je-  
howy nie przypisują sobie nieocyn-  
ności. Przynajmniej posłuchali od Boga  
(Isa. 54:13). Nigdy nie będą znali  
wszystkiego, ale trzymając się Jego  
prawdy, wciąż się będą uczyć z  
niewyczerpanej skarbnicy mądrości  
Boga.

**PRZYKŁAD ZBORU  
Z PIERWSZEGO STULECIA**

Kiedy jeszcze Jezus przebywał na  
ziemi, rzekł do swych uczniów:

**BÓG  
KORYGUJE  
POGLĄDY  
swojego ludu**

„Wiele nam was do po-  
ziedzenia, ale teraz  
zmieśćcie nie możecie”  
(Jana 16:12). Gdyby  
im wyjawili wszystko  
od razu, byłoby tym  
sztyt praktyczności. Po  
prostu nie potrafili-  
by objąć umyślnie tych  
wiadomości ani wy-  
wodzić ich w życie.  
Dlatego uczę? Ich  
rozumiano.

Przyjrzyjmy się hi-  
storii wspomnianego zboru,  
opisaną w Dzie-  
jach Apostołów. Pod-  
póki Jezus przebywał  
wśród uczniów, nieważ  
na krótko przed jego  
wstąpieniem do nieba,  
sądził oni, że nie-  
bawem ustanowi na ziemi  
królestwo dla o-  
branego narodu Izraela (Dzieje  
1:6). Ale od dnia Pięćdziesiąticy  
roku 33 n.e. zaczęli porządk, że  
jest inaczej (Dzieje 2:12-36; 3:12-  
21; 1 Piotra 3:18). Wiele później  
Bóg pozwolił im zrozumieć, że  
szczegół swej „świętej tajemnicy”,  
mianowicie to, że postanowił do po-  
ru chrześcijańskiego wprowadzić pa-  
gan (Dzieje 10:34-48; Rzymian, roz-  
dział 11; Kol. 3:11-27; NW). Je-  
szcze później powstał upor na temat  
obrzezania nawróconych z pogaństwa  
i musieli się nim zająć ciągle kie-  
rownicze. W tym wypadku do skory-  
gowania poglądów doprowadziło zbada-  
nie Piśmie świętego w świetle naj-  
nowszych wydarzeń (Dzieje Aposto-  
skie, rozdział 15). Wiele spraw wy-  
jaśnili również apostołowie w swo-  
ich listach, na przykład kwestię  
drugiej obecności Chrystusa oraz  
uzartykowania (1 do Koryntian,  
rozdział 15; 1 Tes. 4:13-17), a tak-  
że sprawy związane z organizacją  
zborową (listy do Tymoteusza i Ty-  
tusa).

Czy takie przyglądanie nowego  
zrozumienia i skorygowanych poglą-  
dów oznaczyło powstanie zboru jako  
„filaru i podpory prawdy”? Nie, ra-  
czej ją umocniło, gdyż świadczyło o  
tym, że kierował nim i poszukiwał  
się Jehowa Bóg oraz Jezus Chrystus.  
Dowodem tego było bogostawieństwo  
Jehowy. Kiedy rozproszonym zborom  
posłano wyjaśnienie kwestii obrze-  
zania „utwierdzający się (...) w wie-  
rze i z dnia na dzień rosy w liczbę”. - 1 Tym. 3:15; Dzieje 16:14,5.

The original in English:

*Some persons, however, object to changes in viewpoint, changes in understanding of certain scriptures or procedures. For example, since the 1940's Jehovah's witnesses have refused to give or accept*

*blood transfusions, whereas prior to that they did not take this position.* (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1972 p. 501, emphasis added).



The original in English:

*Then the taking of blood is just as despicable to you as cannibalism. Think of eating of the flesh of another human creature! It is shocking! Is drinking human blood any different? Does bypassing the mouth and putting it directly into the veins change it? Not at all! (The Watchtower July 1, 1966 p. 401).*

Włodzimierz Bednarski has been dealing with the Jehovah's Witnesses teachings for many years. He has published numerous publications both polemicalizing with JW's doctrine and showing the changes of it. Just to list a few: *Pismo Święte a nauka Świadców Jehowy, innych sekt i wyznań niekatolickich* (only in Polish: 1997, 2015), *Armageddon in 1975 – 'probability' or 'possibility'?* (English free e-book: 2011), *Porównanie nauk Świadców Jehowy* (only in Polish: 2014) *Year 1925 and Millions Now Living Will Never Die! Expectations and predictions made by Jehovah's Witnesses in the past* (English free e-book: 2018) and co-author with Szymon Matusiak, an Evangelical Christian of a study:

*Ever-changing teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses The most important changes in the doctrine of the Watchtower Society in the years 1879-2015* (English free e-book: 2016). His publications may be found on the website ([www.wobroniewiary.pl](http://www.wobroniewiary.pl)).

"Since the mid-1940s, the Watch Tower Society has issued for its followers, Jehovah's Witnesses, a ban on blood transfusions. They speak out on the subject, claiming that the prohibition originates from the Holy Scriptures as God's law.

This book will help to judge how reliable and competent Jehovah's Witnesses are regarding blood transfusion and other medical issues they have raised in their older literature.

The author carefully reviews the publications of the Watchtower Society, especially those past, since they may not be easily available for everyone. He clearly shows the basis of JW's teachings and helps the medical community to confront that with the common sense, and assess, whether they (JW's) are reliable and have a solid scientific basis.

Moreover, inquisitive Jehovah's Witnesses can learn, through this book, how the Watchtower Society's views on medical issues have evolved. Possibly that my trigger revision of their standpoint regarding the treatment using blood".

Szymon Matusiak,  
former long-time congregational elder of Jehovah's Witnesses

## Are Jehovah's Witnesses competent to resolve the issue of blood transfusion?

A small guidebook for the medical community and criticism of the Watchtower Society's teachings