

Religious Education news stories

This story recently received coverage in the national press.

Parents who want God to save girl lose case

A seven month old girl was given only one year to live unless she received a bone marrow transplant. Doctors thought that a transplant operation had a 50% chance of successfully enabling her to live a normal life. They also thought there was a 10% chance that the operation might kill her.

The girl's parents opposed the operation. They believed that God would provide a miracle cure.

The girl's doctors took the case to court, seeking consent to carry out a bone marrow transplant.

The mother speaks

"I am a Christian and both me and my husband have faith and hope that God can heal our daughter, and our conviction is that He will heal her.

We strongly believe that God has the ability to heal her. Our belief in a miracle gives us the ability to make decisions for her quality of life, even if short term."

No possibility of miracle cure

The judge said: "Whilst I respect the faith of the parents, I must leave entirely out of account any possibility of a miraculous cure."

"Without treatment, it is a medical certainty she will die; and probable that she will die by about the age of one, or within another year or so from now at the very most. The only effective treatment is a bone marrow transplant."

The parents are both "strong, committed and regularly practising Christians", and their final position opposing the treatment reflected elements

of both their religious beliefs and consideration of scientific evidence.

The judgement

However, the judge ruled that he must ignore the possibility of a miracle.

He said: "I must decide this case on the basis of medical knowledge and experience, the evidence and reason. By definition, a miracle defies medical science and all known experience and reason. Whilst I respect the faith of the parents, I must leave entirely out of account any possibility of a miraculous cure."

The Daily Telegraph, 2007

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Mother dies after refusing blood

A young Jehovah's Witness has died after giving birth to twins. It is claimed that she refused a blood transfusion because of her faith.

The twins, a boy and a girl, are healthy and are being cared for by their father.

A friend spoke on behalf of the family and said, "We follow the Bible and abstain from blood transfusions and I've got no reason to believe that the mother didn't share those views."

Refusing a blood transfusion

Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions because they believe

that God has forbidden it in the Bible. They believe that accepting a blood transfusion is a sin.

A doctor said, "If somebody believes that having blood will excommunicate them from their religious beliefs, then they will often say no and accept the risk of death."

Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions, including autologous transfusions in which a person has their own blood stored to be used later in a medical procedure.

The Daily Telegraph, 2007