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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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> article speaks of "extracts from blood components" only in respect to an arbitrary division of components namely white cells, red cells, platelets, and plasma. Those divisions are arbitrary because the Bible makes no such distinction of blood components as if an extract from one of them is less than a part of blood, a lesser part of blood or of lesser Biblical significance. Finally, calling something an 'extract from blood' in the context of that article avoids the fact that every single part of blood is intermingled with plasma. That means that forbidden components like platelets must be extracted from

blood plasma as must other tolerated parts of blood if they are going to be administered or used separately. For that reason it is meaningless to call something an "extract of plasma" as if that action is a unique secondary extraction for certain components but not for others. Because the above issues are not dealt with in the June 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> articles treat the idea of pouring blood out on the ground. The June 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> article, the October 15<sup>th</sup> article treats the idea of pouring blood on the ground as an absolute standard. The October 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> nor the October 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

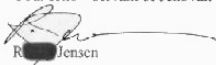
That 1951 article also states, "So this principle regarding blood existed before and after the Mosaic Law, yet was so vital that it was also therein incorporated and emphasized." That statement is not altogether a sound

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

<b>Enclosure:</b>	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