



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

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HIA:HSA November 21, 2005

TO: ALL FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND SIGN LANGUAGE CONGREGATIONS
ALL CONGREGATIONS WHO CARE FOR A FOREIGN LANGUAGE OR SIGN LANGUAGE GROUP

Dear Brothers:

As you may know, we are in the process of supplying all congregations in Britain with a new document, the *Advance Decision to Refuse Specified Medical Treatment*, for publishers to carry on their person in order to protect themselves from an unwanted blood transfusion. The manuscript for the Service Meeting item, along with a copy of the Instruction Sheet that will be made available to all publishers, is being sent ahead of time to all congregations, along with a covering letter (HIA:HSA November 15, 2005).

However, when it comes to conveying their personal views in relation to various aspects of the blood issue, we realise that foreign-language speaking and deaf publishers may face communication difficulties. What special measures can elders take to assist them to be well prepared?

The first step is for the foreign-language or deaf publishers to consider the Bible based material presented in the "Questions From Readers" in *The Watchtower* issues of June 15, 2004, and October 15, 2000, so that they can determine where they stand on the issues discussed therein. May we emphasise the importance for elders to have copies of these articles in the local language easily accessible to share with the publishers. They should be kept in a separate file for ease of access, along with other related material regarding the blood issue.

Once the publishers have reached their personal decisions on the conscience issues, the elders can help them transfer these decisions to the *Advance Decision* document. We suggest that, where possible, elders serve as witnesses to the signing of these forms. Thus, in the event of clinicians challenging a publisher's ability to understand the form, the elders can assist. If an elder's emergency contact details are provided, he can readily be contacted to testify that, through translation, he made sure that the signatory fully comprehended the issues at the time of signing the form. To pre-empt this, the elders witnessing the form could write "I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief, [name] understood the contents of this form before he/she signed it."

There have been many occasions when these advance directive documents have ensured that a treating team were alerted to, and subsequently respected, a patient's wishes. Elders caring for foreign-language and deaf publishers should therefore encourage the completion of the *Advance Decision* document and the related follow through, as outlined in the accompanying Instruction Sheet.

May we take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt appreciation for your hard work in this most important field, along with our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF BRITAIN

HOSPITAL INFORMATION SERVICES

copies: All Travelling Overseers & HLCS