



Concern

Issue 33

Summer 2000

Topics and News from First & Last Ministries

NO CHANGE

Media claims of a Jehovah's Witness U-turn on blood are unfounded.

JEHOVAH'S Witnesses who accept blood transfusions during life threatening surgery will still be shunned despite media reports in June.

According to an article in the London Times on June 14th, 2000 the Jehovah's Witnesses have announced "*the biggest climb-down in the movement since the predicted Armageddon failed to materialise...in 1975*"

The story in the Times followed a decision by the Watch Tower Society's 12-member governing body to cease disfellowshipping members who accept blood.

Instead the Watch Tower Society will now view members, who break its rules on blood, as disassociating themselves from the Society.

In effect this poses exactly the same consequences for members, who will find themselves

By Paul Bacon

shunned by any family and friends who happen to be Jehovah's Witnesses.

In a statement to the press, the Watch Tower's national spokesman, Paul Gillies, described the change as a "*slight adjustment*".

He said that not taking blood was still a "core value" of the religion. "*It is quite possible that someone who was under pressure on an operating table would take a blood transfusion because they did not want to die. The next day they might say they regretted this decision. No action would be taken against them. We would just view it as a moment of weakness.*"

But why make the "slight adjustment" in the first place?

Raymond Franz, a former Jehovah's Witness who once served on the group's Governing Body, believes the Jehovah's Witness leadership hopes that publicly ending the practice of disfellowshipping will lessen negative perceptions of the group in Europe.



**CONTINUED
ON
BACK PAGE**

Comment

TO the uninformed the headlines and story in the Times new s- paper on June 14th would indeed indicate that the Watch Tower Society had made a significant change in its doctrine on blood.

With words such as U-turn and climb-down littering the text, it was no surprise that this story grabbed so much attention.

But for anyone with some experience of how the Watch Tower Society works, they knew there was bound to be something else behind the announcement.

What is the difference between being disfellowshipped or disassociating oneself from the organisation?

Ask anyone who has experienced one or the other and the answer is not a lot.

It is important to remember that individuals who are "disassociated" JWs are treated identically to those who are disfellowshipped. They are shunned by JW friends and denied normal family relations with JW family members.

How anyone can say that this is a change in policy is beyond me.

The Society is just playing with words in order to make sure that Governments (France, Bulgaria and others) around the world don't continue to clamp down on their activities.

In the light of the Bulgarian case, where it agreed not to impose sanctions on anyone who takes a blood transfusion, this line fits in perfectly.

All the Society says now is "we didn't take sanctions against them, they chose to leave the organisation instead."

My friends this has just been one of the Watch Tower Society's many PR exercises over the past few years.

Nothing has changed, nor is it likely to change in the near future.

Paul Bacon
Editor.

YEAR 2000 EX-WITNESS CONVENTION UPDATE.

THIS year's ex-Jehovah's Witness convention will be held in the beautiful valleys of Wales.

The three-day get-together will be held on October 6th to 8th 2000 at Cefnlea Park, Dolfor, Newtown, Powys.

This year's guest speaker will be Duane Magnani who was a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses for 18 years and is the author of many books including 'From Kingdom Hall To Kingdom Come', 'Who Really Is The Faithful & Wise Servant?' and the award winning 'The Watchtower Files'.

Registration forms or further details are available by calling: 01922 491971 or 01922 441552 alternatively write to:

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TO THE EDITOR:

HELLO and Greetings to you in the name of our Sweet Lord!

I finally received the sample tracts. They are wonderful and really informative. I will surely make copies to spread them around. I pray it will glorify the Lord and set people free from deceptions. May the Good Lord continue to use your ministry and bless

every one there who is working to promote JESUS.

Thank God for your ministry. :-)

In Jesus We Serve!

**Bro. Winston C Romero
California, USA**



TO THE EDITOR:

I HAVE visited your internet site... it's very good and I am a JW, I have an open mind? But aren't you forgetting that we all have a need to get to know the truth about what we are all doing here on this world. And for me the only true source of getting to know God is in the BIBLE "don't you think"... So what is the big deal about trying to PULL DOWN JW's after all, were did you get all you're insight from over the years.

Have you got anything better to offer when you consider all the problem that the WORLD is going through....

What are you about. Do you think that the JW's Have a secret plan for a Master race or do you think we are kept in the dark... and if so, for what reason?

I think it is better to follow people who have the interest of all and not just the one individual at heart. I think this is better than giving power to one man over so many.

**Hugh Horne,
Via email.**

TO THE EDITOR:

I'M Todd--a Christian, formerly an EX-JW, who's mother (presently Christian/EX-JW) ran into a big shot "elder," as well as my poor indoctrinated JW cousin all in the same day in the short hour of being in the doctors office about a week ago.

In short my mother told them straight out that the WT is NOT the truth & that she is now free in Christ.

The big shot "elder" instructed my mother to inform the "brothers" at her local "kingdom hall," in Stratford, Canada.

To make matters worse my mother & sisters picture appeared in today's paper as participates in the March for Jesus :)! It's funny because when my mother was talking to the JW's in the doctors office a week ago she was wearing a March for Jesus T-shirt!!! :) :) :) Ha! Ha!

It's only a matter of time till she gets a knock on the door or letter from the JW authorities in Stratford.

I thought that it's best that we write a "Letter of Dissociation" or better yet a "Letter of Denunciation of the Beliefs of the Heretical & False Religious Cultic Group of the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society," before they kick my mother out. She has been a Christian for approximately 10 years & hasn't been attending any "kingdom halls," but is actively serving in a Baptist church.

Do you have any suggestions on how to write such a letter?

I'll be writing the bulk of the letter for her. My mother still has a brother & a sister plus their kids still in the WT. Thank God the rest of us are out! Your advice is greatly appreciated. Thanks.

**Yours in Christ,
Todd Paul Langis,
Via email**

send your letters to:

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UNITED KINGDOM



WITNESS SON MURDERS MAN WHILE HE SLEEPS

AN illiterate, alcoholic, son of a Jehovah's Witness family brutally stabbed and murdered a man while he lay sleeping at his home in London.

Jacob Rhoden, 21, a dyslexic, unemployed chef, had a history of crack and LSD use. He pleaded guilty to murder at the Old Bailey and was sentenced to life imprisonment by Judge Ann Goddard, who described the attack on September 15 as "beyond the understanding of decent people".

On that night, Mr Harris had spent several hours at the ground-floor flat with Rosalee Nelson, his girlfriend, discussing his future. An Economics graduate from Manchester University, he worked for a London merchant bank.

At 2 am Miss Nelson left, and Mr Harris went to bed, but, despite previous warnings from friends, he continued to leave his front window open. Lurking outside was Rhoden, drunk, only yards from his own untidy flat, where he had just quarrelled with his parents, both Jehovah's Witnesses.

A school dropout at 14, Rhoden had an IQ of 71, had rebelled against his strict religious upbringing and had been thrown out by his parents for his thieving and drinking. A regular drug-user, he had convictions for wounding a man and burglary.

After removing his training shoes and jacket, Rhoden climbed through the open window, picked

up a knife from the kitchen and entered the bedroom.

"Rhoden found Mr Harris asleep and began stabbing at him. It was a prolonged and sustained attack," Mark Dennis, for the prosecution, said.

The short-sighted Mr Harris was unable to see properly, having left his glasses under the bed. He managed to stagger, screaming for help, towards his front door before collapsing.

Alerted by his screams, neighbours called the police. In the following minutes, Rhoden ransacked the flat, leaving bloody footprints and smears throughout the banker's home. He escaped with just a watch and a small bottle of perfume. Mr Harris, who died shortly after the attack, had more than 25 stab wounds.

Rhoden was arrested a short distance away with a badly cut index finger and covered in blood. He told police that he had been the victim of a racist attack, but was later arrested after matching the description of a man seen leaving the murder scene.

*If you have a JW related news story
then send it to us at the address on page 3.*

Kingdom Kapers



Send your Jokes to:

First & Last Ministries
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UNITED KINGDOM

FROM DECEPTION TO JESUS - THE REAL TRUTH

The testimony of Janet Hayes - Part One

As a child I was very curious about life and God and often wondered what life was all about. My mother professed belief in God but my father didn't claim to have any faith, but rather was inclined towards belief in evolution. I went to church with mum now and again and was christened and confirmed, but certainly didn't have a relationship with God at that time. My mum wanted me to be confirmed so I went ahead at age 13, but only went to church very irregularly. Once I was well into my teens, spiritual things didn't have any part in my life as I was totally absorbed with the music and dancing of the 60s. I didn't know anything about Jehovah's Witnesses other than they would rather die than accept a blood transfusion.

At the age of 23 I was married and working full time as a secretary. Six months after John and I

married, one evening there was a knock on our door and two Jehovah's Witnesses stood there - a man and his wife. They offered me a book for twelve and a half pence (this was December 1971). The book

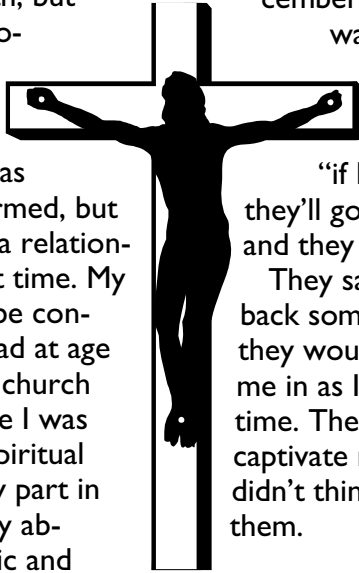
was called "Is the Bible really the Word of God?", and I thought to myself

"if I buy this book they'll go away" and so I did and they did!

They said they would call back sometime but I knew they would probably not find me in as I was working full time. The book didn't really captivate my attention and I didn't think much more about them.

SURPRISE

Around four months later, however, in the spring of 1972, I was chatting with a colleague at work who was complaining about his mother-in-law and the fact that she was coming to stay



with him and his wife for the weekend. I asked him what was wrong with his mother-in-law and he said, “Oh, she’s OK, but she’s a Jehovah’s Witness”, and then he added “and so is my wife”. Now this was quite a surprise to me as I had met his wife who seemed really nice (I was one of those people who thought Jehovah’s Witnesses were really strange and probably looked and acted nothing like “ordinary people”). I then asked Bob (the work colleague) what Jehovah’s Witnesses believed and he proceeded to tell me all about Armageddon and the idea that 1975 would mark the end of the world as we knew it. I was fascinated by what he was saying and remember thinking, after our conversation, that I wished the two people who had left me the book four months earlier would call back. The following day Bob brought me a book from his wife called “The Truth that leads to Eternal Life” and this book really did capture my attention. I felt all my questions finally were being answered – and so it seemed, from the Bible.

IMPRESSED

Two weeks later there was a knock on the door and there stood the two people who had originally called on me. I really

thought God had sent them and I asked them to call back two evenings later. Needless to say, they were astonished at my keen interest, especially after a lapse of four months from first meeting me.

From that time a study commenced in the “Truth” book and continued for around 18 months – two years. They would come for about three hours every Monday evening and we became really good friends. They always checked the scriptures and I was really impressed with their Bible knowledge. I was soon completely hooked on the idea of the paradise earth and totally believed this was indeed God’s Organisation. I was soon attending the Kingdom Hall with my new found friends and seldom thought of anything else other than what I was learning, as I thought, from the Bible.

next issue....



More Callers

THE RUTHERFORD RACKET



By Charles P. Windle
Editor Truth and Light

RELIGIOUS liberty is a cardinal doctrine based upon the fundamental principle of equal rights.

Your right to worship God in accordance with the dictates of conscience rests upon the same principle that guarantees a similar right to citizens of other faiths.

If any group of our citizens can be penalised, or their civil rights abridged, on account of their faith, then the rights of all the rest of us would no longer rest upon the solid rock of principle but upon the fickle and shifting sands of popular prejudice and passion.

Religious bigotry, like a dragon of old, is the evil genius of the human race. It stands in the pathway of human progress, preventing that unity and understanding so essential to the peace and happiness of a community or a nation.

Bigotry is the greatest menace of Religious Liberty.

This article was written to counteract a veritable Niagara of false and vicious propaganda against the Christian religion – designed to undermine and destroy Christian faith and to foment prejudice.

The author is a non-Catholic who loves the Truth and hates Falsehood – resolved to do his part in making religious freedom a living and indestructible force in the nation. This places him in opposition to every movement calculated to arouse bigotry.

MEET THE JUDGE

The record of “Judge” Rutherford is relatively unimportant. I am much more concerned in whether he is telling the truth or furthering falsehood – whether he is promoting peace and good will or advancing the cause of hate and prejudice. However, so many people have asked me questions about him that it might be well to introduce the man to my readers.

For much of the information about the “Judge” I am indebted to the interesting booklet, “Rutherford Uncovered,” by Rev. Richard Felix, O. S.B., of Pilot Grove Mo. This pamphlet was written in answer to a recent booklet by Rutherford entitled “Uncovered,” which attacks the Catholic Church. Father Felix lives in Cooper County, Mo., the same county in which the “Judge” lived for fifteen years. This made it possible for the author to do some “uncovering” in return.

In the uncovering process it develops that Rutherford’s claim to the title of Judge is as weak as the soup which Abraham Lincoln said was made from the shadow of the breast bone of a chicken that had starved to death. Mr Rutherford is not a Judge. He was never elected to that office. The statutes of Missouri provide that members of the local bar shall select one of the members to take the place of a Judge of the circuit court during his absence. From time to time various members of the local bar preside

over the circuit court. In all the years Mr. Rutherford was a member of the Cooper County bar, he presided over the local court on but four occasions – each time for one day only. On two of the days no jurisdiction came before the court, and on the other two occasions only trials of minor cases came up.

Therefore, Mr. Rutherford's claim and use of the title of Judge is a bit of deception wholly in harmony with the greater deception he practices on his credulous readers.

His vanity in assuming a title in this manner is all the more amusing in light of the fact that he berates the clergy for using titles they have really earned.

The "Judge" was born on November 8, 1869. He was the second son of Mr. and Mrs. Colvin Rutherford who lived for nearly fifty years on a little farm three and one-half miles from Versailles, Mo.

They were active members of the Freedom Baptist Church. The father died in 1912 and his mother passed away October 9, 1926. At the time of her death she was blind and receiving help from the government in the form of a pension for the blind. The "Judge" returned to preach a sermon at his mother's funeral.

Rutherford was really a lawyer, but a search of the registry books of the accredited Law Schools of Missouri fail to reveal his name. It appears that he acquired a smattering of law while serving as court stenographer for Morgan and Copper counties, and was granted a license to practice law on May 5, 1892, after an examination by a committee of five members of the bar at Boonville, Mo.

When Pastor Charles T. Russell died in 1916, Rutherford stepped into his shoes as head of the International Bible Students' Association

and Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. His followers are self styled Witnesses of Jehovah. On June 22, 1918, Rutherford and six other Russellites were sentenced to serve 20 years in Prison after being convicted of "unlawfully and wilfully conspiring to cause insubordination, disloyalty and refusal of duty of the military and naval forces of the United States."

"Mr. Rutherford's claim and use of the title of Judge is a bit of deception."

Since that time the Witnesses of Jehovah have attempted to lay the blame of their trials and convictions on persecution by the Catholic Church, but the Church had nothing to do with the affair. They were convicted, not because of their religious faith or because of persecution, but because they violated the espionage Act, They were released along with Eugene Bebs and others on May 16, 1919, after serving nine months of their sentences.

The Witnesses of Jehovah are rabid pacifists. They even object to saluting the flag of their country.

Next Issue:

**A
False
Prophet**



Blood Update

More true-life stories from around the world.

No Blood for Liver Transplant Patient

DOCTORS have performed a liver transplant on a Jehovah's Witness without the use of any blood products.

Dr Olivier Detry and co-workers, from the University of Liege in Belgium, report in the medical journal *The Lancet* how they successfully performed the procedure.

Before the operation, the patient was given iron by mouth and a compound called erythropoietin that increases the rate at which red blood cells are made.

The researchers used this therapy to increase the production of red blood cells so that the patient could afford to lose blood during the operation.

The blood that the patient lost during surgery was then filtered through a machine and put back into his body.

The researchers conclude that their success with this patient "may allow successful liver transplantation in Jehovah's Witnesses who should not necessarily be excluded from this life-saving procedure".

Concerns over blood

Paul Gillies, national press officer for the Jehovah's Witnesses, said representatives from the Society worked closely with the medical profession to find alternatives to blood transfusion.

He said recent contamination of blood supplies with HIV and hepatitis C had heightened concerns over safety.

Mr Gillies said: "We approach this subject from the Bible's perspective, and the medical profession are looking for alternatives because of the dangers associated with blood transfusions.

"It seems that we are coming together, even though we have been walking down two different roads."

Jehovah's Witness gives up faith to survive.

A JEHOVAH'S Witness who lost five pints of blood in a machete attack renounced his faith so that he could have a blood transfusion.

Doctors said that it saved Brent Bond's life with only seconds to spare.

Mr Bond's jugular vein was severed as he left a pub after a night out with friends.

Mr Bond, 24, from Nottingham, knew that his mother would never grant approval for a transfusion so seconds before he lost consciousness he told a paramedic: "I'm no longer a Jehovah's Witness. I give my consent to a transfusion."

Mr Bond said that his prediction about his mother's attitude proved correct. When she arrived at the Queen's Medical Centre she tried to stop the transfusion going ahead.

Mother and son had since discussed the situation and agreed that his survival was all that mattered.

"The hospital was able to prove I had already given my consent," he added. "I managed to give it to the ambulanceman and that saved my life. There was no way I could have survived after I had lost that much blood."

Mr Bond was struck on the hands, face, back and neck, partially severing his spine and slicing his jugular vein.

As a result of the attack he also suffered brain-damage and has had to give up his job as a van driver. "But at least I am alive," he said.



WORLD NEWS

European Court of Human Rights issues landmark ruling in favour of conscientious objector.

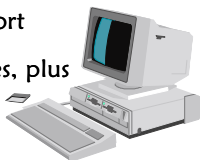
THE Grand Chamber of European Court of Human Rights has ruled unanimously that Greece violated the rights of a conscientious objector when it allowed religious discrimination against him in his employment, thereby denying him freedom of religion. The court awarded nine million drachmas (US \$26,000) in damages.

The decision, which was made on April 6th will likely result in the restoration of the civil rights of more than 3,500 Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece who have been convicted in the last 30 years for their conscientious objection to military service. It will also affect conscientious objectors in the 40 other member states of the Council of Europe.

"This decision means that those in Greece who objected to military service for reasons of conscience will not be marked as criminals for the rest of their lives," said Babis Andreopoulos, spokesman for Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece. "Instead, their freedom of religion will now be fully respected."

Visit us on the Internet.

For help and support in reaching out to Jehovah's Witnesses, plus the latest news on the Watch Tower Society.



Website - <http://www.firststandlast.org.uk>
email: ministry@firststandlast.org.uk

Taiwan relaxes military service.

TAIWAN Jehovah's Witnesses who refuse to serve in the military have the option of fighting fires - or helping the elderly - under a new law that took effect yesterday.

The new law allows young men who must take care of their families - because parents are old or families members are handicapped - can apply for alternative service lasting 27 months.

Young men who refuse to be drafted for religious reasons can apply for alternative service lasting 33 months.

The Interior Ministry, which handles drafting, said there were 5,000 openings for alternative service this year.

Nearly 100 Jehovah's Witnesses have been jailed for refusing to be involved in military service.



Mile High suits Jehovah's Witnesses' needs

JEHOVAH'S Witnesses have found a new home, temporarily, for their annual summer convention. It will be at Mile High Stadium in Denver USA.

The organisation had used McNichols Arena for 21 years, but when that was torn down, a new venue was needed. Witnesses met in two separate conventions when at McNichols, but now all 22,000 people can easily fit into one end of Mile High.

The Witnesses may have to find yet another place to meet after the new Broncos stadium opens in the fall of 2001, but for now they have a home.

"It will be nice to have us all together," said Todd Simcik, a spokesman for the organisation.



NO CHANGE!

Continued from front page.

In New York, Watch Tower spokesman James Pellechia dismissed the news reports as misleading.

The group acknowledges that it has ended its practice of “disfellowshipping” - or excommunicating - members who receive blood transfusions.

But Pellechia said that a Jehovah's Witness who has a transfusion automatically “revokes his membership.”

“It has the same effect,” said Pellechia.

The Last Days in the 14th Century? Part 1



Throughout its history the Watch Tower Society has pointed to the calamities, horrors and disasters in the world, and preached that this signified an imminent end to the world.

Convinced that the time of the end, has always been upon us, the Jehovah's Witness have until more recently been falsely prophesying and setting dates for the end of the world.

But a loyal Watch Tower student living at the end of the 14th century would have just as much to get excited about.

As he witnessed and experienced the events of this century, and looked for the "signs" of Jesus' coming. What would he find?

In this series of articles we will see just some of the horrors of the 14th century.

1. Wars

The descendants of Genghis Khan's Mongol hordes killed c. 35 000 000 of Chinese peasantry from 1311 to 1340.

They annihilated whole civilisations from the Pacific to the Adriatic Sea in the previous century; the wars that followed in China when these rulers were fought off were no less destructive.

Do not believe for a second that this is even remotely all. In 1337 the longest war in recorded history, the Hundred Years' War between England and France, started. The whole of Europe was also, through the first half of this century, divided into countless regional conflicts and feuds.

Asia was not through with genocidal war, alas. Along, in 1370, came a Turkic conqueror known as Timur Lenk (or Tamerlane). He was a Tatar, a Muslim of Mongol descent.

Timur Lenk wasn't second to even Genghis Khan in cruelty and ambitions for world dominance; his hordes slaughtered entire cities and left nations completely devastated.

Even great cities like Baghdad and Damascus were plundered and their populations annihilated.

In India, it is estimated that one million people were killed in a few weeks alone. The century ended at the closing of this savage destruction.

Next Issue: Pestilence



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