

'Can't stop Witnesses' from refusing blood

Feb. 1979

EDMONTON (CP) -- The Alberta Medical Association (AMA) says there is nothing it can do to stop Jehovah's Witnesses from refusing blood transfusions.

AMA President Dr. Robert Clark was commenting Monday on last week's death of Leonard Budd, 20, of Tisdale, Sask., following his refusal of a blood transfusion to treat massive internal injuries received in a car accident near Edmonton. Budd, who was buried near his home Monday, was a recent convert to the Jehovah's Witness faith.

Clark said if doctors attempt to force patients to accept treatment they don't want, society could easily come to resemble a totalitarian state. He said the AMA feels a patient has the right to refuse treatment.

Budd's mother, Eileen Chamberlain, said Monday her son, who was working in Wabamum, west of Edmonton, was to be married this Saturday. She said he may have refused the lifesaving transfusion to avoid being shunned by his fiancee, also a Jehovah's Witness, and friends.

"I think he was so afraid they would disown him, he'd rather give up his life than be disowned."

Chamberlain telephoned Budd at the Edmonton hospital where he had been admitted and pleaded with him to accept the transfusion.

The Jehovah's Witness faith considers blood transfusions a form of "eating blood," which the Bible forbids. The Old Testament book of Leviticus, 17:14 states: "For the soul of any creature is its blood: whoever eats it shall be cut off."

"If they take the blood willingly, they will not be part of the resurrection of the dead because they have violated God's commandments," said John Shandro, an elder of the Edmonton Jehovah's Witness community.

Chamberlain said Budd, who had been raised in the United Church, was buried with Jehovah's Witness rites, out of respect for his adopted faith.

She said the service was attended by Budd's fiancee and a large number of Jehovah's witness members.

"By the size of the bag they brought and the books in it, they're going to try to show me his decision was right," she said.

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TWO DIFFERENT PROCESSES

BLOOD placed into:

THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

(The Mouth, Stomach, Intestines etc..)



BLOOD
IS
eaten
digested
and
destroyed

THE BIBLE FORBIDS THIS

The blood is eaten

- *Blood taken into the mouth is eaten.
- The process of digestion immediately begins to destroy the blood cells, etc., to absorb them as food.
- *Some substances placed in the stomach can be excellent food.
- *Large quantities of blood "eaten" into the stomach can result in death.

"Not To Eat Blood" - of the Animal Kingdom

Gen. 9:2 - 5. The prohibitions against eating blood are always in connection with eating the flesh of "beasts" and "fowls" for food. (See Lev. 17:13)



A transfusion of human blood from another living human being is completely out of context with the Bible prohibitions against eating blood, as well as the flesh.

"The Life of the Flesh is in the Blood"

Lev. 17:11. Blood that is "eaten" required the death of the "beast" or "fowl".



A blood transfusion does not require the death of the donor. He does not give his life with the transfusion.

"To Make an Atonement for Your Souls"

Lev. 17:11. The only blood used upon the altars of Israel to make an atonement for their souls, was that of "beasts" and "fowls".



Human blood was not in any way under consideration in this context, nor was the blood of fish, as it was not used in sacrifices either.

"Abstain from Things Strangled and from Blood"

Acts 15:20, 29. This chapter discusses the law of Moses. Concerning his laws dealing with the eating of "beasts" and "fowls" the apostles directed that the Gentiles were to also continue to keep them, and thus not eat the blood of any of these "beasts" and "fowls" as the heathen did. Nor were they to eat the flesh of any that had been strangled and not bled.



The context of this Bible command is dealing only with "beasts" and "fowls" and certainly not with fish or humans. The apostles and Jews were net fishermen and ate fish strangled in their nets. Witnesses recognise this principle and eat such fish today - herrings and sardines, etc. - which are unbled. The command does not in any way extend to human beings or blood transfusions!