

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: QUESTIONABLE MEDICAL TREATMENT

Dear Brothers:

God's Word gives Christians a dire warning concerning the activities of Satan the Devil. The Devil is a master deceiver who makes his snares look attractive so as to lure victims and catch the unwary. (2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:11) Even in the field of treatment for sicknesses, we need to be very careful to avoid his snares. Some doctors and clinics offer diagnosis and treatments using methods that do not seem to be based on sound medical or scientific principles. It is wise to investigate these in the light of God's Word, using one's perceptive powers to distinguish between right and wrong. (Heb. 5:14) A Christian will thus be on guard against exposing himself to harmful practices or demonic influences. (Eph. 6:10-13) At times, elders may find it necessary to assist those in their congregations to make wise decisions in this matter. Therefore, we are pleased to provide the following helpful information.

What was published in the article "A Health Test for You?" in the December 15, 1994, issue of *The Watchtower* can be helpful in evaluating the questionable practices. While this issue of *The Watchtower* does not rule out all health practices that are not fully understood at this time, the point is made under the subheading "Beware!" that some procedures 'go beyond this.' Examples are provided of procedures that cannot be explained rationally and that raise strong suspicions of the use of "uncanny power."—Isa. 1:13.

The article entitled "Maintain a Scriptural View of Health Care" in the November 15, 2008, issue of *The Watchtower* cautions on page 25 that our deep regard for God's Word should impel us to avoid resorting to therapies that could harm us spiritually, and "we should not play into Satan's hands by exposing ourselves to anything that borders on spiritism and the occult." For example, some procedures involve the use of radionics machines. It is stated that such machines are far superior to the ordinary laboratory equipment and can diagnose and treat a disease outside or beyond the physical realm. The patient does not have to travel to the clinic to be treated!

This description raises concerns that aspects of spiritism might be involved. In an attempt to explain how treating patients from a distance might be possible, some may point to the effects produced by the radio, television, mobile phone, and fax machine, which, years ago, would likely have been considered impossible to produce. However, the facts are that the operation of those devices can be explained and established scientifically. On the other hand, there is no scientific evidence to support the ability to diagnose or heal a person from a distance. Jesus Christ, of course, had this ability, but he did this because "God anointed him with holy spirit and power." (Acts 10:38; Matt. 8:5-13; John 4:46-54) However, no one has these miraculous gifts today. Thus, if a practitioner successfully healed someone from a distance, this would indeed be a "powerful work." But how would this be accomplished? Since it would not be by natural forces, there would be reason for suspicion that it was by opening oneself to the influence and control of the one who has the ability to produce "every powerful work and lying signs" and who grants such power as an "unrighteous deception."—2 Thess. 2:9, 10; Matt. 7:22, 23.

If elders become aware that any publisher may be using this kind of equipment for treatment, it would be wise for them to investigate further. They could assign two of their number to meet with

such a person. It should be made clear to him that he is not being accused of knowingly engaging in unscriptural practices. Rather, the purpose of the discussion would be to help reason on the wisdom of such health-care practices in the light of the Scriptures. The discussion should be held in the spirit of Galatians 6:1.

An effort should be made to find out the facts of what is actually being done, endeavoring to distinguish between techniques that are merely unusual from those that appear to be unscriptural. The elders would be alert to any practices that are being promoted that clearly are not in harmony with Bible principles. This may include distance treatment, and others that claim to diagnose and treat in mysterious ways. Surrogate testing and treating are not acceptable. Such methods would have to be discontinued if one who has used these methods is to remain in the congregation. The fact is, when *any* health method goes well beyond what is rational and cannot be explained logically there is a basis for evaluating whether “uncanny power” is involved.

Counsel can also be given against the use of such methods. In this regard, page 22 of the December 15, 1994, issue of *The Watchtower* warns: “There is good reason to exercise caution about anything that *might seem related* to the practice of spiritism, which God’s Word condemns.” (Gal. 5:19-21; see also “*God’s Love*” book, page 191, paragraph 18; Matthew 6:13) Thus, in endeavoring to reach the heart of such a publisher, a strong appeal might be made: Do we really want to give the *impression* of being involved with something that Jehovah finds detestable? (Jer. 10:2, 3; Deut. 18:10, 11, 14) The Witness should want to set a sterling example in submitting to Bible counsel and to what has been published by Jehovah’s organization.—Phil. 3:17; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

The two elders should bring their findings to the body of elders for review. If the body of elders finds that a publisher’s practices have crossed the line into what is clearly spiritistic, and this one does not respond to counsel and see a need to make adjustments in what he or she advocates and practices, then it will likely be necessary to go further and have a judicial committee meet with him. It is our hope that reviewing this information will help an individual to see the need to make whatever adjustments are necessary for his own spiritual well-being, along with a keen desire to please Jehovah and not to bring reproach upon His good name and the reputation of His people. Of course, if questions arise, please do not be too quick to respond. (Prov. 18:13) Take time to research the matter thoroughly in the publications. (Prov. 15:28) If necessary, you may contact the circuit overseer or the branch office, providing all the facts, for further direction. We trust the above comments will be helpful. Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

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PS to traveling overseers:

When you visit each congregation, find out from the elders if there are any publishers in the situations discussed above and how they have handled the situation. If there are any in this situation, help the elders follow the direction in this letter.