

R Jensen

24 Running Deer Road
Phenix City, AL 36870

Office: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

February 16, 1998

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards

Dear Brothers

I am an elder in the [REDACTED] congregation in [REDACTED] Alabama. What I write about in this letter has nothing to do with any past, present or foreseeable judicial activity in our congregation. The contents are concerning my own activity in the ministry with persons in the health care industry. The letter is quite long and I appreciate your perseverance in both reading and responding.

In my secular employment I have need for somewhat close association with a few physicians and insurance claims examiners related especially to workers compensation issues. These individuals have heard expressions of my faith on opportune occasions, and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses have been the subject of friendly and meaningful conversation. Our discussions regarding Jehovah's Witnesses have never been a point of contention between us, and indirect benefits have been reported by one physician regarding local publishers. On occasion some of these physicians or insurance claims examiners will call me with questions about Jehovah's Witnesses and the medical use of blood, usually they are quite simple questions. In the last few months questions have been presented for which I have no answer, it is these questions about which I write. Before getting to the meat of this issue I can tell you I have spoken with four (4) different elders and our current circuit overseer brother [REDACTED] Skogsberg, none could provide answers for the particular questions asked. Before writing this letter or speaking to those brothers, I studied and reconsidered many scriptures on this issue, and countless articles in our publications. It was suggested by some that I call our assigned hospital liaison committee, but I really don't want to bother them and that is not their intended assignment, to answer questions from the field ministry. I was encouraged by all to write the Society, so I am writing.

On this subject the two type parties have different perspectives on this issue. Insurance claims examiners are interested in reducing the claims for their respective companies. Physicians are more interested in knowing how to deal with patients who happen to be Jehovah's Witnesses. All parties generally enjoy scriptural discussion. I have told both that our organization has a

2/16/98

Page 1

Blood & Upholding Righteous Standards

hospital liaison committee that would likely be glad to address their concerns in person. Each insist they are more comfortable with the informal setting of our personal one-on-one discussions (our meetings are rarely formal, usually it happens that a physician or claims examiner simply drops by my office for a visit or we may have a business lunch together).

Of interest to the physicians is how our organization deals with persons who decide to accept blood components. They understand and respect elements of our judicial process, that of assisting those who have fallen into grave sin and protecting the spiritual interests of our brotherhood. They begin having the questions about which I write when we discuss how Jehovah's Witnesses deal with publishers differently due to particular blood components accepted. I have relayed to them what is stated in many publications (we spent considerable time in the w90 6/1 30-1). Specifically they question why *we do not* deal judicially with publishers accepting injections of blood components as long as they are from the fractions of protein, hormone, salts or enzyme components of blood, when *we do* deal judicially with publishers accepting any components of red cells, white cells, platelets or plasma (even if these have been accepted in their component form and not as whole blood). The most direct difference these physicians see between the two is in the relatively small measure of some blood components compared to other blood components and the amounts usually administered (they see all as being of blood), and that it appears our organizational tolerance (referring to actions left to conscience and not dealt with judicially) is somehow determined by individual conscience. They thus wonder why the entire matter is not left to personal conscience by our organization.

Regarding conscience I reminded them that all among Jehovah's Witnesses are free to do whatever they wish as individuals, our brotherhood simply establishes with scripture what practices we permit among ourselves and who we thus recognize as fellow worshippers. It was made plain that while acceptance of some blood components is left to publisher's individual conscience, Jehovah's Witnesses *do not endorse the use of any blood products*. Further, I reminded them *as physicians* they are not spiritual shepherds and should concentrate on treating the whole person, respecting personal religious convictions of individual patients.

They ask the following:

Regarding judicial / non-judicial status:

Is it the amount of blood or the particular components of blood one accepts that measures when we deal judicially with someone?

If it's the amount, what is the amount?

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

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

What is Jehovah's Witnesses' *definition* of blood?

Are all parts of blood "blood" or are there certain components of blood we do not define as "blood" as prohibited in Acts 15:29? (For example: Scripturally what makes red cells coming from whole blood *different* from proteins coming from whole blood, making one a matter of interest judicially and the other of no judicial interest?)

If certain components in blood are not "blood" as prohibited at Acts 15:29, *how is this determined?*

Are components of blood no longer viewed as "blood" once they are of small enough proportion, if so what is the amount?

Is it the *particular component* binding the relation to Acts 15:29's prohibition? If so what are the *scriptural* reasons for allowing these components as a matter of conscience by our organization while upholding God's requirements judicially in response to acceptance of other components?

I understand there is some overlapping in the questions above. I have categorized the questions in an attempt to provide the different contexts in which they were asked. Also, regarding Acts 15:29, there was discussion about the passage of antibodies and proteins via the placenta. This did not seem to satisfy their questions from a *scriptural* position and there was reluctance to accept that only antibodies and/or proteins passed through the placenta. One asked: "How do you think water is delivered to an unborn child if not *from* the mothers blood, specifically from the plasma?" He added: "Even though their blood systems do not actually intermingle, the *source* of nourishment for the unborn *is* from the mothers blood." It seemed unlikely to them that God's Law stated to Noah had anything to do with the inner workings between fetus/placenta/mother.

In the course of conversation I used the illustration of the alcoholic being advised by his physician to abstain from alcohol and how this prohibition would certainly include intravenous acceptance of alcohol. In response one physician asked: "If, as your doctor, I said "abstain from eating meat", should I object to your acceptance of an organ transplant which could serve to sustain your life?" Further he asked: "If I told you to abstain from alcohol, does that mean I should object to some medical use of alcohol to preserve your life?" I explained that my illustration was intended *only* to show that drinking or eating is similar to intravenous transfusion into the body, reminding him that intentional eating of blood *is* prohibited by God. Otherwise I had no response to his illustrated questions except by reminding him in this case it is not a physician requiring abstinence but our Creator, and since his standards call for abstention from blood, Christians should obey. He agreed, and then said "that's all well and good except for this, it seems Jehovah's Witnesses are selective on *how to obey* this command and *how to uphold* it in your congregations, either you should abstain from *medical* use of blood or not, it seems that "some blood" is allowed while "other blood" is not."

We also discussed how Jehovah's Witnesses view misuse of blood in other ways, and how blood should be disposed of when no longer part of the individual or creature. Regarding general misuse of blood, I was asked if I had any idea how much blood had to be "misused" (by Jehovah's Witnesses' standards) to produce the blood components which our organization leaves to conscience, I had no idea (and still don't). He said it is a considerable amount, and that if I

thought a single unit of blood being transfused was objectionable and considered misused I should go to a facility where blood is separated and processed and just look at the amount of blood being misused in order to gain the "accepted" fractions. Being ignorant of this particular process I did not have a response, but it seems reasonable that misuse of blood would be an important factor regardless of whether transfusion or injection into humans occurs, because we consider any misuse of blood to be serious as described in the October 15th 1981 Watchtower and elsewhere. (w81 10/15 30) One comment made in this Watchtower is "such commercialization of blood would not be in accord with deep respect for the life-representing value of blood." Is not the handling and processing of blood for medical products (which are bought and sold for profits) considered a commercialization of blood? Wouldn't this commercialization then be just as reprehensible as accepting whole blood transfusions, especially if it is true that large volumes of blood must be processed for the intended purpose of commerce? Could a brother be acceptable spiritual association if he owned and operated an establishment which specialized in the handling of large volumes of blood in order to separate for sale and use certain blood fractions which are left to individual conscience as to their use? It seems that the voluntary acceptance of blood fractions clearly and directly contributes to the wholesale misuse of blood because of the obtaining, storage and handling of the blood. (w75 page 216)

These men have asked questions not simply because they work in the field of health care, they also seem to have interest in the Bible. They have not indicated to me any attempt to thwart our association, the subject of health care happens to be their interest and naturally because of our position on blood they are inquisitive. Obviously numerous questions have arisen from worthwhile conversations with these individuals. I have attempted to simplify this letter, but much is being compressed into these few paragraphs. Please respond to each point as there is potential of advancing these discussions to higher ground, possibly starting a Bible study with at least one of these individuals upon clarification of the aforementioned.

I too desire a better understanding of *how* we can determine Scripturally that elders should deal judicially with publishers because of a particular component of blood accepted, while not dealing with publishers accepting other components. Especially confusing is a statement made in the June 1st 1990 Watchtower on page 31, it says: "Others have felt that a serum (antitoxin), such as immune globulin, containing only a tiny fraction of a donor's blood plasma and used to bolster their defense against disease, is *not the same as a life-sustaining blood transfusion. So their consciences may not forbid them* to take immune globulin or similar fractions. They may conclude that for them the decision will rest primarily on whether they are willing to accept any health risks involved in an injection made from others' blood" (Italics added) There are two things puzzling about this quote.

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

Second. The italicized portion also indicates that *individual consciences play a determining role* in our decision about what we tolerate morally. What if

someone's conscience allowed acceptance of components like plasma, concluding that their decision rests primarily with accepting health risks?

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

Additionally there is another area I have questions about (briefly mentioned above). The w89 3/1 30 comments that Jehovah's Witnesses "DO NOT accept" certain autologous procedures. The reason for this is well stated: 'We have long appreciated that such stored blood certainly is no longer part of the person. It has been completely removed from him, so it *should be disposed of in line with God's Law*: "You should pour it out upon the ground as water."—Deuteronomy 12:24.' This *bottom line reasoning* can be found several times throughout the same article. With this bottom line scriptural law in mind it seems of importance that *all blood fractions* for medical use come from whole blood which has been *intentionally*: donated (or even sold), stored, processed, sold for commercial profit, and finally introduced into another person. *How can it be Scripturally reasoned* that all of this misuse of blood, explicitly to sell, buy or use blood fractions, can possibly be accepted by any Christian conscience? I can understand that even properly bled meat is going to have *some* blood remaining which is eaten together with the flesh, however, this eating of blood is not intentional, reasonable efforts have been made to 'pour out' the blood at the *onset* according to God's Law. My question arises because in the case of blood fractions administered medically there *must* first have occur *several* procedures which we "DO NOT accept", leading *intentionally* and *directly* to the product offered. Would not acceptance (and purchase) of the intentional end product be directly supportive of the process when there is *no obligation* on our part to accept such? Is the described process acceptable? (reference: w81 10/15 30, w90 6/1 30)

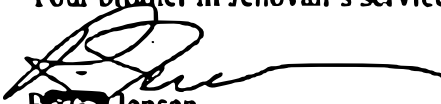
Incidentally, regarding one insurance claims examiner (for workers compensation claims) who seemed initially concerned about the cost of nonblood medical management, I reminded him that many times workers compensation claims are astronomical, not because of the real needs of the individual but because of unscrupulous persons who are content to 'milk the system'. Some do this by feigning a work related injury when in fact the injury had occurred away from work, others by lazily manipulating some form of permanent total disability ('disability retirement' so-to-speak) on an otherwise resolvable though bonafide claim. After hearing how Jehovah's Witnesses teach good ethical and honest behavior in these areas he seemed convinced that these would not be issues with claimants who happened to be Jehovah's Witnesses and that in fact these claims likely would be easier to manage. Further I reminded the examiner that often claims can be resolved positively and more readily for all parties when the injured person knows and feels they are understood, appreciated and well looked after. He agreed and was glad to know more about Jehovah's Witnesses beliefs to that end.

I look forward to reading your reply. I have understood and appreciated the Christian directive to abstain from blood for most of my life, and as an elder have several times assisted friends under stressful and even life threatening circumstances. Reading and studying further into this subject has only strengthened my resolve to abstain from blood, consequentially I look forward to your response. My personal questions are not intended as quibbling over the

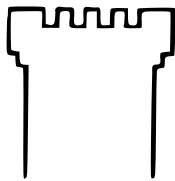
direction to allow mature Christians use of their own conscience in determining acceptance of certain blood products, I seek only understanding.

You brothers are very busy up there, and we all surely appreciate your efforts. It is not my desire to burden you with additional work, I just can't nail down the *scriptural answers* to the questions above and need your assistance. I thank you in advance for your kind spiritual aid in this matter. Also I wish to thank all for the wonderful (though exhausting) Kingdom Ministry School we attended in November/December 97'. I enjoyed the positive nature of the program, all assignments were handled with excellence. *Keep up the good work!*

Your brother in Jehovah's service,



Ross Jensen



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

WRITING DEPARTMENT
25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2483, U.S.A.
PHONE (718) 625-3000
ECC:ECO March 23, 1998

R. JENSEN
24 RUNNING DEER DR
PHENIX CITY AL 36870

Dear Brother Jensen:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of February 16, 1998. You ask about the propriety of a Christian accepting blood fractions for medical purposes. You say you have been discussing this matter with various medical doctors and have found it difficult to answer some of their questions.

We note you have considered what the Society has published on this subject, especially comments under "Questions From Readers" in the June 1, 1990, issue of *The Watchtower*. As indicated, the Society has left it to the individual Christian to decide whether he or she can accept blood fractions such as proteins found in the bloodstream, believing this to be in a gray area and thus not the same as accepting a life-sustaining transfusion of whole blood or a major component for the same purpose.

Some take the strict position that since a serum injection or another medical substance is made from something that formerly was in the bloodstream, even though a minor fraction, it would not be right to accept it in fighting against disease or to heal a wound. And if a Christian's conscience will not allow him to accept a serum, we would encourage him to respect the dictates of his conscience. However, as you know, when we say "fraction," it is not meant that a few drops or even a drop of whole blood is involved. Rather, whole blood is broken down into its various parts and certain proteins or other minute substances are taken from the breakdown product, called immunoglobulins (a very minor fraction) in which antibodies are known to reside, and these are isolated for use in fighting against disease.

It might be argued that if blood was properly disposed of, it would not be possible to make serum injections, thus removing any reason for a question to come up on this matter. But as to disposing of blood (apart from its use in sacrifice), instructions in the Bible pertain to the slaughtering of animals for food. It is mentioned that the blood of the animal should be poured out on the ground as water and covered over. (Leviticus 17:13; Deuteronomy 12:15, 16, 24) Why was this done? Would it not be done in order to show that the one slaughtering the animal did not wish to eat the blood? It was, in effect, given back to Jehovah by pouring it out on the ground and covering it over. But if blood is taken from a body and, before it is disposed of, is broken down by a medical procedure and in the process a small fraction is extracted, not to eat or to nourish the body, but to immunize against a disease,

could it be said that there is a clear violation of God's law not to eat blood?

Jehovah is reasonable concerning his laws and their application. For instance, the Mosaic Law clearly stipulated that no Israelite was to "do any work" on the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:10) Yet, Jesus recognized that there was a difference between "workers who harvested [others'] fields" and "plucking and eating the heads of grain" in such fields. (James 5:4; Luke 6:1-5) Certainly, to harvest a whole field or a major portion of it would clearly violate the law of not working on the Sabbath. However, plucking and eating some of the heads of grain that made up a very minor fraction of the field was not prohibited by the Law. Such plucking was not to be considered "work" that was prohibited.

So, too, the blood derivative is only a small fraction of blood, as mentioned above. Such can be distinguished from the major components of the blood, such as the red cells. For instance, if a person is told to discard a bushel of potatoes and not to eat them, would this command be violated if the potatoes were cooked and in the process the starch from the potatoes was isolated and used for medical purposes? First of all, could the ingesting of the isolated starch for medical reasons be said to be eating potatoes? Taking a transfusion of blood is clearly contrary to God's law. But what about accepting a small injection, not of whole blood or even a primary component of blood, but of a breakdown product, whether it be salt taken from blood, sugar taken from blood, iron, calcium, a hormone, or another fractionalized part?

You also ask why one can be disfellowshipped for taking a blood transfusion but not for taking blood fractions. While both may affect the life of an individual, the expression "life-sustaining" in connection with blood transfusions is synonymous with the idea of taking in food for nourishment. In this regard both whole blood and major components of it carry nutrients, oxygen, and other nourishment to the body. It is this aspect of taking in blood, that is, to provide nourishment, that links blood transfusions with the Biblical prohibition. Note that "Questions From Readers" of the July 1, 1975, issue of *The Watchtower* stated: "The Bible specifically forbids the taking of blood to nourish the body.—Gen 9:4; Lev. 17:1-14; Acts 15:28, 29." The motive or reason for taking a serum is significantly different. It is not to feed the body, as would be the case if there was an eating of whole blood (or a major component thereof) by mouth or by having it transfused intravenously. Rather, the antibodies that have been separated out are administered for the purpose of immunizing the body against a certain disease. While blood fractions in certain situations can be lifesaving, they do not operate to feed and nourish the body and in this way sustain life but, rather, utilize other mechanisms.

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

With you in Jehovah's service,

Watchtower B. V. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

Office: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

July 31, 1998

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
Desk: ECC : ECO
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards

Dear Brothers

I appreciate your letter dated March 23, 1998 in response to questions regarding blood and upholding righteous standards. Having read your response months ago, and meditated on it for some time, I'm impelled to ask additional questions. I do this in the spirit of our brothers in ancient Berea who were 'examining the scriptures daily.' (Acts 17:10,11)

In your letter the following statement is made:

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

This argument is precisely at the heart of one of my questions. I had asked:

How can it be Scripturally reasoned that all of this misuse of blood, explicitly to sell, buy or use blood fractions, can possibly be accepted by any Christian conscience? Would not acceptance (and purchase) of the intentional end product be directly supportive of the process when there is no obligation on our part to accept such? Is the described process acceptable? (Please see my letter dated 2/16/98 page 5)

As informed persons we all know that injections derived from blood would be impossible to manufacture commercially if blood was disposed of properly, just as your quoted words suggest. Thus Christians know that use of any blood derivative is dependent on blood not being poured out as commanded by God. In your response I found no answer to my questions (stated above) relative to this issue. Again, can it possibly be scripturally reasoned away that our *intentional* buying of products having blood components as a critical element does not support the wholesale abuse of blood? Should we view processing of blood for commercial gain as acceptable, that is, since we support it by *voluntarily* purchasing some of its end products? I feel an answer should be possible and that it would likely have a direct bearing on Christian conduct.

Further, you state:

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

From infancy I've been taught that transfusion of material intravenously is similar to *eating*, at least as far as abstention goes. As one of Jehovah's Witnesses I've often used the illustration of a doctor telling his patient to abstain from alcohol whether this be ingestion by mouth or intravenous transfusion, either way the patient must abstain from alcohol. In harmony with this thought, I must conclude that ingestion of a blood fraction, intravenously or otherwise would be *eating*. What if the same medical blood derivative could be given orally? It's still being given for immunization, would this then be eating?

It seems the crux of the above quoted reasoning is that blood derivatives are 'not eaten to nourish the body.' Does the administering of blood components like white cells nourish the body like a meal? Would they even be administered as a meal, or would they only be administered for medical purposes? Someone starving could be saved if provided with food for ingestion, whether this be provided intravenously or by mouth. Would someone starving survive by having a blood component like white cells transfused into their veins? It seems white cells are used only for medical purposes, not to provide nutrition like a meal, but to increase the bodies ability to fight certain conditions. Isn't this similar to why other acceptable components are used? I understand from your letter that major components of blood carry *some* type of nourishment, but is it the same as eating a meal? Again, would white cells provide *nourishing sustenance* if given intravenously similar to its going through the human digestive track? Also, I'm quite sure that the 5% of blood which we tolerate acceptance of could be eaten for nourishment just as red cells or white cells could. Why does it become acceptable if this same material is ingested intravenously? Isn't this similar to eating? After all, some of these components are prescribed and administered in substantial amounts, especially when they are infused regularly.

Food we eat does more than provide energy and mass, it nourishes us. *Websters New World Dictionary of the American Language* defines nourish as "to feed or sustain with substances necessary to life and growth." Food we eat nourishes us for life in *more than one way*, it not only provides for growth, but our bodies also gain necessary *elements* enabling it to fight against disease and thus live. Nourishing food, just like taking medicine, helps us fight off disease. In fact a well balanced diet is probably more responsible for enabling our bodies to fight disease than medicine we may be prescribed. An example of this is a mothers milk, components therein provide immunization for the child against certain diseases. Are the immunization components of a mothers milk not considered nutrition, is it not food? Even among adults it is a good diet that helps maintain our body's immune system, in fact, natural immunity vanishes with poor diet. Persons may take injections containing blood components or vitamin supplements to bolster their immune system against disease. Certainly taking vitamin or mineral supplements is eating, even though the actual amounts ingested with each dose may be relatively minute. Immunization injections containing blood components likewise serve to bolster the immune system, why is this not also considered eating? By definition medical use of blood components is life sustaining nourishment whether they be strictly for immunization or not.

Your letter contains two illustrations. Below I quote excerpts of what seem to be key phrases from the first illustration followed by comments and questions:

“Jehovah is reasonable concerning his laws and their application... plucking and eating some of the heads of grain that made up a very minor fraction of the field was not prohibited by the law. Such plucking was not to be considered “work” that was prohibited.”

For Israelites eating was a normal daily practice. God didn't *prohibit* eating on the Sabbath. (Exodus 16:29) Plucking grains from a field for immediate and personal consumption was nothing more than eating a meal. The effort involved in plucking those heads of grain was no more labor intensive than getting dishes off the shelf and serving an already prepared meal to a family. Your comment though seems to reason that size or amount somehow enters into the picture with the command to abstain from blood. I don't see the instance above as a matter of amount, but rather a matter of activity. They weren't “working” as prohibited in God's Sabbath law, they were *eating* their meal, an activity *not prohibited* on the Sabbath.

It is true that God allowed certain activities on the Sabbath, though these did require exertion. But things God *explicitly prohibited* were not tolerated, *not even when infringed upon in some minor way*. Could Eve had eaten just minor components from the forbidden tree and been acceptable to God? Would Achan have lived had he only intentionally taken minor components of spoil? In these cases God gave *explicit prohibitions*, and *amount* had nothing whatsoever to do with the prohibition. God has said “abstain from blood.” Is there something in this command separating blood components? This prohibition is quite explicit, just as His commands to take no spoils from Jericho and not to eat from that one tree in the garden of Eden. If we view acceptance of blood for medical purposes as breaking God's command to abstain from blood, how can we justify acceptance of 5% of it's components based on amount or nutritional value?

The second illustration stated in part:

“For instance, if a person is told to discard a bushel of potatoes and not to eat them, would this command be violated if the potatoes were cooked and in the process the starch from the potatoes was isolated and used for medical purposes? First of all, could the ingestion of the isolated starch for medical reasons be said to be eating potatoes?”

When a child, if my mother had said, “Randy, dump those potatoes out. Don't eat them.”, and I turned around and cooked the starch out and ingested it, you can be sure I'd have been disciplined. Her instructions were clear, dump them out and don't even think about eating *those potatoes*, meaning anything I had been told to throw out. Yes, cooking the starch out and ingesting it would be eating something we had been told to discard.

You asked: “Could the ingestion of the isolated starch for medical reasons be said to be eating potatoes?” In the illustration we've been told two things, ‘dump the potatoes and don't eat them.’ Can you imagine God making this command and one of us replying, ‘Okay, as soon as I cook out the starch I want for ingestion, I'll dump what's left over’? We were told to dump *those potatoes*, not what's left after taking what we want. Cooking the starch out and disposing of the remnants would not be discarding the potatoes, it would be throwing out leftovers. In the illustration we were told to “discard... potatoes”, can you have a potato without starch? If God had given this command you can be sure he was well aware of each component - not just starch - making up the potato. Plus, in the matter of blood, we're dealing with God's chosen and *sacred* symbol of life, something that *belongs to him*. If God commanded “Return those *sacred* potatoes to me, *they belong to me*, do not eat them”, and we subsequently cooked the starch out for personal consumption then returned what's left, wouldn't that be stealing? Your reasoning above would allow the

dissection of potatoes into individual elements and ingestion of the same individually, *none of which* would be “eating potatoes”, and so doing would be tampering with another’s property.

What if you gave a team use of your baseball for the duration of their game, requesting the ball be returned to you at the games end and that your ball not be played for additional games? Of course you know some *incidental* damage and loss will occur to this ball while being played, thus you don’t expect to have the exact or entire ball returned, it will have some obvious use in that minor bits of leather will be missing and perhaps even the cover thread may be severed in a spot or two, both of which are normal losses incurred while playing ball. At games end, if one of the players *intentionally* separates the threads off your ball – a minor, yet significant, component – intending to use them to repair the teams old ball, would this be acceptable? Or, what if this same player, after the game ended, *intentionally* picked pieces of sound leather off with a pocket knife, hoping to use these bits of leather for his own purposes? The player could reason, ‘Well we did give back your ball, just without this one small component, and you said not to play additional games with it, and we’re not, we only have the threads from your ball, not the windings necessary for play.’ Would you feel you’d been dealt with in an upright manner? When we pour out our blood, we do more than simply pour out blood, we in effect give it back to Jehovah to whom it belongs. Are we faithfully doing this if we *intentionally* remove the minor “threads” and *use them*?

Jehovah has *explicitly forbidden* humans to eat blood since the days of Noah. Later God’s law on blood included directions on its proper disposal. *Since blood is sacred and eating it is forbidden, it seems reasonable to apply Bible examples where sacred objects belonging to Jehovah were prohibited from personal consumption.* Such an example can be found in the account of Jericho’s destruction. Upon attacking, Joshua said: “Shout; for Jehovah has given YOU the city. And the city must become a thing devoted to destruction; it *with everything that is in it belongs to Jehovah...* As for YOU people, only *keep away from the thing devoted to destruction, for fear YOU may get a desire and YOU do take some of the thing devoted to destruction and do constitute the camp of Israel a thing devoted to destruction and bring ostracism upon it. But all the silver and the gold and the articles of copper and iron are something holy to Jehovah. Into the treasure of Jehovah it should go.*” (Joshua 6:16-19)

With his words Joshua made God’s direction clear, everything in Jericho belonged to Jehovah, nothing was to be taken for personal consumption. Everything was to be destroyed by means of fire. After the burning, metal objects – gold, silver, copper and iron – were to be turned over to the treasury at God’s tabernacle. We all know the fate of Achan. In modern terms, he had taken several thousand dollars worth of God’s belongings resulting in his and his family’s death. Additionally, *the Israelite nation* suffered the death of thirty six men along with humiliating defeat at Ai. (Joshua 7:4,5) Would it have been acceptable if Achan had *intentionally* only salvaged some minor fraction of the booty? If Achan had found an inexpensive bottle of oil prior to the destruction by fire, would it have been acceptable for him to take home for his own use because of its medicinal value? God’s direction was clear, if *an* Israelite were to “take some of the thing devoted to destruction” it would “bring ostracism upon” Israel. What if the leadership of Israel had tolerated individuals separating out minor components of booty for their own use?

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

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

One summation in your letter is that the aspect of taking in blood which is scripturally objectionable is its *providing of nourishment*. You are specific that whole blood and major components carry nourishment to the body. Does this mean that the tolerated 5% of components carry no nourishment? If persons ate these components outright would they gain no nourishment from them? Aren't the immunization effects themselves nourishment just as the immunizing components of a mother's milk are to her infant child? Is it the major components themselves or the nutrition they carry which makes them objectionable? We have used the transference of antibodies and proteins via the placenta as reason that some might conscientiously accept these components of blood. However, when it comes to *nourishment* carried by the blood, doesn't a fetus receive every bit of its nutrition – including water from the plasma – from the blood of the mother? How do we explain this seeming contradiction in deduction?

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

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

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

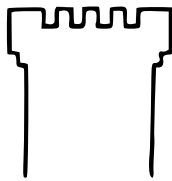
Recently we enjoyed our district convention program carrying the theme "God's Way of Life". It provided refreshment and instilled enthusiasm for living God's way. The book entitled *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* along with the brochure *What happens to Us When We Die?* I have found most strengthening. I wish to express my appreciation for such provisions. Keep up the good work!

Your brother in Jehovah's service,



R. Jensen

enclosure: Copy of my original letter dated 2/16/98
Copy of your letter dated 3/23/98



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2443 USA PHONE (718) 622-3600

ECC:ECM August 24, 1998

R  JENSEN
24 RUNNING DEER DR
PHENIX CITY AL 36870

Dear Brother Jensen:

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

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

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

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. T. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

Office: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

November 15, 1999

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards

Dear Brothers

Back in 1998 I wrote you with questions regarding facets of our teaching and stance on use of blood. (See my letters dated 2/16/98 and 7/31/98) Those letters made clear my difficulty in teaching our present stance regarding medical use of blood. On this topic your last correspondence to me dated 8/24/98 said, "...it would be appropriate at this time to let the matter rest."

I fully realized the gravity of what I had addressed to you and understood that you perhaps needed some time to consider what I had said. In that respect I agreed that letting the matter rest was a good idea and thus I was content to wait for a future consideration of the subject. In light of that, I confidently expected some forthcoming explanation to my questions in a Watchtower article or else personal correspondence. I do not expect that letting a matter rest means letting it die nor do I think that was your intention. For that reason I have patiently waited. At this time I again ask for your consideration of my questions in those letters. My reasons for being concerned about this topic are many and varied.

As an elder I am expected to teach with conviction and to impart understanding. Such teaching is required from elders in several circumstances. Those circumstances can be in our public ministry, one on one with publishers, publicly from our Kingdom Hall platform, in judicial hearings, etc.... In each case elders have a responsibility to teach with conviction and to impart understanding. While all will not accept our convictions or understandings we should nonetheless have sound explanations for them. We should have, know and understand the *reasons* for our answers. In this case we should have scriptural reasons *for answers from* our existing scriptural stance. How can I teach with conviction and impart understanding without reasons for the answers.

Besides responsibilities as an elder I am also a husband and father. As a teacher my foremost responsibility is to my family. When questions are considered serious and worthy of an answer how can I so answer when I cannot explain it myself? In the case of my questions on medical use of blood, what do I say when I must admit that I do not have reasons for my answers? What will my wife and child think? How can I build within them conviction for something that I cannot explain?

Circumstances have already put me in the difficult position of avoiding situations where my questions asked are likely to arise. I do not want circumstances where someone could be hurt or stumbled because of my truthful admission that I see no explanation for certain of our stances on what is or is not tolerated. Since my last correspondence I have been asked twice to help with serious medical issues involving blood. In each case I had to defer publishers to another elder by asking that they be contacted for help instead of me. I explained that I was unable to assist them as needed at the time and that the other elder could. What I did not tell them was what made me unable to help. One of those circumstances was an emergency and it was crushing to feel unable to help directly. Circumstances such as that have caused me much distress. When my brothers needed me the most I feared being there out of concern for stumbling them with my inability to answer legitimate though likely questions for which I see no scriptural answers. The potential is there to cause stumbling, or discouragement at least, when they are already in a vulnerable position.

11/15/99

Page 1

Blood & Upholding Righteous Standards

Then there is the matter of my family. Our daughter is now 16 months old. My wife and I have taken time to discuss what we should do in the case of a medical emergency involving blood. I must tell you that those conversations I find very stressful because I do not want to stumble my wife by admitting that I have serious concerns about not being able to explain with scriptures our stance of tolerance toward some blood components versus intolerance of other blood components. Then there is the discussion with our family physicians, which is likewise problematic.

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

My conscience dictates that I not lay a stumbling block before my brothers, family or anyone else if I can help it. Again that puts me in a stressful position of limiting who I can turn to for answers to all that I have asked in my former correspondence to you. Who can I turn to for scriptural answers regarding an existing scriptural stance if not to you brothers? Once back in 1980 (or it could have been 1981) I was told that brother Albert Schroeder was in the same hotel in which I was lodging for the convention in Jacksonville, Florida. At the time I had what was then to me a serious question for which I needed an answer. I was encouraged to just go knock on his door and ask. I did so and was warmly welcomed in and provided with an answer from the Bible. Well, I am again knocking at the door in need of an answer.

While patiently awaiting answers to my questions I have continued to pray and ponder over our stance of tolerance toward some blood components and intolerance toward other blood components as well as our overall teaching regarding medical infusion of blood. That prayerful pondering has led me to the idea that it is not proper to make or impose distinctions or applications if they are not so specified in the Bible. It is inconsistent that we tolerate some components of blood for medical purposes while being intolerant of the very donation making that possible. It is contradictory that we denounce it when blood is stored for later consumption and then turn around and use blood components requiring massive amounts of blood stored as denounced. Without scriptural distinctions it is inconsistent that we tolerate some components of blood when every component from blood is *equally* of blood. As far as I can see, making such scriptural distinctions is impossible. Considering that medical science will continue inventing various techniques for manipulating blood and dividing and using components of blood, it seems that we should apply the same onus toward all components of blood, either that of tolerating individual conscientious choice or that of intolerance of any blood components.

I hope the tenor of my letter is understood. I am not seeking to cause you brothers any distress. Indeed we all experience distress in these days and need for endurance. I support my entire association of brothers and am willing to give my life rather than needlessly stumble one of them. The Watchtower of June the 6th, 1982 on page 20 states, "At times, some bring to the attention of the 'slave' class various doctrinal or organizational matters that they feel ought to be revised. Certainly, suggestions for improvement are proper, as are inquiries for clarification." It is in harmony with that statement that my letter should be understood.

Your last correspondence to me on this topic advised it was appropriate at that time to let matters rest. Hopefully you will see observance of that advice in my patience. Likewise I hope that you will see my request as genuine and worthy of serious consideration for an answer at this time, whether that be in personal correspondence or some future Watchtower article. I have enclosed my earlier letters for that purpose and your convenience. If you need any clarifications regarding my questions or suggestions feel free to write or call and I will clarify all that I can.

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

Your fellow servant,

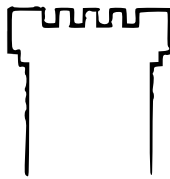

R. Jensen

Enclosure: Copy of my letter dated 2/16/98
Copy of my letter dated 7/31/98

11/15/99

Page 2

Blood & Upholding Righteous Standards



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

WRITING DEPARTMENT

29 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211-2483, U.S.A.

PHONE (718) 590-6000

ECA:ECN February 21, 2000

~~RE: JENSEN~~
24 RUNNING DEER DR
PHENIX CITY AL 36870

Dear Brother Jensen:

We acknowledge your letter of January 18, 2000, in which you sent us a copy of your letter of November 15, 1999. In addition to considering these two most recent letters from you, we have reviewed your two letters of February 16, 1998, and July 31, 1998, and our replies to you dated March 23, 1998, and July 24, 1998. Your concern is why the accepting of some fractions of blood for medical treatment has been left as a matter of conscience.

Likely you will recall that at last week's study of *The Watchtower*, at the close of paragraph 18 on page 10 of the January 1, 2000, issue of *The Watchtower*, the point was made that "if a Christian does not fully understand a new explanation of a scripture, he does well humbly to echo the words of the prophet Micah: 'I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation.'—Micah 7:7." We would like to encourage you similarly with respect to your questions on the matter of blood fractions. This is the wise and safe course.

You state that you have difficulty "in teaching our present stance regarding medical use of blood." You recognize as an elder you are expected to teach with conviction and to impart understanding. You express concern that you felt unable in the past to assist in cases of your brothers where there was an issue involving blood. Properly, you are concerned about making decisions on this matter that will have Jehovah's blessing as to yourself and your family, and as to what you teach publicly. You also again bring into the picture your discussions on this subject with health-care professionals with whom you have contact and their reactions. Desiring to act conscientiously in all these respects is certainly commendable.

However, care needs to be exercised, Brother Jensen, that you not seek to impose your deductions and conscience on others. For some decades now, "the faithful and discreet slave" has been giving the matter of blood usage in medical procedures careful and prayerful consideration in the light of the Scriptures. (Matthew 24:45-47) As blood began to be broken down into smaller and smaller component parts, arguments pro and con as to the use of these were considered. The consistent position of "the faithful and discreet slave" has been as expressed under "Questions From Readers" in the June 1, 1974, issue of *The Watchtower*: "While refraining from approving or condemning in such areas where we believe the decision must be left to individual conscience, we do, nevertheless, urge all to seek to maintain their conscience clear

before God, never showing deliberate disrespect for his Word." And you will see this same balance reflected also in answers to a series of questions under "Questions From Readers" in the June 15, 1978, and March 1, 1989, issues of *The Watchtower*.

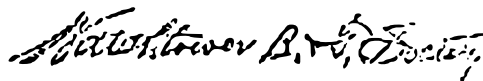
Thus, acceptance or nonacceptance of small fractions of blood is left for each one to decide conscientiously after weighing all factors having a bearing. In your case, if you find no basis for accepting any component from blood, no matter how small or for what purpose, in treating a medical condition, then that would be your decision before Jehovah. In deciding matters this way, you could go ahead with your service to Jehovah with a clear conscience. Others, after also carefully and prayerfully considering all factors having a bearing, have concluded that they could accept certain minor components. Should they not be allowed to accept the responsibility before Jehovah for their decision, just as you are allowed to do the same regarding your decision?

Moreover, whatever one's decision is, this should not prevent him from helping others to understand what has been published by "the faithful and discreet slave" on the subject in the light of the Scriptures. Then those individuals can make their own informed decision. And this decision need not be, and should not be, because responsible brothers influenced them either way. As to this, we are aware that some elders, including some on Hospital Liaison Committees, have conscientiously decided that they personally do not wish to have certain minor blood components used in treating them, or none at all. But this position does not prevent them from being of help to their brothers and sisters, according to the need, when they need help understanding some aspect of what has been published on the use of minor blood fractions or some mechanical process that involves extracorporeal circulation of one's blood.

Regarding those in the health-care field who do not always understand our position, we are sure you will agree that this is not unexpected. Even as to our rejection of whole blood or major components of blood, many feel we are being unreasonable. However, as to those who ask sincere questions, we might say that those brothers who make presentations before doctors and receive questions from health-care professionals often find it suffices to say that while individuals may not see the logic of a particular position or agree with our reasoning, we ask that they respect our religious position on this matter, which includes letting each one decide whether or not to accept a minor fraction of blood. This almost invariably absorbs any implicit demand that we explain what appear to be inconsistencies or why some of Jehovah's Witnesses feel they can conscientiously accept certain small fractions while others do not.

We trust the additional comments above will be helpful. We take this occasion to send warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,



OF NEW YORK, INC.

R [REDACTED] Jensen

24 Running Deer Road
Phenix City, Alabama 36870

Office: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

March 1, 2000

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
Writing Department
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards

Dear Brothers

I appreciate your February 21, 2000 reply in consideration of my letters dated February 16, 1998, July 31, 1998 and November 15, 1999 together with your previous replies dated March 23, 1998 and August 24, 1998. However, I fear that you brothers do not understand the full measure—indeed specific requests—of my concern. (Compare 2 John 12) For this reason and fearing that others carefully considering our stance on blood may realize similar difficulties I will make one more attempt to spell out more exactly those difficulties. Before doing so, as follows let me first ease your minds about concerns raised in your February 21, 2000 response.

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

I am not seeking ways of convincing *everyone* that we are correct; such is unrealistic and contrary to Jesus' utterance that most are on the road to destruction. (Compare 2 Timothy 3:7) Regarding physicians or anyone else, I am not looking for ways of "absorb[ing] implicit demand[s]" but rather gaining needed conviction for *teaching* whether that be to physicians, my family, congregation publishers or anyone else. (See your letter dated February 21, 2000 page 2, par. 3)

I am not seeking scriptural clarifications regarding a "new" teaching, but rather one that has existed for decades. Your letter of February 21, 2000 wisely admonishes that each of us should have or gain the waiting attitude of Micah. Regarding that attitude, as you noted The Watchtower of January 1, 2000 on page 10 makes the following comment:

"If a Christian does not fully understand a new explanation of a scripture, he does well humbly to echo the words of the prophet Micah: 'I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation.'"

That comment is regarding how we should *deal personally* with "new" views, not how we *explain* views long held. My questions are not concerning something "new" but rather views held for decades. Is it unreasonable to request clarification of reasons/views offered regarding teachings decades old? Is it unreasonable that someone asked to teach asks for an understanding of the "reasons behind [the] answers" or

3/1/00

Page 1 of 4

Blood & Upholding Righteous Standards

"the Scriptural reasons for [the] explanations"? (See Organized To Accomplish Our Ministry page 44; Our Kingdom Ministry, February 2000 page 8) My concerns have existed for some time now, they are not new or short lived. I have asked you for scriptural clarifications. I have also waited, allowing time for your thorough consideration of my request. Regarding "new" views, we usually *do give* corresponding scriptural reasons for them. Whether we understand or not has more to do with our understanding of those *scriptural reasons* not just a "new" idea itself. In this case our stance is pretty clear—though I think dynamic details and their consequences are very much missed by many, including many of our brothers. What I have asked is for corresponding scriptural explanations regarding certain pertinent details of our stance.

Now to clarifying issues of concern.

Our stance on medical use of blood makes distinctions between components of blood. Naturally the question arises, If we tolerate intentional acceptance of one component of blood then why forbid intentional acceptance of other components of blood? Since we represent our stance as scriptural, in order to adequately defend distinctions made we must provide scriptural reasons for them, otherwise distinctions made become indefensible either way, the tolerance or the intolerance. Our literature and your previous replies indicate one possible scriptural distinction and one possible distinction as a matter of reasonableness.

The one possible scriptural distinction is the element of *nutrition*, that is whether a blood component provides *nutrition* versus "utilize[ing] other mechanisms" thereby "immunizing the body from a certain disease." (See your letter dated March 23, 1998 page 2, par. 3) However, as previously expressed there are terrible flaws regarding the distinction of *nutrition*. Itemized below are three flaws in that distinction, two of which I enumerated earlier plus an additional one.

1. Components considered "a matter of conscience" are nutrition to the body, thus saying that nutrition is the distinction is indefensible. (See my letter dated July 31, 1998 page 2, par. 3,4)
2. Confounding the distinction of nutrition is the following paragraph from Insight On The Scriptures Volume 1 page 629 under the heading Disease and Treatment:

However, if a person were to take blood into his body for the treatment of disease, this would violate the law of God—Ge 9:3, 4; Ac 15:28, 29; see BLOOD.

Clearly that comment above has to do with affects of blood *other than* nutrition. Specifically that comment is contrary to the notion that utilizing components of blood for "immunizing the body from a certain disease" is okay, which confounds the "nutrition" distinction.

3. Confusing the distinction of nutrition is our published comments comparing the "significant" transfer from mother to fetus via the placenta. (See Questions From Readers, The Watchtower of June 1, 1990 page 31, par. 11-14) Since a fetus gains *every bit* of its *nutrition* from its mother's blood via the placenta then our use of that as an example, again, goes contrary to the distinction of "nutrition". (See my letter dated July 31, 1998 page 5, par. 1)

The offered scriptural distinction as a matter of reasonableness has to do with whether we should consider parts of a substance the same as the whole. (See your letter dated March 23, 1998 page 2, par. 2) Such a distinction must be somehow defined (i.e., by uniqueness, size, amount, common recognition, etc.). Even then, since our stance is represented as scriptural, we must show scripturally that our distinction based upon reasonableness is proper (e.g., We could never say that reasonably certain minor aspects/components of porceia

are tolerable because without exception the Bible says “abstain from fornication”—see 1 Thess. 4:3). However, as itemized below there are at least three terrible flaws regarding the idea of distinctions based upon reasonableness.

1. Components considered “a matter of conscience” are just as unique to blood as forbidden components thus no reasonable distinction can be made based upon uniqueness (i.e., white corpuscles are as unique to blood as clotting factors.). Also, classifying components of blood as “major” or “minor” components is meaningless unless “major” and “minor” is effectively defined.
2. Consistently components considered “a matter of conscience” do not make up less of blood by volume, thus no reasonable distinction can be made based upon size or amount. (I.e., forbidden white corpuscles makes up less volume of blood than tolerated albumin.)
3. Medical practitioners commonly refer to red corpuscles, white corpuscles, platelets and plasma as components of blood. Taking the stance that “abstain from blood” applies to medical transfusion then the Bible offers no proper exceptions from abstaining from blood based upon components. In that case the phrase “abstain... from blood” is just as categorical as “abstain from fornication”. (Acts 15:20, 1 Thess. 4:3) There is no indication in scripture that God commonly recognizes one component of blood as more or less unique/important/common than another component. Designations and divisions of red corpuscles, white corpuscles, platelets and plasma are purely manmade. Modern medicine divides, recognizes and names components of blood *as they discover and understand them*. God has recognized from the beginning the various components of blood and their purpose. Thus no reasonable distinction can be made based upon common recognition.

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

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

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

Like other brothers, I am able to *tell* our stance on medical use of blood and direct interested persons to where our publications address it. Afterward, as you say, each must decide for themselves, uncoerced, according to their conscience. But, what I am interested in is having *scriptural answers* to critical aspects of our position. Such answers allow that I can *teach*—and that with conviction—rather than just *tell*. Teaching with conviction requires knowing and understanding the reasons for answers or explanations, in this case scriptural reasons for a scriptural stance. My difficulty is with *explaining and teaching* our published “scriptural” stance with scriptures and sound reasoning, not informing persons what our stance is. (Compare The Watchtower of March 15, 1998 page 19, par. 4)

I fear now that my concerns and questions raised about our present stance have no scriptural answers. If they existed I feel you brothers would have already shared them with me. This is very disheartening. Nevertheless, I will do my level best in serving Jehovah and trust that you brothers will continue pondering issues raised toward resolution. In the meantime if issues such as those expressed are raised to me I will show persons where our publications address them. If pressed for scriptural answers to issues about which I have questions myself then I must honestly reply that I do not know them. In some instances I may have to decline being used.

In my November 15, 1999 letter I stated, "While patiently awaiting answers to my questions I have continued to pray and ponder over our stance of tolerance toward some blood components and intolerance toward other blood components as well as our overall teaching regarding medical infusion of blood." That pondering has included the idea that maybe my questions are irrelevant because perhaps our stance requires more than intended based upon scriptures, that perhaps "abstain from blood" does not address medical blood transfusion as we know it today, thus mooting my questions. So, regarding our overall teaching about medical infusion of blood versus the decree to "abstain from blood" and in harmony with admonitions in The Watchtower of June 1, 1982 page 20, par. 15, I submit a suggestion for an improved view of the decree to "abstain from blood".

My suggestion is the result of long, hard, intense and sometimes distressful and prayerful consideration. I expect no response to it. I only submit it for your consideration. I assure you that my suggestion has only the loftiest of intentions to better understand, respect and obey our Father, Jehovah and His requirements. My motivation is genuine and not at all toward seeking ways of diluting God's express will. Seeking to dilute God's word is counterproductive toward pleasing our Maker and gaining His rich rewards. If you have any questions or wish to communicate regarding it you should feel free to do so but again, I have no need for a reply to it. I believe that my suggested view is already fundamentally realized in our publications yet without elaboration as they apply to the decree "abstain from blood" versus medical transfusion of blood as practiced today. I must admit that though I have always enjoyed reading and studying the Bible along with vigorously researching our publications that I had to dig harder and deeper than ever to realize what turned out to be simple elements as presented in my suggested improved view. My suggestion is enclosed as a separate document. Though somewhat long it contains basic and simple elements strongly favoring the view presented.

Finally, I know this is now my fourth letter to you brothers on the same subject of blood and upholding righteous standards. I am reminded of Abraham's questioning toward that one whom Jehovah was using. (Gen. 18:22-33) I hope you brothers will not chaff but rather that you will see a way to clarify my inquiries if possible. If need be I am more than willing to travel and meet you in person, face to face, so that with a full measure my questions, responses or suggestions can be understood and put to rest or to the test. (2 John 12) I want to express my appreciation to you brothers for responding at all to my letters regarding blood and upholding righteous standards. As I said earlier, considering the nature of my questions, I really had no one else to turn for dialogue. I realize that my letters have been somewhat long and tedious but that is the nature of corresponding by letter on such subjects as this, which I have tried to address objectively toward better understanding God's will. Again, I appreciate your time and responding.

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

Your fellow servant of Jehovah,



R. Jensen

Enclosure: Suggested View Of The Apostolic Decree "Abstain from: blood" (6 pages)

3/1/00

Page 4 of 4

Blood & Upholding Righteous Standards

Suggested View of The Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"

Acts chapter 15 contains an apostolic decree that is binding upon Christians. Part of that decree requires that we abstain from blood and things strangled. (Acts 15:20, 29; see also 21:25) Faithfulness to Jehovah requires that we observe that decree by obeying it. Obedience to that decree is not optional for Christians.

Questions arising in considering our stance on medical use of blood has led to reconsidering the basis for, import and application of the apostolic decree "to keep abstaining... from blood and from things strangled" and everything we have published concerning it. (Acts 15:29) Clearly that decree was instituted based upon the law God gave to Noah recorded at Genesis 9:1-16. Regarding the apostolic decree we teach that "there was not an imposing on Gentile Christians of a responsibility to conform to the Mosaic Law or some portion of it but, rather, there was a confirming of standards recognized prior to Moses." (See United In Worship of The Only True God, page 149) In short, we teach adherence to the apostolic decree as defined by what God said to Noah, not the Mosaic Law. Yet, we also *utilize* aspects of the Mosaic Law as applied to Israel to teach God's intentions regarding the prohibition decreed to Noah. In effect we teach that the law given to Noah as defined by application of the Mosaic Law to Israel defines the apostolic decree. Defining of the apostolic decree by prohibitions given to Noah is easily demonstrated scripturally. On the other hand, *the extension* of defining the apostolic decree by the Mosaic Law applied to Israel is more tedious and perhaps unwarranted.

Before discussing whether the Mosaic Law applied to Israel should define aspects of God's prohibition regarding blood to Noah and by extension the apostolic decree, I want to first state the following premises:

1. The apostolic decree defined only by the law God gave to mankind through Noah is *insufficient* basis to conclude that God condemns medical blood transfusions as practiced today.
2. The apostolic decree defined as the Mosaic Law applied to Israel is *sufficient* basis to conclude that God condemns medical blood transfusions as practiced today.

If the first statement is true then it becomes critical to ascertain whether the Mosaic Law applied to Israel clarifies God's law to Noah. However, first we will take up whether the law to Noah necessarily prohibits medical blood transfusion as practiced today.

As recorded at Genesis 9:3,4 God said to Noah, "Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for YOU. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to YOU. Only flesh with its soul—its blood—YOU must not eat." Do those words provide a basis for absolutely prohibiting medical blood transfusion as practiced today?

Prior to the flood Noah and his family witnessed extreme and growing degradation among their fellowman, including the *wanton* taking of human life—and probably animal life too. (Genesis 6:4,5; compare The Watchtower of January 1, 1986 page 11, par. 6) During the flood Noah and his family witnessed the most devastating event in mankind's existence up to that time. So, besides the wanton disregard for life manifest prior to the flood, during the flood Noah's family witnessed animal and human life being taken on an unprecedented scale. In fact the taking of human life nearly to extinction was the specific intention of the flood with catastrophic loss of animal life being consequential, yet it was not wanton. Afterward, considering what Noah's family had witnessed, God spoke to Noah regarding His valuation of life, the sacredness of life, making it clear, which is *the context* of Genesis 9:1-16.

Though mankind had never been prohibited from taking animal life, according to Genesis 9:3,4 Noah/mankind was for the first time allowed to take animal life for food, he was permitted to kill and eat animal flesh. (Genesis 3:21) Also, through Noah, mankind was for the first time permitted to kill humankind.

29

Suggested View of The Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"

but only as recompense for committing murder. (Compare Romans 13:4) Though Noah was permitted to eat killed animal flesh he/mankind was prohibited from eating blood from such flesh. Out of regard for life, *specifically* Noah was prohibited from eating blood from life taken unilaterally though with God's permission. Out of respect for Jehovah's word Noah was to obey. Along with His decree to fill the earth and His unilateral rainbow covenant, Jehovah's decrees prohibiting eating the blood of slain animals and murder instilled a high regard for life. Germane to our subject is that Genesis 9:3,4 prohibits *no more* than eating blood obtained from the *taking* of life, from killing. That conclusion is certainly narrower than our present *elaborated* teaching. (See footnote 1) Is there scriptural confirmation of this narrower conclusion? Yes.

A fundamental difference between the law given to Noah and the Law of Moses is that God's prohibition to Noah applies to all mankind whereas the Mosaic Law applied uniquely to the nation of Israel or proselytes to that nation. However, in the Law of Moses is found the curious text of Deuteronomy 14:21. Pertinent to our subject is Jehovah's decree to Israel, "YOU must not eat any body [already] dead. To the alien resident who is inside your gates you may give it, and he must eat it; or there may be a selling of it to a foreigner, because you are a holy people to Jehovah your God." With those words God stated that Israelites could appropriately provide unbled meat for purposes of eating *to those whom the law of Noah applied*. Since God has never revoked his law for mankind given to Noah we then must ask, Would Jehovah have suggested an act that would have facilitated, encouraged or aided in the breaking of His own law, His own expressed will? As Jehovah says, "I have not changed." (Malachi 3:6) Additionally, under inspiration the disciple James stated, "with evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone." (James 1:13) God certainly has never facilitated, encouraged or aided in breaking His own law to mankind.

Since 1) God would not facilitate, encourage or aid humans in breaking his own law and since 2) Deuteronomy 14:21 contains Jehovah's decreed permission to give already dead and thus unbled meat for purposes of eating to those outside the Mosaic Law yet under the law to Noah then that text stands as confirmation of the conclusion that Genesis 9:3,4 prohibits *no more* than eating blood obtained from the *taking* of life, from killing. (Compare Insight On The Scriptures Volume 1 page 345, par. 6; See footnote 2) Therefore Deuteronomy 14:21 demonstrates that God does not hold blood as more sacred than life itself. It demonstrates that it was not blood itself or necessarily the eating of blood that God was so interested in when addressing Noah. Rather, Jehovah was interested in instilling a high regard for life. Prohibiting mankind from eating the blood of animals *slain* by man for food and decreeing that murderers are subject to death acted as strong reminders of God's high valuation of life, the sanctity of life, which is the context of Jehovah's post-flood decree to Noah. After that catastrophic loss of life God wanted to remind mankind that life is precious. Jehovah did not want mankind's previous degradation or presumptions based upon His own action of the flood to minimize life's value thus He made His views plain by decree.

Now we get to the question of whether the Mosaic Law applied to Israel clarifies God's law to Noah. We will see that between the two laws in question that a very relevant difference exists in the application and scope of the Law of Moses as well as God's reasons for a specifically more restrictive decree in respect to prohibitions on blood. That relevant difference effectively prevents using the Mosaic Law for clarifying prohibitions on use of blood decreed to Noah.

One large obstacle to applying specifics of the Mosaic Law to Christians is texts such as Ephesians 2:15, Romans 7:6; 10:5, and 2 Corinthians 3:14, all of which indicate quite clearly that Christians are not bound by provisions of the Mosaic Law. Besides that considerable obstacle we have another in God's stated reason for "why" His specific prohibitions on use of blood were *more restrictive* within the Mosaic Law, which we reason can find at Leviticus 17:10-12. It reads:

"As for any man of the house of Israel or some alien resident who is residing as an alien in YOUR midst who eats any sort of blood, I shall certainly set my

Suggested View of The Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"

face against the soul that is eating the blood, and I shall indeed cut him off from among his people. *For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have put it upon the altar for YOU to make atonement for YOUR souls, because it is the blood that makes atonement by the soul [in it]. That is why I have said to the sons of Israel: "No soul of YOU must eat blood and no alien resident who is residing as an alien in YOUR midst should eat blood."* (Itzlics added)

God's reason for applying to "the sons of Israel" more restrictive prohibitions regarding use of blood consisted of two elements. (See footnote 3) Please not that Jehovah had a *single* reason "why", which was composed of two separate elements. *Together* those elements constituted the reason "why" Jehovah's specific prohibitions on use of blood were more restrictive within the Mosaic Law for "the sons of Israel". Regarding blood, Jehovah had *incorporated into* the Mosaic Law the law given to Noah, which law uses blood illustratively of life. *Additionally* Jehovah pointed out how for "the sons of Israel" he had made blood part of their atonement sacrifices. Considering that blood was *already* used illustratively of life and that, as of the Mosaic Law, blood was by decree uniquely important to the sacred atonement sacrifices outlined by God for Israel, Jehovah then set forth *more restrictive* laws governing use of blood for Israel than for anyone else.

Consequently, defining the law to Noah regarding blood by means of the Mosaic Law as it applied to Israel is unworkable and unjustified because Jehovah's blood prohibitions to Israel and reasons for those prohibitions were relevantly different than those to Noah and all mankind outside the Law of Moses, *they were more restrictive*. Though the Mosaic Law incorporated the decree given to Noah it nevertheless instituted prohibitions regarding blood that *went beyond* and were *internal and unique* to that law, specifically that having to do with atonement sacrifices. Since Christians definitely are not obligated to atonement sacrifices of the Mosaic Law then the very reason for that law's *more restrictive* prohibition on use of blood disappears—indeed it never existed at all for anyone other than those under the Mosaic Law.

Inherent to this suggested view of the apostolic decree is that, in God's view, life itself is not secondary to blood, that is, Jehovah does not consider blood as more sacred than life. Regarding that idea is the question, Is it okay to donate our life that another might gain temporary life from that donation? Jesus said, "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 15:13) Actually Jesus encouraged that Christians be willing to donate their life that another might gain temporary life from that act. Unless blood is considered more sacred than life Jesus' expression allows that we donate blood also for the purpose of saving life, even if that life is just a temporary gain. (See footnote 4)

Likewise, Biblical personages like David and Abishai were willing to endanger/donate their lives in behalf of others. Such men willingly imperiled and sometimes lost their lives fighting Israel's enemies and in defense of fellow Israelites. True, motives had to do with carrying out God's will, nevertheless they also knew that Israelite fellows benefited from their selfless acts and those selfless acts were gratefully acknowledged and *accepted*. (2 Samuel 21:15-17, compare Acts 9:24,25) (See footnote 5)

The suggested view above acknowledges and advocates deep respect and obedience to the apostolic decree to "abstain from blood". Doing so requires that Christians hold life in high esteem just as God does. Adherence to the apostolic decree obligates Christians to a *high degree of respect for life, God's view of life*. It requires that Christians respect and regard life such as God instilled with his words to Noah rather than harboring the discounted view of life manifested prior to the flood. It requires 1) abstaining from eating any blood from animals slain for purposes of food and 2) abstaining from taking human life if at all possible. Considering the Christian requirement to make disciples by preaching and teaching the good news of God's kingdom and the results of not accepting that message, the apostolic decree also obligates 3) that we work whole-souled at following that mandate. (Compare Matthew 24:14 and 28:19,20 with 2 Thessalonians 1:8)

**Suggested View of The
Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"**

However, the apostolic decree does not require abstaining from medical transfusions of blood as practiced today because such does not require any taking of life.

In conclusion I would like to address a peripheral reasoning in our present elaborated comments regarding blood transfusion.

We have imputed wisdom to refraining from medical transfusion of blood based upon dangers inherent to the practice. However, considering that God's *permission to eat flesh* likewise poses significant health risks, such reasoning becomes problematic. *Like blood*, if flesh is exposed to virulent organisms or is not prepared or selected correctly it can—and has—caused significant loss of health and even death. Today even in developed lands thousands die annually from food poisoning. Since food poisoning victimizes health and causes death just as can medical use of blood then we cannot impute any unique wisdom associated with abstention of one versus the other based upon risk to health. Someone may contend that blood is rather unique from person to person and that that uniqueness poses inherent health risk besides any induced health risks from contamination of blood. However, the same can be said of animal flesh and some vegetation in that some are inherently poisonous to man if eaten. If not properly prepared and selected some animal flesh poses inherent and significant risk to human health and life. I dare say that more people are adversely affected by food poisoning from eating flesh than from medical blood transfusion.

In harmony with direction from "the faithful slave" I leave this suggested improved view of the apostolic decree to "abstain from blood" in the hands of you brothers. For me, the matter is now in Jehovah's hands. (See The Watchtower of June 1, 1982 page 20, par. 15)

1



**Suggested View of The
Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"**

Footnote 1: A careful comparison of the following quotations from our publications acknowledges the fundamental and simple elements establishing the accuracy of my suggested narrower view elaborated:

United In Worship Of The Only True God page 149, par. 8 states:

"When the issue involving application of the Mosaic Law to Gentile Christians was presented to the governing body in Jerusalem in the first century, their decision was in harmony with these facts. They recognized that Jehovah was not requiring Gentile believers to perform works in obedience to the Mosaic Law before holy spirit was poured out on them. The decision of that governing body did list as "necessary things" certain prohibitions that were in harmony with that Law, but these were based on the Bible record concerning events that *predated* the Law. So there was not an imposing on Gentile Christians of a responsibility to conform to the Mosaic Law or some portion of it but, rather, there was a confirming of standards recognized prior to Moses.—Acts 15:28, 29; compare Genesis 9:3, 4; 34:2-7; 35:2-5." (Bold added)

Insight On The Scriptures Volume 1 page 345, par. 6 states:

"At Deuteronomy 14:21 allowance was made for selling to an alien resident or a foreigner an animal that had died of itself or that had been torn by a beast. Thus a distinction was made between the blood of such animals and that of animals that a person slaughtered for food. (Compare Le 17:14-16.) The Israelites, as well as alien residents who took up true worship and came under the Law covenant, were obligated to live up to the lofty requirements of that Law. People of all nations were bound by the requirement at Genesis 9:3, 4, but those under the Law were held by God to a higher standard in adhering to that requirement than were foreigners and alien residents who had not become worshippers of Jehovah." (Bold added)

Footnote 2: The Watchtower of April 15, 1983 contains a Questions From Readers article dealing with Deuteronomy 14:21. It addresses the question, "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?" The conclusion offered is, "No." However that article formed conclusions based upon "the religious standing" of the people involved rather than the applicable laws of God. The applicable laws of God were as follows: To Israel the Mosaic Law applied, which incorporated the law to Noah. To everyone else the law of Noah applied. (See It-1 page 345, par. 2; It-2 page 507, par. 7) Religious preference or practice is irrelevant to the question of what God requires. In the case of Deuteronomy 14:21 there is no indication that those receiving unbled meat for purposes of eating were considered by God exempt from His law to mankind as provided through Noah. Additionally, Jehovah was not at all addressing those outside the Mosaic Law but rather those under that law. Addressing those under law (non-Israelites/proselytes) God would not have facilitated, encouraged or aided in breaking his specific law concerning blood consumption any more than he would have done so with His law to Noah regarding murder. Such an act on God's part would undermine the very appeal of law, that of respect and obedience. Consequentially Deuteronomy 14:21 presents a unique difficulty if we try harmonizing it with God's law to Noah, that is *unless* Genesis 9:3,4 prohibits *no more* than eating blood obtained from the *taking* of life, from killing. Significantly, our publication Insight On The Scriptures Volume 1 (published in 1988) on page 345, par. 6 acknowledges that Deuteronomy 14:21 *does make a distinction* between the blood of already dead animals versus the blood of animals that a person slaughtered for food. It agrees that *all people* are bound by God's requirements recorded at Genesis 9:3,4, yet those under that law to

2.A.

**Suggested View of The
Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"**

Noah could appropriately receive and eat unbled meat that had not been *slaughtered* for food. Again, Jehovah making that distinction regarding those outside the Mosaic Law yet under the law to Noah clarifies the intention of His words recorded at Genesis 9:3,4.

Footnote 3: That the Mosaic Law was "*more restrictive*" regarding prohibitions on use of blood is evident. For example, the Mosaic Law restricted blood use to purposes of atonement sacrifices only; otherwise it required that blood be poured out onto the ground. (Lev. 16:15; 17:13) Noah had no such restriction. The law given to Noah may have been incorporated into the Mosaic Law but that does not mean that the *more restrictive* Mosaic Law clarifies the law given to Noah. Significantly, our publication *Insight On The Scriptures Volume I* on page 345, par. 6 acknowledges that, regarding use of blood, even though *all people* were bound by the requirements of Genesis 9:3,4, the "sons of Israel" were held by God to a "higher standard", a different standard, contained in the Mosaic Law. The fact that the laws to Noah and the Law of Moses have different standards and applicability illustrates why the one cannot be used to clarify the other—*admittedly* they are *different*, one is *more restrictive* than the other is.

Footnote 4: The Watchtower of July 1, 1951 contains a Questions From Readers article dealing with John 15:13. It addresses the question, "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?'" The conclusion offered is, "No." However that article formed conclusions as if Jesus was somehow suggesting that his followers could not meaningfully donate their life since their life lacked the atoning benefits as his did. Such reasoning is flawed because Jesus certainly realized the lesser benefits from life sacrifice of his disciples and that they would be temporary, yet he encouraged it anyway. Since 1951 our publications indicate awareness of this fact but in print it has not been considered in relation to the issue of donating blood for medical use, whether that be for whole blood transfusion or for utilization of certain components. (See It-2 page 275, par. 6) In answer to the question asked the article also argues circularly with comments such as "And [any saving of life accomplished by transfusions] in disobedience of God's commands could cost one eternal life" and, "no good comes of violating God's law, regardless of the array of worldly wisdom brought forward to justify it before men." If true such abstract principles are correctly stated, however they become circular in this instance because they utilize a conclusion to the question asked as an argument in favor of the same conclusion.

Footnote 5: Significant is David's reaction to his soldiers endangering their lives retrieving water from the cistern of Bethlehem's gate as recorded at 2 Samuel 23:13-16. In response to his men's *needless* endangerment of life David said, "It is unthinkable on my part, O Jehovah, that I should do this! [Shall I drink] the blood of the men going *at the risk* of their souls?" (Italics added) The record states that David did not consent to drink that water. Interestingly David considered drinking that water as drinking the blood of his men. However, David was not objecting to the idea of drinking the blood of his men but rather the *needless risk* of life; their *needless risk* was his objection. On other occasions David did accept benefits gained from his men's risk of life. In fact, on other occasions when circumstances were *more deserving* David actually directed that his men engage Israel's enemies, even at risk of their life. As a good king even David was willing to endanger his life in Israel's battles. (See 2 Samuel 21:15-17) Since through no fault of their own each Israelite soldier knew they could be killed in battle they exhibited courage and a self-sacrificing spirit when engaging in combat. (Joshua 7:5; compare Deut. 20:8) Such actions were indicative of Jesus' direction that his followers have a willingness to donate their life so that others may live. (John 15:13)

R.A.

R Jensen

24 Running Deer Road
Phenix City, Alabama 36870

Office: [REDACTED]
Home: [REDACTED]

March 3, 2000

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
Writing Department
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards - ADDENDUM

Dear Brothers

Enclosed is an addendum to my letter dated March 1, 2000. Please forward this cover letter and its enclosure to whomever has my March 1, 2000 letter.

Thanks for giving this matter your prompt attention. I take this occasion to again send my love and greetings to you all.

Your fellow servant of Jehovah,


R Jensen

Enclosure: Suggested View Of The Apostolic Decree "Abstain from blood" ADDENDUM (3 pages)

**Suggested View of The
Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"**

ADDENDUM

Realizing I neglected to address the apostolic decree as recorded and whether it agrees with my suggested view I have supplied this addendum to correct the oversight.

In respect to blood my suggestion dated March 1, 2000 concluded the following about the apostolic decree *as defined by the law to Noah*:

1. It *requires* abstinence from eating blood of animals slain for purposes of food.
2. It *requires* abstaining from wanton taking of human life.
3. It *requires* that we work whole-souled at following the mandate to preach and teach the good news of God's Kingdom.
4. It *does not require* abstaining from medical transfusions of blood as practiced today because such does not require any taking of life.

Are those conclusions compatible with the apostolic decree as recorded? Does the apostolic decree support those conclusions? Those are the two questions this addendum will address.

In regards to blood the apostolic decree rests firmly on the law God gave to Noah. Acts 15:19-21 states:

"Hence my decision is not to trouble those from the nations who are turning to God, but to write them to abstain from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. For from ancient times Moses has had in city after city those who preach him, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every sabbath."

Since the Bible elsewhere makes plain that Christians are not under the Mosaic Law and since reasoning found at Acts chapter 15 considers the experience of gentiles already accepted by God as His true worshipers—who did not conform to the Mosaic Law nor bound to it—then the reference to the reading of Moses as associated with the apostolic decree can only refer to writings of Moses *other than* The Law to Israel. The only reading of Moses outside The Law to Israel yet containing explicit comments regarding prohibitions on blood is the text of Genesis chapter 9, making that law to Noah the only basis for prohibitions on blood found in the apostolic decree.

For the first century governing body the question boiled down to what was *necessary* to impose upon those becoming Christians, including themselves of course. The account at Acts chapter 15 demonstrates that the law to Noah was considered for such necessities and rightly so because it was a law *applicable to all mankind* not just Israel. (Besides the law to Noah, other of Moses' writings were used to establish parts of the apostolic decree aside from that having to do with blood or the Law to Israel) As far as decreed requirements go the law to Noah contained three for mankind.

1. God's command that mankind "Be fruitful and become many." (Genesis 9:1; Compare It-1 page 258, par 1)
2. His command prohibiting mankind from eating blood of animals slain for food.
3. His command prohibiting the taking of human life except as recompense to wanton taking of life

Addendum to: March 1, 2000 Suggested View of The Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"

Page: 1 of 3

Date: March 3, 2000

Complier: R. Jensen, 24 Running Deer Road, Phenix City, AL 36870

Congregation: C. AL Number: 100164

**Suggested View of The
Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"**

ADDENDUM

Of those three commands the apostolic decree *does not reaffirm* the command for Christians to "Be fruitful and become many" in regard to marriage and childbearing. Since the law to Noah was for all mankind why would that command to Noah not be considered a necessity for Christians? For the most part the *need* for population growth was not by then an issue. That command was given on two separate occasions, both of which saw mankind with extremely limited populations, which necessitated childbearing. (Compare Genesis 1:28) However, and more importantly, Jesus had indicated that that decree was no longer necessary and therefore no longer required. He said, "For there are eunuchs that were born such from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs that were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens. *Let him that can make room for it make room for it.*" (Matthew 19:12; Italics added) Being fully aware of Jesus' statement, "*Let him that can make room for it make room for it*" and being influenced by holy spirit the first century governing body could easily see negated the command regarding childbearing. After that time childbearing or not was up to individuals rather than a command to follow; it was not deemed a *necessity*. (See also 1 Corinthians 7:8)

We will now jump to the third command to Noah prohibiting the taking of human life (shedding man's blood) except as recompense to wanton taking of life. Abstaining from wanton taking of life is certainly necessary for Christians. Since the apostolic decree to "abstain from things strangled" covers the prohibition against eating blood of animals slain for food then the decree to "abstain from blood" stands as reaffirmation that wanton taking of life remains as a decreed prohibition and a *necessary* requirement for Christians. Is that really what the first century governing body had in mind with the expression "abstain from blood"? Consider the following:

1. As recorded at Act chapter 15 issues before the governing body were in part decided based upon God's acceptance of gentiles as Christians, as "people for his name". (Acts 15:14) The very first gentile Christian was Cornelius, an *army officer* of the Italian band. (Acts 10:1, 44-48) Army officers are charged with killing enemies of the State and teaching subordinates to do likewise. Could those like Cornelius remain as such and please God? Hardly. Which is one reason making the decree "abstain from blood" a *necessity* as applied to wanton taking of human life.
2. It was commonplace for persons living in that era to carry personal weapons designed to kill humans; people were prepared to kill people, including some of Jesus' disciples. (Luke 22:38; See It-1 page 169, par 4) Being armed with such weaponry created a distinct danger that Christians might "shed man's blood" in violation of God's law to *all mankind* through Noah. Many back then willingly persecuted fellow humans to death over mere ideological differences and with impunity. Saul did it and he was also subject to such murderous brutality. (Acts 8:1; 14:19) Persons learning of Jesus and God's Kingdom had to learn that such behavior and disposition is completely inappropriate for followers of Christ. (Ephesians 4:20-24) Again, a clear and present *need* existed that "abstain from blood" carry the prohibition against unlawful killing of humans. It was a *necessity*.
3. Contrary to the decree to be fruitful with childbearing—which Jesus' words effectively abolished—Jesus had earlier reaffirmed the law to Noah regarding wanton taking of human life. He said to Peter and those present. "For all those who take the sword will perish by the sword."

In the case of the first century governing body it is easy to see why their decree to "abstain from blood" was actually reaffirmation of the law to mankind through Noah prohibiting the wanton taking of human life.

**Suggested View of The
Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"**

ADDENDUM

Finally we go back to the second prohibition decreed to Noah for mankind, that of prohibiting mankind from eating blood of animals slain for food. Each record of the apostolic decree requires abstention from *blood* "and" from *things strangled*. (Acts 15:20, 29, 21:25) Considering that the law to Noah was *the basis* for those decrees and that the law to Noah prohibited *two actions regarding blood* then we must conclude that the decree to abstain from "blood" is one of those prohibitions to Noah and the decree to abstain from "things strangled" is the other of the two prohibitions to Noah. Otherwise the decree redundantly repeats the same prohibition twice *when both are necessary* for Christians.

What does the foregoing suggest regarding the apostolic decree? Beyond just being compatible with suggestions/conclusions offered in this letter the apostolic decree actually agrees with and supports those conclusions. The conjunction "and" between blood prohibitions evidences that both such laws to Noah were being reaffirmed, but no more than that. The circumstances of the meeting, the reasoning toward the decree and the needs of those brothers coincided at the point that two of those three laws to Noah needed reaffirmation and one not. Two of them were *necessities* and one was not. Of those two laws reaffirmed neither is sufficient basis to absolutely conclude that medical blood transfusion as practiced today is prohibited to Christians.

My suggestion also draws the conclusion that "abstain from blood" requires that we work whole-souled at following the mandate to preach and teach the good news of God's Kingdom. Why such a conclusion? First of all, we must remember that Noah was also a preacher of righteousness. His preaching had the direct affect of saving those who listened to him; his fellow humans. Secondly, it was Paul who said, "And now, look! I know that all of YOU among whom I went preaching the kingdom will see my face no more. Hence I call YOU to witness this very day that I am *clean from the blood of all men*, for I have not held back from telling YOU all the counsel of God," (Acts 20:25-28, italics added) Had Paul not been active in preaching and teaching the good news of God's Kingdom, by his own admission he would have been guilty before God of shedding human blood, which is precisely one of the prohibitions laid down to mankind through Noah. Noah's example and Paul's deduction combine to evidence that "abstain from blood" requires that we work whole-souled at following the mandate to preach and teach the good news of God's Kingdom.

As I said before, it is harmony with direction from "the faithful slave" that I leave this suggested improved view of the apostolic decree to "abstain from blood" in the hands of you brothers. For me, the matter is now in Jehovah's hands. (See The Watchtower of June 1, 1982 page 20, par. 15)

Addendum to: March 1, 2000 Suggested View of The Apostolic Decree "Abstain From Blood"

Page: 3 of 3

Date: March 3, 2000

Compiler: R. Jensen, 24 Running Deer Road, Phenix City, AL 36870

Congregation: C. AL, Number: 100164

Office: [REDACTED]
Home: [REDACTED]

January 3, 2001

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
Writing Department
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards

Dear Brothers

This letter follows up on correspondence I sent to you dated March 1, 2000 and an addendum dated March 3, 2000. Both letters contained enclosures.

The March 1, 2000 letter clearly expressed particular difficulties of our present stance on using donated blood for medical purposes. Also that letter and the subsequent one of March 3, 2000 contained a separate document offering the suggestion that we change our stance on blood and that suggestion included scriptural reasoning for why the suggested change is fitting and proper. This follow up is to draw your attention to my suggestion for change and the evident difficulties of our present stance and to ask for a scriptural answer.

My March 2000 letters indicated that, at the time, no reply was necessary regarding *my suggestion* for change in our teaching. However I was expecting a reply to my letter describing the concerns about our *present* stance. When you did not reply I chose to wait and watch for those serious concerns to be thoroughly addressed and resolved in one of our publications. Initially I thought the June 15, 2000 Questions From Readers article contained a response to the inherent and internal difficulties of our stance on the subject but after reading it I found no resolution or answer to those problems as outlined in my letter of March 1, 2000. To the contrary I found that that article actually increased the difficulties because it indicated that our stance is simple when in fact it is not so simple. The question asked was, "Do Jehovah's Witnesses accept any medical products derived from blood?" The opening remark in that article states, "The fundamental answer is that Jehovah's Witnesses do not accept blood." But, based upon what the article goes on to say, a more precise fundamental answer is that Jehovah's Witnesses accept some parts of blood but reject other parts of blood.

Several times the June 15th article talks about extracts and/or fractions from a component of blood as if that is somehow significant. Calling a substance an 'extract from blood components' does not change the fact that some of those extracts are as unique to blood as other forbidden parts of blood. (What makes a tolerated *whole* protein component [like human albumin or factor VIII] inferior to a forbidden *whole* platelet component?) Calling something an 'extract of blood components' does not recognize that some of the tolerated 'extracts' amount to a larger volume than other forbidden parts of blood. The June 15th article speaks of "extracts from blood components" only in respect to an arbitrary division of components namely white cells, red cells, platelets, and plasma. Those divisions are arbitrary because the Bible makes no such distinction of blood components as if an extract from one of them is less than a part of blood, a lesser part of blood or of lesser Biblical significance. Finally, calling something an 'extract from blood' in the context of that article avoids the fact that every single part of blood is intermingled with plasma. That means that forbidden components like platelets must be extracted from

1/3/2001

Page 1 of 4

Blood & Upholding Righteous Standards

blood plasma as must other tolerated parts of blood if they are going to be administered or used separately. For that reason it is meaningless to call something an "extract of plasma" as if that action is a unique secondary extraction for certain components but not for others. Because the above issues are not dealt with in the June 15th article then the significance of "extracts from blood components" is wanting and is left as an arbitrary distinction.

As indicated here and in my letter of March 1, 2000, our stance of accepting some parts of blood and rejecting other parts of blood is inherently flawed and so far as I can tell has no support in scripture. I have also repeatedly asked for guidance to where such a stance can be reasoned from the scriptures yet none has been provided. The idea conveyed in the June 15th article that our stance is simple confounds the senses of persons who want to understand our stance from a scriptural perspective, including me (and I am certainly working hard and faithfully on this subject). As I wrote before, we teach that we abstain from blood yet more precisely stated our stance is that we abstain from some parts of blood but we do not abstain from other parts of blood. I cannot in good conscience tell a physician or anyone else that we abstain from *all* medical use of donated and stored blood and that is what is *implied* when we tell persons that we abstain from blood.

As of the June 15th Watchtower I assumed that more would be forthcoming on the subject of medical use of blood and for that reason I decided to continue waiting patiently without writing you. I was initially delighted to see the subject again addressed in the October 15, 2000 Questions From Readers article, but my delight soon sank to greater concern that we are ignoring key elements of the difficulties raised, difficulties that anyone can see upon examining the details of our position.

Particularly confusing/disturbing is a comparison between how the June 15th and October 15th articles treat the idea of pouring blood out on the ground. The June 15th article refers directly to that idea as a point of reasoning to refuse components of blood yet the same article states that "other Christians decide differently." So, according to that article, our stance does not hold that the idea of pouring blood out on the ground as stipulated in the Mosaic Law is something that Christians must hold to as an absolute standard. If our stance were to hold that standard as absolute then we would reject *all* medical use of donated and stored blood because *all* of it must then be poured out on the ground as far as we are concerned. Different from the June 15th article, the October 15th article treats the idea of pouring blood on the ground as an absolute standard. The October 15th article states, "we do not donate blood, nor do we store for transfusion our blood that should be 'poured out.' That practice conflicts with God's law." So, a comparison of the June 15th and October 15th articles indicates that one treats 'pour blood out' as *less than* an absolute standard and the other treats 'pour blood out' as an absolute standard. The two articles represent a contradiction on a fundamental point of reason.

Also, though the October 15th article states, "we do not donate blood, nor do we store for transfusion our blood that should be 'poured out,'" it does not directly address or explain scripturally our correlative action of using from the donated and stored blood supply. Our stance is inherently conflicting since we are willing to use from the donated and stored blood supply but are unwilling to replenish the same thing that we are using from. In speaking with my father (also an elder) about this topic I asked him if he would be appreciative if one of his children's lives were saved as a result of utilizing certain acceptable components of blood. He indicated that he would be appreciative that the therapy saved their life. When I asked him if he would have donated that component of blood himself to save their life he said, "No." So, it was good and fine that that life saving act was accomplished by means of someone else's donation of blood but not that we make that donation ourselves. This is not criticism of my father or anyone else, it serves only to illustrate one of the confusing and contradictory aspects of our present stance. I cannot be the only one realizing this significant disparity and the need to remedy it.

As it turns out neither the June 15th nor the October 15th articles dealt at all with difficulties raised in my letters to you on the subject of blood and upholding righteous standards. A more precise description of those difficulties raised can be found in my letter to you dated March 1, 2000 and at this time I request an answer from you on those concerns. You may also want to review past letters between us on this same subject. For that reason and for your convenience I have enclosed copies of all our correspondence on this subject.

Besides addressing various difficulties of our present stance on blood, my letter of March 1, 2000 indicated my feelings that our stance is overall in error and that a significant change is in order. That conclusion was outlined in a separate but enclosed document as a suggestion for change and it spelled out factual, fundamental and simple scriptural points of reason in support. Since our publications do not refute those points of reason and I have not otherwise read or heard anything refuting them then I remain steady in my feeling that our stance is in overall error and that significant change is in order. My feelings are actually made stronger because fundamental points of reason in my suggestion are emphatically supported by teachings espoused in our literature. Please understand that I have conscientiously and faithfully dug into the scriptures and our publications while trying to resolve things on the subject of medical use of donor blood.

While waiting to hear from you or see these issues addressed in our publications I have continued considering the scriptures and our publications together with praying and meditating on the subject. Beyond being troubled by our stance's inherent and unresolved difficulties those deliberations have only intensified my feeling that our present stance is in overall error and in need of change. Without taking up too much of your time, I would like to share bits of my meditation and findings on the subject since my letter of March 1, 2000.

The October 15th Questions From Readers article cited Watchtower comments from July 1, 1951 as containing answers to certain key questions on the subject of medical use of blood. Perhaps the most fundamental statement found there on this subject is the following one:

Since Christians are not under the Law of Moses that emphasizes these restrictions on blood, why be bound by such ordinances?

The restrictions on blood existed before the Mosaic Law, being given centuries earlier, as recorded at Genesis 9:4. They were carried over for Christian observance, even after the Mosaic Law was ended by being nailed to Christ's torture stake. The first answer in this group of questions and answers showed that this restriction on blood is basic for Christians, for when instructions on the bare minimum requirements were sent out this position on blood was included as one of "these necessary things". So this principle regarding blood existed before and after the Mosaic Law, yet was so vital that it was also therein incorporated and emphasized.

My ongoing consideration of this subject has manifested significant error in that reply given above. For instance, it is true that a restriction was issued to Noah regarding blood but it is not true that that restriction was the same as those later imposed under the Mosaic Law *as if* the Mosaic Law's blood restrictions already "existed." In fact there is a *fundamental difference* between requirements of the two laws. Noah was prohibited from doing only one thing with the blood of animals he killed for a meal whereas the Mosaic Law prohibited doing anything at all with any sort of blood except using it for sacrificial purposes and that sacrificial use was required. That difference is readily seen in the idea of pouring blood out on the ground. Though Noah was told not to eat blood of animals killed for food he was not required to *waste* blood out onto the ground. Noah could have used blood for all sorts of things without breaking God's law that he abstain from eating the blood of animals he killed for food. Pondering all the ways Noah could have utilized blood it is obvious that Jehovah had not restricted him from using it for many, many things regardless of whether those uses were for a *sacred* purpose or not. For instance, since Genesis 9:4 only speaks of a prohibition for humans then nothing in God's recorded statement to Noah would have prohibited Noah from intentionally using blood for animal feed (which animals do anyway), but clearly the Mosaic Law forbade that type of intentional use by those under the Mosaic Law. Noah could have also used blood's natural pigmentation by using blood as some sort of painting material yet that would not have conflicted with what God said to him, but clearly such a use of blood was forbidden under the Mosaic Law to those whom God held to it. So, readily it is seen that there exists a *fundamental difference* between the prohibition issued to Noah and the later and more extensive prohibitions given under the Mosaic Law for those God held to it. One contains a *single* restriction regarding blood of slaughtered animals whereas the other contains *all encompassing multifaceted* restrictions. Furthermore, one strictly sets blood aside for *sacred* use and the other *does not* set blood aside for sacred use. Noah was *not* required to treat blood as sacred and Israelites were.

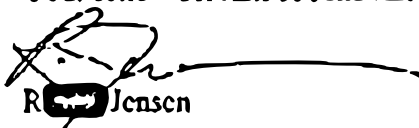
That 1951 article also states, "So this principle regarding blood existed before and after the Mosaic Law, yet was so vital that it was also therein incorporated and emphasized." That statement is not altogether a sound

one. The Mosaic Law did more than emphasize the principle God gave to Noah, it added to it. Adding to is more *and* different than emphasizing. That the Mosaic Law "added to" rather than simply "emphasize" is evident in that it contained an absolute prohibition on use of blood with the sole exception of sacrificial uses (which was required) whereas the law to Noah had no requirement whatsoever for sacred or sacrificial use of blood and it only prohibited a single use of blood, that mankind could not eat the blood of animals whose life had been taken for a meal. The real question is, in respect to blood why did the Mosaic Law contain *additional* prohibitions compared with the law Jehovah gave to Noah? That question is answered in my correspondence of March 1, 2000 but it boils down to the fact that with the Mosaic Law Jehovah for the first time instituted sacred atonement sacrifices with the central part of those sacred sacrifices being blood (fat was also included under the Mosaic Law). (See Leviticus 17:6, 10-12) Therefore the Mosaic Law *added to* the law to Noah regarding prohibition on blood because it *added* blood as a *required* and central feature of sacred sacrifices. Since Christians are not held to the Mosaic Law's provisions for sacred blood sacrifices then that *additional* (and unique) basis for the more encompassing prohibitions on blood use does not exist for Christians. (Acts 15:7-11) This is precisely why in respect to abstaining from blood our obligation today is no more and no less than the obligation lived up to by righteous Noah. (The simple language of Acts 15:28, 29 reflects the simple restriction given to Noah rather than the additional and extensive restrictions of the Mosaic Law that included setting blood aside as sacred by restricting its use to required sacred sacrifices.) And, as indicated in reasoning found in my March 2000 correspondence, God's word to Noah is *insufficient* for us to conclude that medical use of donated blood is forbidden by Him for Christians.

With these thoughts in mind, at this time I request that you reply *also* to my suggestion for change dated March 1, 2000 and its addendum dated March 3, 2000. If my presentation is not clear enough or if you have questions about it needing clarification please feel free to ask specific questions of me so that I can answer. If you find substantial error in my reasoning within that suggestion then I would like to have your written reasons so that I can meditate upon them. In that event I also would request an appointment to later sit down with you brothers in your offices at Bethel to thoroughly discuss this subject.

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

Respectfully,
Your fellow servant of Jehovah



R. Jensen

Enclosure:	My previous letters dated:	3/3/00 and enclosure 3/1/00 and enclosure 11/15/99 7/31/98 2/16/98
	Your letters of reply dated:	2/21/00 8/24/98 3/23/98

R [REDACTED] Jensen

24 Running Deer Road
Phenix City, Alabama 36870

Office: [REDACTED]
Home: [REDACTED]

April 6, 2001

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
Writing Department
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards

Dear Brothers

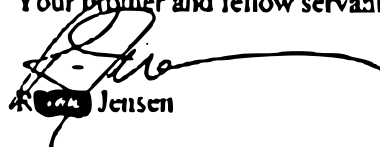
It has been three months since I last wrote you on the subject of blood where I again addressed serious concerns and suggested a course that is scripturally reasoned. (Ref: my letter of January 3, 2001 and enclosures)

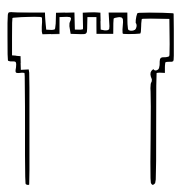
On February 23, 2001 I called Brooklyn Bethel and asked to speak with someone in the Writing Department about my letter. I was transferred to the Writing Correspondence Department at Patterson. The brother taking the call said my letter had been received and that someone was "working on it." To date I have not heard back from you. That hurts, and it leaves me bewildered. My sincere concerns are very serious ones, and your replies have not resolved them with the Bible. I have expressed that I have no one else other than you men with whom to discuss these concerns with understanding. In light of that, it hurts that I now feel practically ignored. It seems completely fitting and reasonable that I ask for your answers to questions—and a suggestion—that I have patiently waited over a year for. After allowing that length of time for your consideration, if I cannot talk back and forth with you brothers about these concerns then who should I go to?

The hurt and bewilderment is acerbated because I have offered to answer any questions you may have; yet none have been asked of me. I have even offered to visit you brothers in person if that would help. That you have made no inquires to me leads to the belief that my concerns and suggestion are understood by you, or at least that you do not believe you misunderstand them, or me. The result is that my confidence is eroding. My faith and confidence in Jehovah and his holy word, the Bible feels strong. What is suffering is my confidence that brothers who I look to for help will give a scripturally reasoned answer to the details of my concerns and suggestion; and I do not understand that because it goes contrary to my experience. This is very hurting and disconcerting.

This letter is not sent to aggravate or discourage anyone. If I thought my questions could be resolved another way I would do that instead of asking for your time and attention. Formerly I tried discussing the same concerns with knowledgeable and experienced local elders and even one circuit overseer, but none of them had answers; they all suggested writing you. In view of my pleas for help, only you men know why I have not already received scriptural answers from you on specifics. As a spiritual man I work hard at helping all those asking for it, and do not understand why I am being made to feel as I do. In any event, I think you brothers would want to know what effect your actions are having, and so I wrote to let you know. For all the reasons given in the past, I continue to welcome any questions or concerns you may have on this matter. I need some resolution on this subject, and it is hard to believe that need is unique to me. Surely all our brothers would benefit from seeing addressed the same serious and specific concerns I have raised.

Respectfully,
Your brother and fellow servant of Jehovah


R. Jensen



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

WRITING DEPARTMENT
25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2482, U.S.A.

PHONE (718) 600-6000

EC  May 30, 2001

R  JENSEN
24 RUNNING DEER RD
PHENIX CITY AL 36870

Dear Brother Jensen:

This letter follows a telephone conversation with you on May 17, 2001. We acknowledge receiving your letters dated April 6, 2001, January 3, 2001, and March 3, 2000. We also received your March 1, 2000, letter, which was a reply to our letter to you dated February 21, 2000.

When you first wrote and shared your observations with us, you did not ask for a reply. Nevertheless, what you wrote was not ignored. All of your letters have been carefully considered. You present your reasons for concluding, since the Mosaic Law had been canceled, that the decision of the first-century governing body "to keep abstaining . . . from blood and from things strangled" would be limited only to a reaffirmation of what you feel are the meaning and scope of the commands given by God to Noah in Genesis chapter 9 regarding respect for blood and life. (Acts 15:27) You claim that Noah had no reason to view blood as sacred as was required of the Israelites under the Law, even stating that he could have made any practical use of blood from slain animals other than eating it. You further claim that the prohibition against eating blood at Genesis 9:4 pertained only to shed blood from animals that had been killed for food, since only this blood is specifically mentioned. You feel that this is reflected at Deuteronomy 14:21 where Jehovah made provision for foreigners to buy and eat an animal that had died of itself, as if eating blood with the flesh of an animal that had not been killed by man was something already allowed by God for non-Jews. Your reasoning has led you to conclude that the medical use of blood from live donors would not be prohibited. But does such deductive reasoning harmonize with the intent of the Scriptures?

It is clear from what James said at Acts 15:21 that the first-century governing body considered all of what Moses wrote under the direction of God's holy spirit, including what was written by him in the book of Genesis. However, neither the account in Acts chapter 15 nor any other part of the Bible record shows that these older men limited themselves only to what was written by Moses in the book of Genesis in arriving at the "necessary things" that required abstinence from fornication, idolatry, and blood, or that these brothers interpreted what was written at Genesis 9:3-6 in the restrictive way you describe in specifically directing that Christians should "keep abstaining . . . from blood and from things strangled."

While the command not to eat the blood with the flesh of animals admittedly was given to Noah in relation to his killing animals for food, he would have no basis for assuming that he could eat blood otherwise. Why? Because of the underlying principle reflected in the command: "Only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat." Here the animal's life or "its soul" is directly equated with "its blood," and that would be true whether the animal was living or had died, whether the blood was still coursing within its circulatory system and serving its vital role in keeping the creature alive or it had been poured out. And if the blood of an animal was considered sacred, belonging to Jehovah, how much more so that of a human, as reflected in Jehovah's further command at Genesis 9:5, 6.—See the enclosed photocopy of page 204 from *A Handbook on Genesis*, a translators guide, by Reyburn and Fry, as well as the extensive discussion under "Questions From Readers" in the April 15, 1983, issue of *The Watchtower*.

This underlying principle—that blood represents "soul" or life—would rule out eating blood under any and all circumstances because blood, like life, belongs to Jehovah and thus is sacred. Therefore, Noah would have no basis to conclude, for example, that blood might be eaten as long as he did not eat the flesh along with it. Or, for that matter, that he could eat the flesh of an animal that had died of itself because he did not kill it; or that he could eat blood taken from an animal still living, since it had not been slain. Otherwise, it could be assumed that a servant of Jehovah even now

might eat an animal that had died of itself or do as some Masai people in Africa do today in opening an artery of a living cow to drain out some of its blood for food. And while the brief command to Noah did not specify that shed blood of slain animals should be poured on the ground and covered, as later stated in the Law, it would be reasonable to conclude that Noah would dispose of shed blood in some respectful way, not making any use of it but viewing it as sacred, belonging to Jehovah.

Moreover, we need not read into the provision in the Law for a Jew to sell to a foreigner an unbled animal that had died of itself any more than that Jehovah evidently did not see fit at the time to strictly enforce his requirements upon those who did not know him, even as the apostle Paul indicates at Acts 14:16 and 17:30, and as reflected at Psalms 147:20, Romans 2:14, 15, and 1 Corinthians 9:21. In a similar way, Jehovah did not hold the Jews under the Law to his original standard of marriage that permitted only one wife and allowed for no divorce. (Genesis 2:24) Jesus acknowledged that it was because of existing human factors that divorce was permitted (even on grounds other than fornication), but God made specific provisions in the Law to govern divorce as well as polygamy. (Matthew 19:3-9) Under Christian law, standards for marriage were elevated, and that was true also with other aspects of Christian conduct and worship.—Matthew 5:17-18; Romans 3:31.

While the first-century governing body would obviously take into consideration God's commands to Noah in directing that Gentile Christians 'abstain from blood,' these older men had before them what the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole had to say in principle about the sacredness of life and blood. This was implicit in the first prophecy, as the unfolding of the "sacred secret" revealed. (Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 1:8-10; 1 Peter 1:19-21) Thereafter, Jehovah progressively laid the groundwork for understanding his grand purpose to send his dear son to pour out his life's blood for sinful mankind. (Romans 5:9) By faith Abel perceived that animals, not bloodless vegetables, would be acceptable to Jehovah in sacrifice, as did Noah and Abraham. (Genesis 4:2-5; 8:20, 21; 15:9, 10; 22:9-13; Hebrews 11:4) It was Abel's "blood" that cried out to Jehovah.—Genesis 4:10; Hebrews 12:24.

God's view of the sacredness of life and blood continued to be reflected consistently in his Law to Israel while also making specific provision within the Law for blood to be used typically in atonement for sins. Anyone who ate "any sort of blood" was to be cut off. Why? Jehovah answers: "For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have put it upon the altar for you to make atonement." In parallel with his words to Noah at Genesis 9:4, Jehovah further stated: "The soul of every sort of flesh is its blood by the soul in it." (Leviticus 17:10-14) Obviously, this shows that the whole living person or creature—the "soul"—is represented by its blood because the life or "soul" is considered to be in that blood, whether the creature is alive or dead. The Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh* version translates this verse: "For the life of all flesh—its blood is its life."—See the enclosed photocopies of pages 267 and 268, from *A Handbook on Leviticus*, by Peter-Contesse and Ellington.

Hence, it would not be correct to conclude that God's view of blood would be any different if the soul from which a volume of blood came continued to live. To further illustrate this, consider God's law prohibiting the eating of fat of animals. The fatty tail of a sheep could conceivably be cut off without causing the death of the animal. Would an Israelite be able to eat this fatty tail, since it was detached from the animal that was still alive? No, because the fat would continue to carry the symbolism Jehovah assigned to it under the Law. The Law stated: "All the fat belongs to Jehovah . . . You must not eat any fat or any blood at all." (Leviticus 3:3-17) Would the symbolism of life that Jehovah had assigned to the blood be any the less real when its owner was not dead?—See *Insight*, Volume 1, under the subject "Fat."

It is evident, then, that God's basic view of life and blood has continued to be the same at all times and under all circumstances. Blood could be shed by man only under special circumstances and conditions. As Hebrew Christians, the first-century governing body knew that the canceling of the Law would not cancel how God viewed life and blood in principle. If the life of a creature is sacred, then that which represents the life of the creature, its blood, is also sacred, whether the creature is living or dead. This proper view of and handling of blood would be a reminder that 'all souls belong to Jehovah.' (Ezekiel 18:4) So, while their decree left no doubt that it was not "necessary" for Gentiles to get circumcised and be obligated to keep the Law that had been canceled, it still

would be necessary "to keep abstaining from . . . blood," since thereby Christians would keep showing respect for the sacredness of life.

Refraining from blood also would outstandingly reflect appreciation that God only approved the use of blood sacrificially in atonement for sins, since the typical sacrifices of animals under the Law pointed to the sacrifice of Christ in behalf of mankind. So, these older men certainly did not ignore "those things that are a shadow of the things to come" contained in the Law that had given true worshipers of Jehovah increased insight and understanding about Jehovah's requirements and purposes until the arrival of "the reality [that] belongs to the Christ." (Romans 15:4; Colossians 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 9:11-14) The entire historical background on the sacredness of life and blood reflected in the Hebrew Scriptures and so far in the Christian experience, including what Jesus did outstandingly in shedding his blood in behalf of believing mankind, would certainly have been considered by these older men as holy spirit led them to list the "necessary things" for believing Gentile Christians, having in mind the progressive revelation of truth and the unfolding of God's purposes.

Moreover, the principles set forth in the Law would still provide guidance to Christians. Quite frequently Jesus and the Christian Greek Scripture writers make reference to the Mosaic Law in providing Jehovah's view on matters in principle. Note Paul's references to the Law to support in principle the points being made at Ephesians 6:1-3, 1 Corinthians 9:8-10, 2 Corinthians 13:1, and 1 Timothy 5:19. Similarly, we properly can look to the Law to provide additional insight as to Jehovah's thinking on matters pertaining to blood, for example on properly slaughtering animals for food and in disposing of blood that has been shed. It also deals with an animal that has died of itself or has been torn by another animal.—Exodus 22:31; Leviticus 7:26; 17:10-15; Deuteronomy 12:16, 20-25; 14:21.

It is of interest that the governing body determined that Gentile Christians should "keep abstaining" from the things listed. Most unbelieving Gentiles would not be conscious of and certainly not doing what was required as to idolatry, blood, and fornication, including the keeping of the commands given to Noah regarding blood. But believing Gentiles in the first century would have begun to conform their lives to Jehovah's requirements for salvation by means of Christ Jesus in being taught the principles of true worship. Clearly, such instruction would not have been limited to what was in the book of Genesis. They would certainly have gained a basic knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, including the features of the Mosaic Law, especially since some Hebrew Christians claimed salvation was not possible unless these Gentile Christians got circumcised and kept the Law. Some Gentile converts may even have been conscientiously trying to keep the Law. Now, with the issuing of this decree, of the things these believers from the nations were already doing according to their then understanding, likely being influenced by the Law, what should they keep doing as "necessary things"? While the decree showed it was not necessary to get circumcised and keep the many features of the Law, the older men directed that they should "keep abstaining" from the things listed. The decree, therefore, did not invalidate the principles of the Law but rather showed respect for these enduring principles. Hence, when the governing body issued its unqualified decree "to keep abstaining . . . from blood," it is evident that they meant all blood, human or animal, from whatever source or in whatever circumstance because it represented the life or "soul" of a creature. They did not limit application to keeping free from imputed bloodguilt because of failing to preach. There would be no basis for concluding that God would approve removing a portion of a creature's blood (which he decreed symbolized the creature's life) and using this to sustain the life of another, as long as the donor creature continued to live. Of course, they did see fit to add that Christians should abstain "from things strangled" to prevent any doubt about a common practice of the day, since eating such strangled animals was considered a delicacy by Gentiles. (See *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1990, page 13, paragraph 16.) Incidentally, this restriction, as was true with some other details on handling blood that became clearer under the Law, was not reflected specifically in the command to Noah.

For that period of the Christian congregation, the first-century governing body acted as Jehovah's agency in providing guidance that was timely and appropriate, taking all applicable factors into consideration. Understandably, with the advance of medical technology, new questions would arise as to the application of Bible principles that pertained to the handling of blood. How would Jehovah provide additional guidance for his people according to the need? Just as he did when questions arose in the first century. (Acts 15:6) Obviously, he continues to use his divinely inspired

Word to instruct his people and his holy spirit is still active, but he also uses to give guidance "the faithful and discreet slave" that Jesus said 'on his arrival' would be appointed "over all his belongings." This slave class would supply to the spiritual household "food at the proper time." (Matthew 24:45-47) Accordingly, Jehovah has used "the faithful and discreet slave" to provide guidance on situations that confront Christians today as to the medical use of blood and fractions thereof, just as he used the first-century governing body to clarify matters related to blood at that time.

For some decades now "the faithful and discreet slave" has been giving the matter of blood usage in medical procedures careful and prayerful consideration in the light of the Scriptures. Each time this matter has come up for review by the "slave" class, taking all pertinent factors into consideration, including those discussed in your letters, the basic conclusion has been the same, that accepting a transfusion of whole blood, or of its four recognized primary components—red cells, white cells, platelets, or whole plasma—would clearly be contrary to the Scriptures. As to accepting minor fractions of blood, "Questions From Readers" in the June 1, 1974, issue of *The Watchtower*, states: "While refraining from approving or condemning in such areas where we believe the decision must be left to individual conscience, we do, nevertheless, urge all to seek to maintain their conscience clear before God, never showing deliberate disrespect for his Word." This consistent position is reflected also in answers to various questions on the subject under "Questions From Readers" in subsequent issues of *The Watchtower*, including what appeared most recently in the June 15, and October 15, 2000, issues.

You contend that using even a small extract of a blood component would be tantamount to using whole blood. Some Christians draw this conclusion conscientiously and we encourage them to decide matters in accord with the dictates of their consciences. Others reason differently, feeling beyond a certain point a blood fraction does not remain a significant part of one's life blood. "The faithful and discreet slave" has not felt that it can be dogmatic on this point but has left that as something each Christian must decide for himself before God.—Galatians 6:5.

While we have not dealt with all the details discussed in your letters, we trust that these additional comments will be helpful. It is evident that matters pertaining to blood have caused you much concern. You have come to the point where you question seriously whether the position of Jehovah's Witnesses is correct. You have presented your reasoning for consideration. When we have questions on matters that are not immediately resolved after doing research and seeking answers, the wise course is to wait humbly upon Jehovah. In our previous letter, we encouraged you to do that, as you continue to serve Jehovah conscientiously.

Proceeding in this way, in some respects, will put to the test your faith and trust in Jehovah and the way he is directing his organization today through "the faithful and discreet slave." Faithful servants of Jehovah down through the centuries have been willing to wait upon Jehovah for direction when they had concerns or questions and were richly blessed as a result. In handling matters this way, we may find as time goes along that we need to lean more heavily upon Jehovah in seeking better to understand the direction he has already provided in his Word and through his organization. (Proverbs 2:1-9) Nevertheless, if further direction, clarification, or adjustment is needed, we can have confidence that Jehovah will provide such according to the need and in his due time and way. So, we need to show patience, not letting any cause for concern become such a preoccupation that it disturbs our spiritual balance and joy in Jehovah's service.

We trust the above comments will be helpful to you. With our letter we would again like to send our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers in Jehovah's service,

Washington B. V. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

Enclosure

Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood: Only translates a restrictive particle that may be rendered "But," "Nevertheless," "On the other hand." Flesh refers here to the meat of the animals. With its life is literally "in its *nefesh*," which is followed by its blood in apposition with *nefesh*, and so RSV translates that is, its blood.

The thought expressed here is that the life (*nefesh*) has its existence or center in the blood. (See Lev 7.26-27; 17.11, 14.) When the blood is removed the life flows out of the animal. Therefore to eat meat with the blood still in it is just the same as eating the animal alive. The meaning is well expressed in TEV: "The one thing you must not eat is meat with blood still in it; I forbid this because the life is in the blood." In a number of languages the natural way to say this is "... because the blood is the source of life" or "is the same as life."

Although it is not stated, the command that God gives in these words has a positive meaning as well as a negative meaning: that the blood is to be drained out of an animal that has been killed, and then it may be eaten. In some languages this will need to be included in the translation, otherwise this verse will be understood as a prohibition against eating all meat, contradicting the previous verse. For example, one translation expresses the verse "But you are not to eat meat with blood still in it. I forbid this because the life is in the blood. You must let the blood run out first, then you can eat it."

There are two other major problems in translating verse 4. In the first place the idea that the life is in the blood may appear very strange, since in many languages the center of life may be thought to be located in another part of the body such as the head, chest, liver, kidneys, intestines, or spleen. In such cases it may be necessary to explain in a note that the Hebrew belief was that the life of the person or animal was in the blood. In some cases it may be added that this is similar to the local belief that the life is located in ... (and then name the body organ).

The second problem is that some languages do not have a noun-like word for life. Therefore it may be necessary in such languages to make some adjustments by saying, for example, "Nevertheless you must not eat meat with blood still in it, because it is the blood that makes the animal live" or "... that keeps the animal alive." The same thought may be expressed through an opposite, for example, "This is because the animal dies when the blood is removed."

second person your at the beginning of transitions. Most translations will require meaning clear.

For your lifeblood: your is plural with to their descendants in future generations blood of your (plural) *nefesh*." Although one is clearly understood, that is, "the your blood, which takes away your life human beings as well as in animals. In the same way as in the previous verse require a reckoning translates a verb that is, to make someone responsible. RSV NEB says "I will demand satisfaction." may be translated "If anyone takes account" or "You will have to answer to rest of this verse and the next verse and not just an explanation, is what is say straight out "... I will punish him" translation says idiomatically "If any make him for, it) understand" (that is,

Of every beast I will require it means as animal that kills a person: the animal of man is a shortened repetition of the person who kills another human being law applies to the human murderer as Of every man's brother parallels the this context means "a fellow human being anyone." I will require the life of an concerning the punishment of the an anyone takes another person's life, murderer to pay with his life. TEV has verse 6. "If anyone takes human life, h

9.6 RSV

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image.

The first part of this verse is in U structure, in which the second line esst This may be seen in the rendering of R

Whoever sheds th by man shall hi:

9.5 RSV
 For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man.

TEV
 If anyone takes human life, he will be punished. I will punish with death any animal that takes a human life.

This verse is made up of three conditions in which God will demand accounting of the offender. The verse is complicated by the shifting from the

he desire to eat the meat of the animal
 ighter of the animal may not take place

y adding "any other sacrifice."

TEV

is an offering to the LORD anywhere
 except at the entrance of the Tent
 shall no longer be considered one of
 God's people.

as well as 7.20.

TEV

If any Israelite or any foreigner
 living in the community eats meat
 with blood still in it, the LORD will
 turn against him and no longer con-
 sider him one of his people.

verse 3.

also 16.29.

to say "eats any meat from which the
 juices. Since blood is liquid, it cannot be
 food" is probably too strong a statement
 with "consumes blood."

ceptor language translation has chosen to
 when the pronoun I should be translated
 ice against" may be translated in some
 k away from" (see 20.3, 6; 26:17; Ezek
 xt" or "to repudiate," implying hostile

g: since this expression has already been
 be replaced by a pronoun here, "against

LORD who is the subject of the verb (the
 RSV). The basic meaning of the verb is
 4 and 9 as well as in 7.20, where it is

RSV

TEV

17.11
 For the life of the flesh is in the
 blood; and I have given it for you
 upon the altar to make atonement for
 your souls; for it is the blood that
 makes atonement, by reason of the
 life.

The life of every living thing is in the
 blood, and that is why the LORD has
 commanded that all blood be poured
 out on the altar to take away the
 people's sins. Blood, which is life,
 takes away sins.

The life of the flesh is in the blood: the word flesh is to be understood as
 referring to living beings in general, including humans, animals, birds, etc. NEB has
 "the life of a creature," and the TEV rendering "every living thing" is similar in
 meaning. NAB reads "every living body." In some languages one may say "everything
 that breathes."

); if indirect speech is used, this pronoun must be translated once again by the
 word "the LORD," as in TEV.

For your souls: or simply "for you," referring to all the people of Israel, not
 just the priests. This is why TEV has "the people's sins."

I have given it for you upon the altar: the pronoun it refers to the blood. The
 verb given has the meaning of "appointed" (NEB). That is, God has arranged or
 ordered that blood be used as the means of taking away sins.

By reason of the life: the sense of this expression is that blood and life are
 equated. This does not differ from the meaning already expressed in the beginning
 of this verse, but it is added for emphasis and should be retained in the receptor
 language, unless the repetition of the same idea is stylistically unacceptable. In some
 translations the wording is even more explicit because the implied subject of the verb
 "takes away sins" is the priest: "it is because blood carries life that the priest can use
 it in the ritual of pardoning sins." Others refer to the action of God rather than the
 priest as intermediary: "it is because blood is life that God can use it to pardon our
 sins."

RSV

TEV

17.12
 Therefore I have said to the people
 of Israel, No person among you shall
 eat blood, neither shall any stranger
 who sojourns among you eat blood.

That is why the LORD has told the
 people of Israel that neither they nor
 any foreigner living among them
 shall eat any meat with blood still in
 it.

I: again, the pronoun should be translated by the noun "LORD," if indirect
 speech is being used as in verses 10 and 11.

RSV has another direct quotation within the quotation of the words of the
 LORD. But this may be changed to indirect speech if it is more natural in the
 language. In that case translators should give attention to the necessary pronoun
 changes:

Eat blood: see verse 10.

17.13

RSV

TEV

Any man also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust.

Any man also of the people of Israel: literally, "and any man of the sons of Israel." This expression is slightly different from the similar one in verses 3, 8, and 10 ("any man of the house of Israel"). But the meaning seems to be identical, so it is unnecessary to search for a separate expression here.

Strangers: see verses 8, 10, and 16.29.

Who takes in hunting: this is a rather odd expression in the English of RSV. But it simply means "who hunts." In some languages there may be completely different words for hunting animals and hunting birds. If this is the case, the logical adjustments must be made, and the two verbs will appear in the receptor language rendering. TEV's "catches" implies hunting.

That may be eaten: this refers to those animals and birds considered "clean" according to chapter 11. If necessary the translator may want to say "an animal or a bird which is ritually clean" (TEV). This is one way to avoid the passive form of RSV.

Shall pour out its blood: in some languages it will be clearer to say "shall pour the blood of the animal on the ground."

Cover it with dust: the Hebrew word here translated dust does not emphasize the powdery nature of the material as the RSV rendering would lead us to believe. It is rather a more general term for loose, dry earth. In 14.41-45 it is used three times and translated "plaster." Here it is better to translate "earth" or "dirt."

17.14

RSV

TEV

"For the life of every creature is the blood of it," therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.

* Grk Syr Compare Vg: Heb for the life of all flesh, its blood is in its life

Although the wording is slightly different here, the meaning of the first phrase in this verse is the same as verse 11, "the life of the flesh is in the blood." TEV has therefore translated the two expressions identically. In RSV the same meaning is repeated later in the verse.

Therefore: both TEV and NIV have "I explain why the LORD has forbidden the blood has been drained.

It is to be changed to "The LORD" if in

Eat the blood: see verse 10.

Be cut off: see 7.20 as well as verses

17.15

RSV

And every person that eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean.

What dies of itself or what is torn by beasts (animal): The first term refers to an animal, the second to one attacked and killed by another. The dead animal would not have been properly eaten.

Native or a sojourner: see 16.29, where the meaning is the same. In this context these terms begin the verse. TEV and many other versions earlier in the verse so that their full

Wash his clothes: see 11.25.

Bathe himself in water: see 15.5.

Be unclean until the evening: see 1:

17.16

RSV

But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity."

But: marking the contrast between the one who fails to do so. NIV, NJV, and NUB of English versions leave it untranslated.

Wash them or bathe his flesh: TEV has it may be better to say "if he does not do so" another possibility is to say more explicitly "do not wash his body."

Bear his iniquity: although the precise meaning of this phrase is not clear, the general meaning of this phrase is that the person must accept responsibility for his

R Jensen

24 Running Deer Road
Phenix City, Alabama 36870

Office: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
Home: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

June 9, 2001

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society
Writing Department
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Blood and upholding righteous standards

Dear Brothers

I appreciate your letter of May 30, 2001, and the telephone conversation of May 17th where some time was spent talking about two concerns, of many, raised in my correspondence on this subject of blood and upholding righteous standards. This is my final letter on the subject. It will express some thoughts regarding your latest comments, thoughts that are sincere and honest before God, and out of respect for Him and you brothers. I do not expect a personal reply.

Your letter states, "You present your reasons for concluding, since the Mosaic Law had been canceled, that the decision of the first-century governing body 'to keep abstaining... from blood and from things strangled' would be limited only to a reaffirmation of what you feel are the meaning and scope of the commands given by God to Noah in Genesis Chapter 9 regarding respect for blood and life."

One of my reasons for concluding the decision to abstain from blood is limited to a reaffirmation of what God said to Noah is because our publications say, "So, there was not an imposing on Gentile Christians of a responsibility to conform to the Mosaic Law or some portion of it but, rather, there was a confirming of standards recognized prior to Moses." (United Worship page 149) If, in respect to blood, the decision of the first-century governing body was "a confirming of standards recognized prior to Moses" and "not an imposing on Gentile Christians of a responsibility to conform to the Mosaic Law or some portion of it," then we must be able to prove our present application in accord with "standards recognized prior to Moses." In respect to blood, the only such stated biblical standard is, as indicated on the same page of the United Worship book, the law Jehovah gave to Noah as recorded at Genesis chapter 9. This is why part of my focus was so concentrated on what can be affirmed as recognized requirements from what was said to Noah.

As for what I feel is the meaning and scope of the commands given by God to Noah, scrupulously I have avoided reading my own ideas into the text of Genesis 9 in the way of deductions. Instead I have diligently looked at what God actually addressed and actually required without adding deductions to that. My comments about how Noah could have used blood without violating what he was told by God do not assert that Noah did use blood one way or another, or that God gave specific permission for that use. Those comments only assert what we know, that Noah could have used blood in other ways without violating what God required of him as recorded in the inspired Scriptures. In the main, there is no disagreement about what God addressed to Noah and what He required of Noah. We agree that, to Noah, Jehovah's command was given in relation to his killing animals for food. We also agree that Noah was told he could not eat blood from animals he slaughtered for food. Did Jehovah require more than He addressed or stated?

6/9/2001

Page 1 of 4

Blood & Upholding Righteous Standards

In our conversation of May 17, 2001 much was said about what Noah may or may have not have deduced from what he was told by God in respect to blood. Nevertheless, what Noah might or might not have thought about what Jehovah said to him is just that, deduction. All we know for sure is what God said to Noah, which included what He required of Noah in light of His speaking and using of blood metaphorically for life. We need not try to deduce what Jehovah required of Noah in this respect. What God required was not left unstated, as though Noah would have to wonder or deduce what was expected. What did Jehovah address in his decree to Noah?

Your letter of May 30, 2001 agrees that God's command in Genesis chapter 9 "not to eat the blood with the flesh admittedly was given to Noah in relation to his killing animals for food." This is exactly what God addressed in his decree to Noah, and it agrees with what we have published in our literature on the subject. Though your letter goes on to say, "[Noah] would have no basis for assuming that he could eat blood otherwise," it is also true that God did not address to Noah how he should otherwise use blood or whether he could or could not otherwise use blood, or eat unbled carcasses he had not killed. It is true that Noah might have had a basis for deducing that he should treat blood special, but it is also true that God did not require this of him. Furthermore, it is also true that, prior to the flood, Noah could already have been using blood for some purpose as were animals skins and, perhaps, other parts such as ligaments. Jehovah himself set the standard of man using animal carcasses by providing clothing of animal skins to Adam and Eve. Accordingly, since God had not forbidden other uses of blood, Noah might also have had basis for deducing that if God did not want blood used in this fashion then He would have said so. You raise the question of whether Noah could eat blood taken from an animal still living, such as some Masai people do. God gave animals to Noah to serve as food. (Gen. 9:2,3) But Noah was prohibited from eating living animals because explicitly God prohibited him from eating animals with *nephesh*. (Gen. 9:4) Animals eaten in the manner described conflicts with God's law to Noah because they were yet living. Quite literally, they have *nephesh*. Since Noah was prohibited from eating animals yet with *nephesh*, then God's requirements to Noah forbade the practice you questioned¹. Did Jehovah require more of Noah than He stated explicitly?

Certain deductions are made in your letter from the fact that Jehovah spoke of blood illustratively for life. But should we deduce what prohibitions Jehovah expects of us from this illustrative use of blood or should we ask ourselves, "As a result of God's illustrative language, what did He require?" Knowing what God requires as a result does not need deduction because God stated His requirements. On the other hand, concluding that Jehovah intended more than He stated demands deductions on our part. As a congregation, should we insist on what God stated as His requirements or what we deduce beyond that? This is at the crux of one of my concerns, and it deals with "a confirming of standards recognized prior to Moses." Should we understand this confirmation from explicit requirements recognized prior to Moses, or otherwise?

Your letter addresses the idea of accepting certain principles from the Mosaic Law as a means of providing guidance in the matter of abstaining from blood. I fully appreciate what Jehovah required of Jews and Jewish proselytes. Admittedly, early Jewish Christians probably kept many provisions of the Mosaic Law, including probably those on blood too, whether doing so was required or not. Though I appreciate this, there remains the text of Deuteronomy 14:21, also part of the Mosaic Law, and how it harmonizes or not with our conclusions. Your letter's address of this text does not contain reasoning demonstrating that it is contrary to what God required of Noah. The assertion is made that "Jehovah evidently did not see fit at the time to strictly enforce his requirements upon those who did not know him." But this assertion assumes that the provision of giving unbled carcasses as food was contrary to Jehovah's requirements for non-Jews as given to Noah. Since,

¹ Eating excretions like milk is different than eating blood of a living animal. Milk is excreted by designation; blood is not. Eating blood or flesh of a living animal is an assault whereas eating a natural excretion is not. Under the Noachian decree when an animal is assaulted for food it must be killed and its blood not eaten.

admittedly, God only addressed eating blood of slaughtered animals to Noah, then concluding that eating unbled and unslaughtered carcasses was a violation of what God required to Noah is a deduction rather than a direct reading of God's requirements for Noah's offspring. I would ask: If Deuteronomy 14:21 is in harmony with God's requirements to Noah, what then? How would that affect our understanding and teaching? And, I would certainly think we should assume that each portion of the Bible reflects God's will in harmony with his fundamental standards, unless it can be conclusively demonstrated otherwise². (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17) So, while I agree with the idea that principles set forth in the Mosaic Law do provide us with guidance, the question is, If Deuteronomy 14:21 is, in principle, harmonious with Genesis 9, then what guidance does that give us in relation to the Christian standard to abstain from blood? Does God require us to abstain from blood as Noah was required to abstain from blood, or as Jews were required to abstain from blood? This too gets back to the important question: what standard was recognized prior to Moses?

I agree that early Christians were influenced by what they learned about and from the Mosaic Law. But, in respect to blood, if what was required of Jews under the Law was more than what God required of Noah, and since God's spirit required abstention from blood without further explanation, should we then deduce the more stringent requirements of the Mosaic Law, which requirements were part and parcel with atonement sacrifices that are no longer required? This question remains because our reasoning so far has not proved, or evidenced, that Deuteronomy 14:21 is anything less than harmonious with Genesis chapter 9. If it is harmonious then Noah and his offspring were not required to abstain from blood to the same extent that Jews had to abstain from blood. Also, if Deuteronomy 14:21 is harmonious with Genesis chapter 9 that would not make God's requirement to Noah contrary to the Law of Moses, as if the two would become disharmonious. The Law of Moses would not disagree with requirements given to Noah, the Law of Moses would simply require more because of its additional requirements of sacred sacrifices.

An ancillary illustration was raised regarding the fatty tails of sheep. Your letter asks: "Would an Israelite be able to eat this fatty tail, since it was detached from the animal that was still alive?" Unlike what was said to Noah about blood, the Law of Moses addressed fat—and blood—aside from whether its original host had been killed or not. That is, beyond addressing fat of animals slaughtered for sacrifice, the Law of Moses explicitly addresses fat in the abstract, as a substance to abstain from eating regardless of circumstances. The very text cited of Leviticus 3:17 unequivocally states, "It is a statute to time indefinite for your generations, in all your dwelling places: You must not eat any fat or any blood at all." As with blood, Israelites were not to eat any fat, period. Context of these requirements allows no room for distinction between whether the fat—or blood—was taken from a living or dead creature, or one slaughtered or unslaughtered. For this reason I do not see relevance in your illustration for our subject. In respect to blood, what was said to Noah was not as restrictive as what was later said and imposed on Jews under the Law of Moses. Just as Noah was not told to waste blood out onto the ground as was later required of Israel, he was also not told unequivocally that he could

² God allowing and, in some cases, providing for polygamy is not evidence that Deuteronomy 14:21 contains a similar deviation on Jehovah's part because they are not the same subject. At most God's allowance and provision for polygamy shows that He does sometimes deviate from His norm, not that deviation is common or that we must conclude it by default because a text does not otherwise accord with a particular conclusion of ours (such a conclusion would be circular reasoning). In the case of polygamy we have Biblical texts demonstrating that this provision was a deviation. We have the account in Genesis of God's comments regarding the first marriage and we have Jesus' statement that those words represent God's standard. This is enough to establish that polygamy provided for in the Mosaic Law was a deviation from God's norm. But such is not the case with Deuteronomy 14:21 and the subject of blood because Deuteronomy 14:21 speaks of eating unbled flesh of unslaughtered animals, not eating unbled flesh of slaughtered animals as forbidden to Noah. So there is no obvious discord between the two texts. Also, unlike the subject of polygamy, there is no defining text in the Christian scriptures specifying that Deuteronomy 14:21 is a deviation from God's norm for humankind apart from the Law of Moses. Christian texts such as Acts 15:28,29 do not provide this definition because those texts cannot be understood by themselves, that is without definition from elsewhere in the Bible—and that is the whole question, that is, what texts are applicable and do the defining.

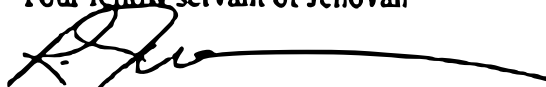
not eat any blood. He was told not to eat the blood of animals whose life he had taken in order to sustain his own with a meal. Of course, what we deduce from that is another matter.

Interestingly, God's spirit did not inspire the first-century governing body to say 'abstain from any sort of blood' or, 'abstain from all blood,' just as it did not inspire 'abstain from feeling of blood' or, 'abstain from looking at blood.' The spirit moved those brothers to say "abstain from... blood," which, though indicating an abstention and a subject of abstention, does not by itself indicate exactly what is required. The decree is not absolute in that it cannot be understood by itself. It lacks defining elements like the extent or type of abstention and what blood should be abstained from. Again, this is why the decree requires definition from elsewhere in the Bible, and is another reason for my inquiries. If the decree were absolute then it would not require this external definition, that is external of the three texts in the Christian Scriptures where it is mentioned.

Finally, I noticed that your letter does not comment on the conflicting matter addressed in my letter, and discussed on the telephone, about us using from the donated and stored blood supply but forbidding the replenishing of the very same thing we deplete. In conversation it was stated to me that it is a personal conscience matter whether a Christian decides to donate blood that will be used in fractionated forms, the same fractionated forms that we likewise leave to personal conscience as to acceptance. I was told that this act being left up to each Christian's conscience naturally follows from what we have already published about decisions to accept fractions of blood. If put on the spot and asked about this issue, I will repeat the same thing told me, that each one must decide this matter for themselves before God as a matter of personal conscience. If asked for verification on this point, I can only show what our publications have stated, and what naturally follows from that.

I appreciate the forbearance of you brothers, and your willingness to reply to a few of my questions asked. Please do not feel I am pitting my views against those of our governing body. I am merely trying to use my mental and spiritual faculties as reasonably, objectively and conscientiously as possible, and that with Jehovah's written word the Bible in full and prayerful view. (Prov. 3:5,6; Acts 17:2,3,11; 1 John 4:1) If I was content to lean on my own understanding, as if pitting my personal views against anyone else's, my efforts would not be so intensely focused on reasoning from the Scriptures and requesting assistance from you brothers. I agree that "logically, to enjoy God's blessing, one must teach only what God reveals in his Word and reject teachings based on human wisdom or tradition." (The Watchtower, June 1, 2001 page 14) Rest assured that my faith in God and His wonderful promises has not subsided. I continue in His service.

Respectfully,
Your fellow servant of Jehovah


Ross Jensen

R [redacted] Jensen

24 Running Deer Road
Phenix City, Alabama 36870

Office: [redacted]
Home: [redacted]

January 10, 2003

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society, and
Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Request to resign

Dear Brothers,

By now you know this letter is about my resignation as an elder. This letter gets straight to the point because I think you brothers want to understand my request to resign and hopefully this will help avoid other men from feeling the hurt, disappointment and exasperation I have been made to experience. My request and reasons for it intend no disrespect.

Starting in February 1998 I expressed specific and important questions to you brothers about important aspects of what we teach on blood. After a few letters my correspondence dated March 1, 2000 explained in painstaking detail why my questions had not been soundly answered. In spite of this letter and future pleas begging for help and answers to important questions neither was forthcoming beyond mere recognition by sentences like "Each time this matter comes up for review by the "slave" class, taking pertinent factors into consideration, including those discussed in your letters, the basic conclusion has been the same, that accepting a transfusion of whole blood, or of its four recognized primary components—red cells, white cells, platelets, or whole plasma—would be contrary to scripture." Replies like this from you brothers do not answer important requests for detailed and sound scriptural reasons for what we teach, nor does saying that some feel one way and others feel differently provide a biblical answer for imposing what we do. Statements such as that only say what I already know, that we teach what we teach, that our stance is what our stance is. I know what our religious position is. My questions have asked for sound biblical reasons for important details of what we teach and impose. Alluding to pertinent factors without identification and logical construction of those factors to a sound conclusion is no answer.

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

On top of all this is the ambush I was faced with last winter when people started calling and writing me about my letters to you brothers. This caused considerable stress for me, and still does. One day Jehovah will root out whatever or whoever is responsible for this.

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

aspects of our stance on blood though I have sought very hard for them. It is my conviction that today we should have reasons for answers we teach today. Furthermore, we should have reasons for those answers to the same detail that we teach and impose them. Otherwise we should wait before we teach those answers or details. This is waiting on Jehovah. It is inappropriate to ask people to wait for reasons to answers we are already teaching.¹ This circumstance has so seriously affected my health to the point where I feel I must resign as an elder.

My previous letters go into detail of why my feelings are what they are on the subject of medical use of donor blood. I will close my letter with two final questions, one of which is drawn from page 30 of The Watchtower of June 15, 2000 in the paragraph providing the stated reason for why we do not impose anything regarding some parts from blood. After saying “we cannot say” whether Christians should accept fractions from parts like platelets or plasma taken from blood, the reason stated is, “The Bible does not give details, so a Christian must make his own conscientious decision before God.” In line with this stated reason, the question begging for an answer is, where does the Bible give details on white cells, red cells, platelets or plasma as independent parts from blood so that we can say what Christians must do regarding them? What scriptural details exist for those forms of parts from blood that do not exist for other forms of parts from blood? They are all equally from blood.²

My second question is more basic but perhaps the answer, whatever it is, is more profound in relation to our stance on blood. Since the Bible speaks of blood representatively of soul, the question is, how do we reconcile our reasoning on what constitutes soul with our reasoning on what constitutes blood? Soul has two major components, physical body and breath of life. Together those two major components constitute soul. Apart neither constitutes soul.³ We teach exactly the opposite about “major”

¹ Some Bible teachings we cannot exhaustively explain, but we can nevertheless solidly prove them as biblical to the same detail we teach them. One example is Jehovah’s infiniteness. We cannot fully understand or explain God’s infinity, yet we can teach it as scriptural because it is explicitly stated in the Bible. (Ps. 90:2; Job 36:26) In cases such as this we have no choice but to wait on Jehovah for further understanding beyond the basic fact of a matter. But when it is our own deductions and conclusions in question, and practices thereof, then we cannot reasonably assert that anyone must wait on Jehovah for an explanation. We must have an explanation for our own deductions and conclusions to the same detail that we teach and practice them. To think or assert otherwise would be illogical and unreasonable.

² The following rendition of 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 illustrates this and offers guidance regarding independent members.

¹⁴ For the blood, indeed, is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the water [of blood] should say: “Because I am not hemoglobin, I am no part of the blood,” it is not for this reason no part of the blood. ¹⁶ And if the platelets should say: “Because I am not a white cell, I am no part of the blood,” it is not for this reason no part of the blood. ¹⁷ If the whole blood were white cells, where would the platelets be? If it were all platelets, where would the protein factors be? ¹⁸ But now God has set the members in the blood, each one of them, just as he pleased. ¹⁹ If they were all one member, where would the blood be? ²⁰ But now they are many members, yet one blood. ²¹ The white cells cannot say to the hemoglobin: “I have no need of you”; or, again, the red cells [cannot say] to the water: “I have no need of YOU.” ²² But much rather is it the case that the members of the blood which seem to be weaker are necessary, ²³ and the parts of the blood which we think to be less honorable, these we surround with more abundant honor, and so blood’s unseemly parts have the more abundant comeliness, ²⁴ whereas blood’s comely parts do not need anything. Nevertheless, God compounded the blood, giving honor more abundant to the part which had a lack, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the blood, but that its members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it; or if a member is glorified, all the other members rejoice with it.

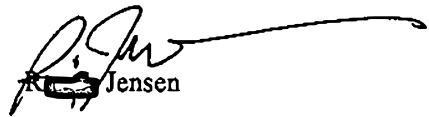
Just as a fleshly body consists of members functioning together to make a body, so too blood consists of members that function together to make blood. The rendering above therefore demonstrates how no member of blood equals blood just as no member of the body equals a body. Verse 19 even asks the question, “If they were all one member, where would the blood be?” In view of verse 14 the answer is, if there was only one of the many necessary members then there would be no body, or in this case no blood. There would be only an independent member, not a body, or blood in this case. Just as each member of the body is necessary to the functioning of the body as Jehovah intended likewise each member of blood is necessary for blood to be what it is. Just as with the body, no matter the size or distinction of members of blood, all of them are just as much part of the blood as every other part.

³ Page 72 of our book *You Can Live Forever In Paradise On Earth* says, “Notice, however, that the Bible does not say that God gave man a soul. Rather, it says that after God started man breathing “*the man came to be a living soul.*” So the man *was* a soul, just as a man who becomes a doctor *is* a doctor. (1 Corinthians 15:45) The “dust from the ground,” from which the physical body is formed, is not the soul. Nor does the Bible say that the “breath of life” is the soul. Rather, the Bible shows that the putting together of these two things is what resulted in “*man’s becoming a living soul.*” (Underlining added)—See also the article *Soul* in *Insight on the Scriptures* Volume 2, pages 1005 and 1006

components of blood. In effect we teach that “major” components of blood are blood even when they are apart from or independent of whole blood. How do we reconcile these two contrasting lines of thought as logical, and more importantly as biblical? This quandary goes to the very heart of one of my first questions—scripturally, what is blood?

It is imperative to maintain a tender yet not oversensitive conscience as we go about living up to our dedication and loyalty to Jehovah. In the future it might be possible that I again serve as an appointed elder, only time will tell. The choice to resign is not something I want. It is something I feel compelled to do in consideration of my health and after much careful and prayerful thought. The decision was a very difficult one, and it intends no disrespect to you brothers. Thankfully my devotion to Jehovah and faith in His wonderful promises has not subsided or been sidetracked in all this. In fact it is that devotion and the strength I gain from it that leads me to this hard decision to request that you let me resign as an appointed elder. I hope you brothers understand my dilemma and that my action stems from this brother’s Bible trained conscience.

Respectfully,
Your fellow servant of Jehovah


R. Jensen