

## BLOOD TRANSFUSION VERSUS EATING OF BLOOD (A COMPARATIVE CRITIQUE ON DEUTERONOMY 12: 16 AND ACTS 15:20)

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### ABSTRACT

*The development of Blood transfusion (giving of blood to save life) as part of curative processes ranges between 1628 A.D. and 1818 A.D. Patients who lose large quantity of blood more than the marrow could replenish in quick succession are resuscitated by blood transfusion. Situations that may warrant this could be excess bleeding in an accident, protracted ailment or such sickness that attack and dry up blood cells. Physicians do not just recommend blood therapy except in an extreme condition where a patient is running the risk of death due to acute shortage of blood. One may ask, "If there is no controversy about the efficacy of blood transfusion, why embark on this religious appeal to a well-established medical practice?" The answer is, some religious bodies reject this on faith grounds referring to the injunction that no one is to eat blood because it is life (Leviticus 17:10-14 and Deut.12:16). In this study one dispassionately examined the issue of blood transfusion theologically from related literature, journals, and oral interviews. Findings of this paper shows that the Watchtower Bible Society, God's Kingdom Advocate, First Century Tabernacle have their strong resentments over blood transfusion according to their faith consequent upon the bible passage above which has been defectively interpreted. This antipathy is assuming none theological height from social angle in the face of AIDS pandemic scourge. One had the task of repositioning the religious psyche of the abstainers and their sympathizers and to distinguish between the eating of blood and transfusion.*

**Keywords:** Blood, transfusion, eating of blood, critique, religion, medical practice

### INTRODUCTION

Blood transfusion as part of curative processes of the Medical profession applies to intravenous giving of blood to save life. Patients who lose large quantity of blood more than the marrow could replenish in quick succession are sustained by blood transfusion. Situations that may warrant this could be excessive bleeding in an accident, protracted ailment or such sickness that attack the blood cells and or sicknesses like sickle cell anemia and acquired immune deficiency syndrome. These cases of excessive loss of blood leave the patient pale and wick with little or no strength with which to carry out any activity. It is clear that medical practitioners do not just recommend blood therapy except in an extreme condition where a patient is running the risk of death due to acute shortage of blood. This position is not predicated upon the respect for any faith but as part of medical ethos. It is no controversy that a number of people have benefited from this scientific breakthrough. One may then ask, "If there is no controversy about the efficacy of blood transfusion, why embark on this religious appeal on a well-established medical practice?" The reason is simple in the sense that some religious bodies and Sects reject this on faith grounds based on the injunction that no one is to eat blood because it is life (Leviticus 17:10-14).

In this research one dispassionately examined the issue of blood transfusion theologically from literatures, journals, and oral interviews. Findings show that the Watchtower Bible

Society, God's Kingdom Advocate and First Century Tabernacle do not accept this medical process. The last of them generally does not accept medical therapy but hold to faith healing strictly. This antipathy is, however, assuming none theological height from social angle in the face of AIDS pandemic scourge. People refuse blood transfusion for fear of contacting HIV/AIDS from unscreened blood. It is necessary to mention that the social perspective of this issue at stake may not concern us so much as we fuse on the theologically based apathy. One had the task of repositioning the religious psyche of the abstainers and their sympathizers to deter avoidable death.

## CLINICAL THEOLOGY

It might be of necessity at this stage for us to attempt a definition of Clinical theology for easy comprehension of the topic we are dealing on. It is the integration of theological, psychiatric, and psychoanalytical analyses of mental and spiritual conditions to achieve a holistic healthy living.

*It serves as the foundation for training seminarians in pastoral counseling offered in church based trainings...Clinical Theology is a course in clinical pastoral training and care which makes full use of the resources and techniques of psychology... The need for clergy being trained in pastoral counseling and care is now generally recognized and is offered as part of the curriculum of most seminaries... While much can be learned from psychiatry and psychoanalysis, Lake's unique contribution was his emphasis upon the therapeutic resources found in certain particular aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He demonstrated that these resources can be like specific medicines, active against recognizable forms of spiritual and mental pain. (Lake: 1996-2009)*

Clinical theology can also refer to the branch of theology that deals with pastoral counseling. It recognizes the place of medicine as part of God's means of grace. Clinical theology concerns itself with the spiritual impact of sickness and seeks a means to offer spiritual relief that can enhance physical therapy through counseling and prayers.

## RELIGION AND MEDICINE

From this on set it might be necessary for one to establish this one fact that religion does not prohibit medicine. In every culture providence had made it possible for medicine men and women to abound. People are naturally enabled, or are trained to manipulate the herbs around within the environment for people's good health. All religions according to their own faith and theology provide therapy for their population either by orthodox or traditional or both combined to secure health care for her community. Taking Christianity from which the Sects of First Century Tabernacle, Watch Tower Bible Society, and God's Kingdom Advocates sprang, one establishes the fact that this religion does not abhor medicine. It is expedient for one to once again re-establish the fact that the bible does not deride the place of medicine and hospitals, but gives them prominence. For instance, in Egypt, the nurses who served and saved the life of the Israeli new born babies were blessed for being the agent of God for the salvation of the children of Israel. One can read from Exodus 1:17 "But the Midwives feared God, and did not as the King of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive." The Old Testament of the bible acknowledges the place of Nurses/Midwives Ezekiel 16:4, and Jeremiah 20: 15 (Douglass. 1982: 775). God is said to have approved of Midwives who did their jobs according to the specifications of God during the Egyptian exile of Israel in that he "...made them houses" (Exodus 1:21), because they feared him. The healing of Hezekiah in II Kings was effected with herb (the back of a tree) (2 kings20:8), by the directives to the prophet Isaiah. It would not have been a difficult a thing for God to give a command for the

King to be healed but to lend credence to medicine he allowed the application of herb. These quotations would not need any seer to explain to one the fact that there could not have been Midwives without Maternities or Hospitals right there in the Old Testament.

The New Testament is dotted with references to hospitals, and physicians by Jesus Christ the master of the Christian faith. In the cherished metaphor of one's neighbor, he referred to the Samaritan who offered first aid to the traveler robbery victim who also took him to the Inn (Hospital). In this passage Jesus condemned religious love for the law than the Law of love. For Jesus, what religion and religious laws could not do, love and pity accomplished. Imperative to this paper is the fact that this Samaritan took the victim to a hospital where he made financial deposit for the medical care of the victim. His reference to the sick requiring the physician is in no doubt a true authentication of the practice of medicine. If then one is a true follower of Christ, one may be doing a disservice to those who follow him when one deceives them to believe that medicine is evil. At the same time it will be an act of faithlessness for us to insist on medicine to the neglect of faith healing. It is expedient, however, to state that each person should be allowed to develop the level of faith that can suffice for the person in the midst of adversities or ill-health. Sweeping statements can only serve to hold some people in religious bondage which is not the same thing as Christian faith. Religious apathy against medicine has no base, and therefore should be seen as unnecessary manipulation. From the foregoing paragraphs, one can safely and assuredly infer that neither Moses nor Jesus condemned the practice of medicine. Rather Jesus Christ had a physician in his team of apostles in the person of Doctor Luke – the Saint.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Blood**

Blood from the surface refers to the red liquid that runs through the bodies of humans and animals (Hornby, 2000:111). It is that vital component part of the body that is composed of the red and white corpuscles. Blood among other things circulate oxygen to the various cells of the body for oxidization. The white cells are specialized for the carrying of antibody (antigens) agents. These antibody agents are also referred to as the soldiers of the body. They attack foreign bodies that infiltrate the organism's internal system. These foreign bodies if allowed can destroy body immunity making the body vulnerable to all kinds of viruses that can cause sickness. Currently science and medicine in particular unequivocally makes it clear that HIV/AIDS in themselves are no illness but are attackers of blood cells thereby reducing body immunity creating express assess for antibodies. Medically and spiritually blood is supposed to be guided jealously if life must continue. Theologically, blood is life in its totality hence it is not to be boiled or eaten. Science through medicine confirms that blood is life according to God's word spoken years before science fully developed.

The analogy that awakened this paper states, "If you stopped from alcoholism would you accept the same to be injected or transfused into your body?" This rhetoric pointedly refers to objection to blood transfusion. While one is not contending against individual faith value, after all God the absolute has always and can favour people by way of faith healing of all manner of diseases. For anybody to resort fully to faith healing there is nothing wrong with that, but to discriminate among the means of curative and at the same time accepting some others could be likened to the Igbo adage of the man who objects to the eating of rats, but could divide the same among children with one's teeth.

The dissuading of Christians from eating blood is a standard law which cannot be disputed or abrogated. Of course, it carries the life value therein. The process of eating blood starts with the boiling of the same, which kills the living cells of the blood. By implication this is

regarded as the final destruction of life. Those who may have the courage to drink fresh blood, nature will pass the pigments through the process of metabolism in the alimentary canal. The two processes obey the rule of heating up the cells thereby snuffing life out of cells. It is necessary to mention that blood transfusion is different from the eating of blood. Blood transfusion may be likened to sexual intercourse in which living organisms are exchanged. If I am correct the living organisms contain some quality of blood which develop when fused into human being. This is God's means of procreation.

### **Eating of Blood**

Blood is usually dreaded at sight when it oozes out of any torn part of the body. This is more frightful when it relates to human blood. Blood natural intuition the sight of human blood has always attracted great trepidation, even when one does not understand its components and comprehensive functions. To the extreme some suffer hemo-phobia at the sight of human blood. According to Campbell;

*Vertebrate blood is a type of connective tissue consisting of several kinds of cells suspended in a liquid matrix called plasma. The average human body contains about 4 to 6 L of blood. If a blood sample is taken, the cells can be separated from the plasma by spinning the whole blood in a centrifuge. The blood consists of cellular elements which include the Red blood cell or erythrocytes (5 to 6 million in the blood), the White blood cell or leukocyte (5 to 10 thousand in the blood) and the Platelets. (Campbell: 831).*

The point chiefly to be determined here concerning blood is whether its biblical usage points basically to life and to death.

*There are those who hold that in the sacrificial system of the OT 'blood' represents life liberated from the limitations of the body and set free for other purposes. The ceremonial manipulation of blood on this view represents the solemn presentation to God of life surrendered, dedicated, transformed. The death occupies a subordinate place or even no place at all. On this view 'the blood of Christ' would mean little more than 'the life of Christ'. The evidence, however, does not seem to support it. In the first place there is the statistical evidence. Of the 362 passages in which the Hebrew word dam occurs in the OT, 203 refer to death with violence. Only six passages connect life and blood (17 refer to the eating of meat with blood). From this it is clear enough that death is the association most likely to be conjured up by the use of the term. (Douglas, 1982:144 – 145).*

The Acts 15 Council in Jerusalem, that resolved for the New Testament worshippers the impasse between her and the Judaizers, vocally condemned the eating of blood. The Council may not have taken this all important decision in isolation of the Old Testament provisions prohibiting the eating of blood for its sacred sacrosanct value (Leviticus 17:10-14). There is no dispute about this injunction. The only knot one may need to untie is the time blood is said to be dead and or the processes that can affect the life span of the blood. When one talks of the eating of blood it involves the boiling of blood fluid to destroy blood cells under excessive heat. It is at this stage that the blood capsules consolidate and are taken as food. This informs the idea of eating of blood. By the time blood had passed through the processes of boiling the cells are killed and the destruction of life takes place. In the slaughtering of animals, is it possible to completely drain all atoms of blood before the same can be taken as food? If it is not then this Levitical law may only enjoy some level of religious symbolism than it could be strictly held to. That is by the way, since one is not dealing with whether it could be observed or not. One had only devoted this paragraph to buttress the fact that the eating of blood is not the same thing as blood transfusion taking cognizance of the processes involved in the two.

Whereas one passes through physical boiling and alimentary canal metabolism, the other is life blood injected intravenously from one source (the donor) joining the life blood of the recipient. The processes of blood transfusion starts with the screening of the donor's blood group and type, if they match the donor's blood is merely used to top up that of the recipient's low blood level. It may be typified with the use of a car which goes to the Filling Station to top up fuel or fill a tank that may have gone dry to keep the car moving.

**Table 1. Summary of the discrimination of the two processes**

<i>Blood transfusion</i>		<i>Eating of blood</i>	
i.	Blood donor remains a live (not killed)	i.	Entails killing the blood donor-man/ animal and both treated as food-raw or cooked.
ii.	Blood preserved a lives even when transfused,	ii.	Blood boiled and cells killed or swallowed and it passes through metabolism that kills the cells if drank.
iii.	Blood joins blood to preserve life.	iii.	Taken to satisfy appetite or ritual and of no value for life preservation.

### **Blood in Procreation**

In the process of transfusion what is absolutely paramount is the preservation of the life of cells of the blood corpuscles under an approved temperature capable of preserving the life span of the cells. When blood is transfused it is simply joining blood to blood, which could be likened to the donation of the X chromosome of the male to form life. It is also obvious that spermatozoa and the eggs contain some quantity of blood which develops into the zygote or fetus. By this brief comparative analysis it is obvious that at one time or the other blood donation takes place in procreation. And to be specific maternal blood supplies oxygen and food to the early zygote through the placenta. One can even refer to this as primary blood transfusion. That sick people taking food through transfusion has no bearing with the eating of blood since the food substances contain no dead blood cells. Furthermore, "Blood transfusion cannot be equated with food transfusion in view of the fact that it does not pass through any chemical metabolism or process that boil the same or heat the cells to death. Some persons may equate blood transfusion as fornication or adultery. This is not true it does not entail any cellular conjugation or psychological union". (Ndukwe, 2015)

### **Discovery and advancement of Blood Transfusions**

This is necessary here for the purpose of periodization as to determine the time frame when blood transfusion as a process commenced. This will help one to determine time and history of the Levitical laws and the practice. This may go further to find out if both are contemporaries. If of the same historical period then one can safely accept that the Levitical laws had practice of blood transfusion in mind, if not any appeal to the same law remains null and void.

The Medical feat that gave birth to blood transfusion dates back to 1628 when William Harvey discovered blood circulation that set the stage for the act under review. The same history informs one that several people made several imputes to arrive at blood transfusion as shown in the table below:

**Table 2. History of several people made several imputes to arrive at blood transfusion**

<i>Name of Physicians</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Discovery</i>
William Harvey English physician	1628	Blood circulation
Physician Richard Lower	1665	Blood transfusion
Jean-Baptiste Denis in France and Richard Lower in England	1667	Transfusions from lambs to humans.
Philip Syng Physick Philadelphia, American physician	1795	The first human blood transfusion not published.
James Blundell, a British obstetrician,	1818	The first successful transfusion of human blood to a patient for the treatment of postpartum hemorrhage.
Samuel Armstrong Lane,	1840	The first successful whole blood transfusion to treat hemophilia
English Surgeon Joseph Lister	1867	Uses antiseptics to control infection during transfusions.
US physicians	1873-1880	Transfuse milk (from cows, goats, and humans).
Saline	1884	Infusion replaces milk as a “blood substitute” .
Karl Landsteiner, an Austrian physician	1900	First three human blood groups, A, B, and C.
Hektoen	1907	Transfusion improved by cross-matching blood between donors and patients.
French surgeon Alexis Carrel	1908	Way to prevent clotting by sewing the vein of the recipient.
Moreschi	1908	Describes the antiglobulin reaction.
Roger Lee	1912	Develops the Lee-White clotting time
Richard Lewisohn	1915	Sodium citrate as an anticoagulant to transform the transfusion procedure from direct to indirect.
Francis Rous and J.R.Turner	1916	Citrate-glucose solution that permits storage of blood for several days after collection.

(AABB, Advancing Transfusion and Cellular Therapies Worldwide 2009)

And whereas, the Watch Tower Bible Society persuading one to believe and accept that the biblical laws like in Acts 15 and history like the historian Tertullian condemned blood transfusion thus;

*In a hospital, when a patient cannot eat through his mouth, he is fed intravenously. Now, would a person who never put blood into his mouth but who accepted blood by transfusion really be obeying the command to “keep abstaining from ... blood”? (Acts 15:29) To use a comparison, consider a man who is told by the doctor that he must abstain from alcohol. Would he be obedient if he quit drinking alcohol but had it put directly into his veins? In the understanding of the early Christians the eating of blood is not limited to human blood “...Tertullian (who wrote in defense of the beliefs of early Christians) stated: “The interdict upon ‘blood’ we shall understand to be (an interdict) much more upon human blood” (The Ante-Nicene Fathers: 86.). (Watchtower, 1989:73)*

And whereas they also appeal to the Levitical laws, it is not clear whether they took cognizance of the historicity of the gap and age of the laws and the founding of Blood Transfusion. This would have helped them to escalate this a little further to discover if the law could have been talking about an inexistent practice as at the time they came into force.

Having examined the processes by which blood could be said to have turned to food and the implication of the boiling of plasma, one goes ahead to look at the arguments that assume that blood transfusion is the same as eating of blood. From this piece of information it is very clear that Tertullian was a contemporary of Clement of Alexandria and Origen lived about AD 200, (Douglass: 773), while the discovery of blood transfusion is fixed between AD 1628 and AD 1818. The gap that exists between Tertullian and the discovery of blood transfusion is as extensive as 1488 years on the commencement of the research on blood transfusion or 1618 years when the final discovery was registered. That he spoke about the eating of blood, is not in doubt, but it is not true that he must have been referring to blood transfusion. Bearing in mind that most of the New Testament records were more of life events than speculations or future projections, and that Tertullian was never a contemporaneous of the founders of blood transfusion who lived decades apart. This reference to the beat of knowledge is mere speculation and it is also biased and liable to nullity. The proposition made by the Watch Tower Bible Society argument for an alternative to blood transfusion, that is

*...simple saline solution, Ringer's solution, and dextran (that) can be used as plasma volume expanders and these are available in nearly all modern hospitals. Actually, the risks that go with use of blood transfusions are avoided by using these substances. ... "The risks of blood transfusion are the advantages of plasma substitutes: avoidance of bacterial or viral infection, transfusion reactions and Rh sensitization." Jehovah's Witnesses have no religious objection to the use of non-blood plasma expanders. Jehovah's Witnesses actually benefit from better medical treatment because they do not accept blood. ... "There is no doubt that the situation where you [the surgeon] are operating without the possibility of transfusion tends to improve your surgery. You are a little bit more aggressive in clamping every bleeding vessel." All types of surgery can be performed successfully without blood transfusions. This includes open – heart operations, brain surgery, amputation of limbs, and total removal cancerous organ (Watchtower: 73),*

is wonderful and acceptable. Furthermore it is necessary for surgical medical personnel to be careful on the surgical table, not to allow blood flow out of the body anyhow, even when they apply any of the two option's available. The capillaries by way of medical caution should always be taken care of no matter whichever option employed as one had mentioned before. It may also be expedient to state the obvious fact that the availability of the second option is no evidence to support the reference to blood transfusion as the eating of blood. If blood transfusion is a religious crime; then blood test should be the worse crime, because the quantity subjected to the rigors of chemical processes loose life value and are not allowed to rejoin the blood system as it had lost its value.

As much as one is taught and one knows, the interpretation of the scriptures is not something one has to do carnally. No matter how wise one may be it remains something one may not approach by way of human knowledge or wisdom. The rule of interpretation insists on the discriminating between passages of the scriptures as to which is real life story, idioms, proverbs and figures of comparison. The context and situation or circumstances that led to every statement in the scripture governs every text. When such is being applied trans-culturally the original culture of the incident must be taken cognizance of as to whether the

new culture of application tally with the original text. One had made a serious case of periodization of the Tertullian reference and the wide gap of 1618 years to prove that there cannot be any relationship between the reference and blood transfusion in Tertullian's statement.

### A Comparative Critique on Deuteronomy 12: 16 and Acts 15:20

Globally blood carries the aura and mysterious of sacredness (in Scripture and in natural value) as it belongs to life. God reserved it to himself when allowing man the dominion over and the use of the lower animals for food. Thus blood reserves or acquires a double power: (1) that of sacrificial atonement; and (2) that of becoming a curse when wantonly shed, unless duly expiated (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26; 17:11-13). It is pertinent here to critically determine the source and base for the sacredness of blood as this paper compares Deuteronomy 12: 16 and Acts 15:20.

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#### Deuteronomy 12: 16

Only you shall not eat the **blood**; you shall pour it out upon the earth like water.

Few commentaries consulted on Deut. 12:16 did not contain any comment in favour or against the eating of blood, but from the brief description above it is obvious that the Israelites must have accepted this as one of the unquestionable precepts of Jehovah. The eating of blood was strictly forbidden to the Jews. The reason for this was that it contained life, Lev. 17:11, 14. This scarceness of blood is also evident in other cultures and religions where the gods and the ancestors demand for blood as article for expiation or for the appeasing of the Land and the ancestors as earlier mentioned.

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#### Acts 15:20

...write to them to abstain from the pollutions of idols and from un-chastity and from what is strangled and from **blood**.

The Jerusalem council of Acts 15 was necessitated by the entrant of the Judaizer from Jerusalem into the Gentile churches which were founded by the Apostle Paul as earlier mentioned. These powerful orators among the Christians insisted among other things that the Gentiles were to observe Jewish laws before being accredited as true Christians. According to Barnes (1949) this teaching gained force from the fact that the use of blood was common among the Gentiles. They drank it often at their sacrifices, and in making covenants or compacts. To separate the Jews from them in this respect was one design of the prohibition.

Of course this law derived its strength from the same Old Testament as that of Deuteronomy 12:15-16, backed by Lev. 17:11, 14. The ruling in Jerusalem remains valid and binding on the contemporary Christian. It is supposed, therefore, that this law is still obligatory. Perhaps also there is no food more unwholesome than blood; and it is a further circumstance of some moment that all men naturally revolt from it as an article of food. "Blood in Christianity seems to always hold sanctifying properties, such as in the blood of saints and martyrs and in the blood frequently evidenced in Eucharistic miracles"

([www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Projects/Reln91/Shell.html](http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Projects/Reln91/Shell.html)).

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In a comparative analysis it is obvious that both passages share a common root and value from the Jewish law contained in Lev. 17:11, 14

*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. ...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.*

In Judaism, blood can be regarded as a holy form of sacrifice or covenant, as in the case of circumcision. Blood is also seen as polluting when regarding the laws of Kashrut and Niddah. By the sixth century B.C.E. sacrifices were primarily performed by priests in the Temple...with reference to the sacrifices described in Leviticus 1-7 as means of atonement, of healing the breach in the covenant relationship and reuniting the people in communion with God. Blood sacrifice was believed to be efficacious in restoring a broken relationship, not because blood had magical power in itself, but because God had provided the symbolic means . . . by which guilt was pardoned. . . The Priestly tradition emphasized that no sacrificial rite was effective in the case of deliberate sin. However the ... concept that the gods require human or animal blood for food is not overtly present in the Hebrew Bible (and the requirement of human blood is denied altogether in the story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac, Genesis 22. It is noteworthy to mention that blood is one means of atonement, but not the only method.

With the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. animal sacrifices ceased to be performed. The emerging rabbinic community declared that Torah study, prayer, and acts of loving-kindness would replace sacrifices. In modern Judaism, the only rite that requires the shedding of blood is the circumcision of newborn males ([www.kenyon.edu/Depts/Projects/Reln91/Shell.html](http://www.kenyon.edu/Depts/Projects/Reln91/Shell.html)). This later reform was cemented in the New Testament which now emphasises the efficacy of the blood that speaks better things than the blood of Abel. Incidentally, the two references do not have close affinity with the issue of blood transfusion.

It is also common that African traditional religion reserves hallowed sacrosanct value for blood. No matter what type that may be. But the question here is the relationship between blood transfusion and the eating of blood as a faith based or stand for refusing blood transfusion as it is the manner of some Christian Denominations. If giving and receiving of blood is wrong could any reproductive mammal be free from the guilt of the same as sexual intercourse involves exchange of blood in its own level and right. However, this strand of thought flow had received an answered in subsequent paragraphs where the process of eating of blood is handled.

In the process of transfusion; what is absolute is the preservation of life of the cells of blood corpuscle under an approved temperature that preserves the life span of the cells. When blood is transfused blood merely join or life joins life to resuscitate a dying person. The donation of the X chromosome by the male into the female ovum to join with the Y chromosome produces life when they fuse together. These chromosomes are carried by and in the same blood plasma that contains the rest of the cells of the blood to give rise to a zygote- the genesis of new life. It is also obvious that the spermatozoa and the ova contain some blood that is responsible for the genesis of new life. By this comparative analysis it is agreeable that at one time or the other blood joins to blood to beget another or to preserve an already existent one. The fact that sick people take food by means of transfusion is not in contention, but it would have been a better argument if the content of such transfused food alternatives are found to contain blood cells that may have gone through chemical metabolism or process of boiling or heat that shall have killed the cells of the blood corpuscle. If one will not conveniently regard or refer injections of all kinds as food or liken them to blood transfusion one may not safely refer blood transfusion as eating of blood. The transfused food into sick people is dead and processed before transfusion but blood transfused remains a live. The blood cells remain a live before and after transfusion.

What one is talking about has neither bearing with the Levitical sacrosanct of life in the blood in Leviticus written about 1,686 B.C. (Dake: 151) nor does the Acts of the Apostle's context written 63 A.D. (Dake: 158) maintain any close affinity with blood transfusion. Both the Levitical and Acts contexts are quite different from what is in contention. When one talks of the collection of blood and the boiling of the same, which could be served as part of food menu on the dining table, or drank raw as for the pleasure of it or for rituals, one really involves in the eating of blood. By the time collected blood is boiled the notion of killing of life is implied. Where raw blood is drank for the fun of it or for rituals, one thing is obvious, and that is the fact that the blood cells undergo metabolism which indeed kills the life in the blood. It is in the context of the above paragraph that the eating of blood is applicable. The Council in Jerusalem was ignorant of the medical evolution that introduced blood transfusion into the World of curative medicine. Neither Paul nor the rest of the Apostles had this in mind judging the year in which this was introduced into medical practice. Simple historical survey makes this argument relevant. Take for instance, the fact that the dates when Leviticus and Acts of the Apostle were written are put about 1, 686 B.C. and 63 A.D. respectively. We had undertaken to trace the development of blood transfusion for the purposes of displaying the number of years it took between the writing of Leviticus and Acts of the Apostles to enable us accept that God did not have blood transfusion in mind or that the Apostles did not foresee it coming 1002 years before the discovery of blood group or 1745 years before the successful record of blood transfusion was made.

That being true as it is, one may make bold to refer to this dogma as part of such dogmas that are not bible based, but human antics to create unnecessary controversies to hold man in bondage. However, this situation commonly arises when people just want to differ from others in order to justify their advocated self-acclaimed originality. This is clear when one consider the fact that the reason for venturing into this unfamiliar field is to expose the fact that this dogma does not seem to be properly squared in the scripture if the base for it is predicated either on the Levitical laws in Leviticus 17:10-14 and or on the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem. Acts 15 is basically addressing the problem of eating of blood, animals sacrificed to idols, and circumcision law imposed on the Gentiles as part of prerequisite for free salvation. It is nowhere of any affinity with Blood transfusion.

### **Preservation of Life by Blood Transfusion:**

The hallmark of every medical practice following the Doctors' oath is the preservation of life within the ambit of the Law and medical ethics. If that is true then the medical world is in partnership with God Almighty according to Joseph, quoting, Gen 45.7, "And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." And Moses in Dt. 6.24, "And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day..." reiterated this sole purpose of God to preserve life through the observation of the law. Jesus Christ plainly declared that He came to give life than allow the love for the law to obstruct the same hence John 10.10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly." On the reverse this dogma in contention has some sort of potency to rob humanity of longevity of life. Lillian Nweke, (a Senior Staff Nurse) of Ebonyi State University Teaching Hospital Abakaliki, in an interview lamented over the lose of life recorded in that young Hospital resulting from refusal to accept blood transfusion. If this young Hospital had recorded quite a number of loses so far what will be the experience of the

older hospitals? One is sure more may have gone to hell untimely for this dogma. It is one's incumbent duty to cut short this teaching that is so much without solid locus Standi.

## SUMMARY

The summary of this paper is presented in bellow:

- I. Blood transfusion was not practiced during 'bible times' and indeed it was not known. The bible is silent about that.
- II. The bible says if one adds to its content plagues will be added to us while subtraction will remove one's name from the book of life so one must be careful to be silent where the bible is silent.(Rev. 22:18-19)
- III. The doctrine that leads to the refusal of blood transfusion is a stretch of biblical injunction and it amounts to addition.
- IV. Blood transfusion is acceptable to the extent of the provisions of Deut. 29:9 as they can be categorized as "things revealed". If there are attendant mysteries, they "belong to God".
- V. Blood transfusion results performed according to specification are among the things one considers as being of "good report" and one is enjoined to "think of these things" (permit that it be added; for the purpose of emulation, propagation and implementation) (Ndukwe).

## CONCLUSION

The fact that the aim of blood transfusion is not the same as in animal meat for food, it is of no locus Standi to equate the two. Blood transfusion as much as one knows in the layman's understanding is like the last available option to every medical practitioner in his or her struggle to preserve life. While no one will rule out possible alternatives like *saline solution*, *Ringer's solution*, and *dextran* (Watchtower: 73), what is one's concern is what is justifiable in the face of critical emergency that requires immediate salvaging of a hopeless and critical situation. Here the Doctors should be at liberty to choose and apply the fastest, affordable and available options. The question one needs to resolve here is, "Has there been proven cases of preservation and elongation of life by blood transfusion?" If, "yes!" is the answer, then the hullabaloo about whether blood transfusion is biblical or not, is like the Pharisee and the Priests who tied themselves to the law to the detriment of saving and preserving the life of a robbery victim on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho.

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