

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES:

*You are trying
to put us*



Though you may not know me personally, with the help of my Christian friend, I want to take this means to introduce myself and visit with you regarding your doctrine concerning blood transfusions.

Through the years I have had opportunity to visit with a score of Watchtower adherents and make a close friendship with a Witness. We have discussed a variety of theological subjects, but most intriguing to me is the Watchtower's doctrine regarding transfusion of blood.

Why this particular doctrine out of the potpourri you hold at variance with Christians?

Because I inherited Hemophilia, a malady in which the lifeblood lacks specific clotting factors, resulting in uncontrollable bleeding and seemingly unending rivers of blood transfusions.

It is most difficult to draw a word picture of the life of a bleeder. Though it has been dubbed the "Royal Disease" because of the descendants of Queen Victoria, those of us afflicted experience recurring bewilderment when we ponder the sardonic implications of an appellation such as this.

For instance, I find irreconcilable the commonplace ideas of little princes in the lap of the "good life." As I recall my earliest memories of childhood, I am aroused with thoughts of a necessarily controlled environment, various limitations, and imposing restrictions placed on playmates by their well-meaning parents, reminding them of dire consequences if, by rough-housing with me they provoked a hemorrhage. As a natural consequence, children cautiously befriended me, and I was placed outside the circle of a natural childhood.

Then of course, the tacit scandal of the repeated, often large swollen "royal purple" bruises, arrested only by intense internal pressure. Pressure that provoked pain so profound it was said to be rivaled only by natural childbirth. Prolonged repeated hemorrhaging in joints results in severe crippling, deformity of joints and as a consequence, restricted use of limbs.

Today, medical science as provided an alternative to all this, providing a near-normal life for the child of this rare disease, via the transfusion of blood or blood factors, with techniques so simple and safe, home infusion setups are designed so children as young as ten are administering blood factors to themselves.

Indeed, today's Hemophiliac has the potential of "living like a prince"—free from pain, "frozen joints" and the social stigma of leary friends.

Yet, due to a macabre interpretation of Old Testament Levitical food and sacrificial laws—an *interpretation even Jewish people do not accept*—and a misinterpretation of Acts 15:20, the Watchtower Society has concocted a strange new theological twist equating eating blood and transfusing blood or blood derivatives.

In a booklet "*Jehovah's Witnesses and the Question of Blood*" the Watchtower Society has gone to exhaustive and often deceptive, one-sided lengths to dupè people into thinking that they would be violating God's teaching on the use of blood as food when blood is used in the realm of medicine.

One example of deception in the booklet is the use of the Jewish faith and their interpretation of the law in an incident involving some Jews and their encounter with Christ when he spoke figuratively about "drinking His blood," (John 6: 53-58) saying the Jewish religion regarded consuming . . . "any sort of blood," "the blood of any sort of flesh," as a violation of Leviticus 17: 10-14, then closing the paragraph with "Yes, the thought of *taking in* human blood was absolutely abhorrent to those Jewish worshipers of God." (Italics mine.) Note the clever use of "taking in" rather than "eating." It is argued that the Jews were horrified at the thought of consuming Christ's blood as food (and rightly so) but I believe their position is presented in such a way as to lead the reader into believing that they later would accept Watchtower doctrine regarding blood transfusions! Throughout the booklet it is analytically inferred that devout Jews even today would side with ~~the~~ Watchtower's position equating transfusing blood with violation of the Levitical law. But not even the Jewish people — guardians of the law — accept the Watchtower's twisting of the Levitical laws to mean a prohibition against blood transfusions. I know whereof I speak, for I have been transfused in a Jewish hospital and have a close personal friend who is a Jewish Hemophiliac!

Space here limits a thorough refutation of this booklet, and it's attacks on people who advocate the use of blood transfusions, inferring they are to be aligned with felons and gouls, saying blood is "poten-

tially lethal" and ". . . donating blood can be compared to sending a loaded gun to an unsuspecting or unprepared person. . . ." also comparing a bottle of blood to a "bomb" or a "bottle of nitroglycerin." (p. 41-42)

The danger and disease factors related to transfusing are milked by the unidentified author for all they are worth, while "alternative therapies" and equating Witnesses with early Christian martyrs are pressed as surrogative and honorable solutions to what, in the Watchtower's eyes, God seems to see as next to the unpardonable sin.

I can only conclude it is shallow reasoning such as this that has caused documented numbers of Witnesses to make human sacrifices of their innocent, nonmember children on the altar of the Watchtower, forcing them into eternity, rather than defy an anonymous author—the hidden "Jim Jones" of the Watchtower who never signs his name. . . .

Blood transfusions really can't be said to involve a sacrifice of life, as required by the Old Testament sacrificial laws. God's teaching on the sacredness of life (Genesis 9:4-6 among others) is not violated by transfusing blood—in fact, it is *enhanced* because a transfusion is a *transference* of life and hope—a gift of love from generally an anonymous donor who cared enough about the sacredness, health and worth of a fellow human being to relieve their suffering and possibly prevent death.

Nor can blood transfusions be equated to eating blood. Infused blood is not subjected to the digestive processes of the stomach as food is, which is then changed into blood — **it already is blood!**

A third prince has entered the scene. He is called Apollyon—the destroyer—the Prince of Darkness. Under the pretense of "biblical doctrine," and "Christian obedience" he would chain Christians such as myself to a Watchtower, have us sick from pain, weak from loss of blood, lame from deformed joints or preferably dead. Ground would be gained for his domain if the Redeemed of the Lord are silenced—unable to fulfill the Christian's role as "light-bearer"—proclaimer of the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ and the true Christian gospel.

I remember well a time in my life when a Witness offered me the option of refusing a transfusion as one of many means he had of *earning* eternal life. I could

have opted for "another gospel" St. Paul warned the Galatians about (Galatians 1: 6-9) or stayed with the Gospel of Grace:

We must realize our condition: "All we like sheep have gone astray . . ." (Isaiah 53: 6)

Understand the consequences of that condition and even more important, the provision made for the state we see ourselves in: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6: 23)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Accept God's invitation of grace: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11: 28) "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37)

Partake of God's free gift: "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John 4:10)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2: 8, 9)

Experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (II Corinthians 5: 17)

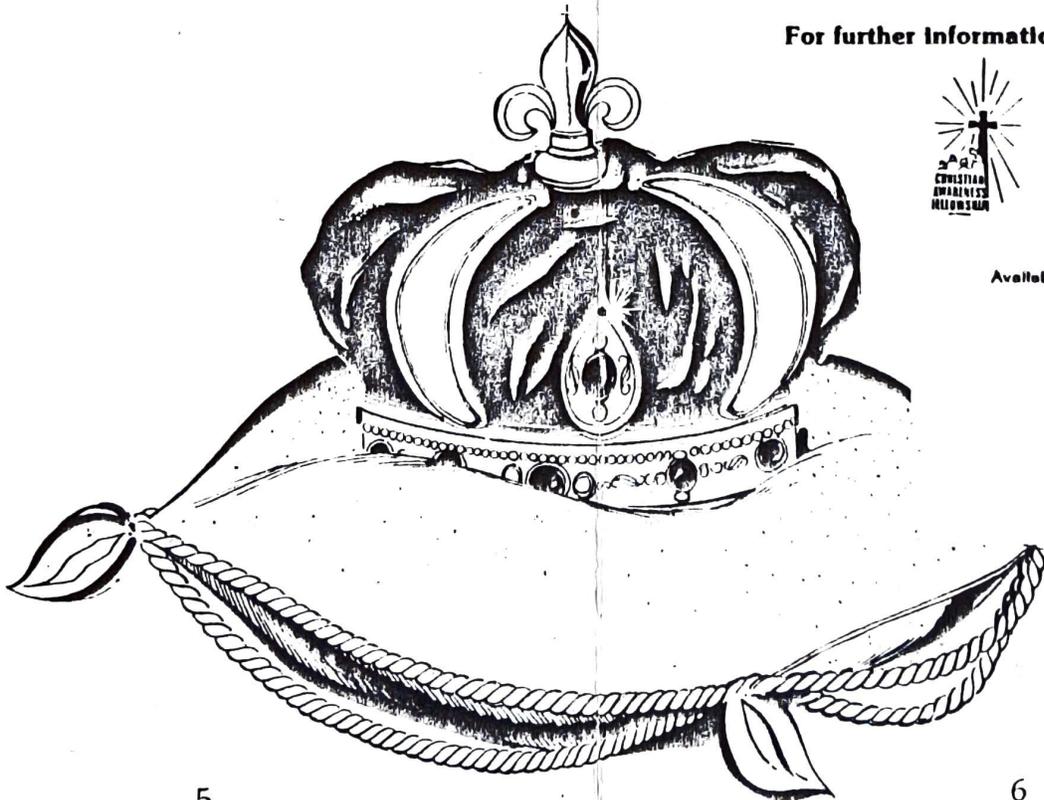
Confess Jesus as Saviour and Lord: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10: 9, 10)

Live a transformed life by the power of the Holy Spirit: ". . . as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6: 4)

I would love to hear from you personally dear Witness friend. Why not drop me a line? My door is always open . . . and . . . I love you.

Mel Richtsmeier

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