Should congregation action be taken if a baptized Christian accepts a human organ transplant, such as of a cornea or a kidney?

Regarding the transplantation of human tissue or bone from one human to another, this is a matter for conscientious decision by each one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Some Christians might feel that taking into their bodies any tissue or body part from another human is cannibalistic. They might hold that the transplanted human material is intended to become part of the recipient’s body to keep him alive and functioning. They might not see it as fundamentally different from consuming flesh through the mouth. Such feelings may arise from considering that God did not make specific provision for man to eat the flesh of his fellowman when he made provision for humans to eat the flesh of animals that had been drained of their life-sustaining blood. They may give consideration also to the way people in Bible times viewed sustaining themselves by taking in human flesh. For example, see the account at 2 Kings 6:24-30; Deuteronomy 28:53-57; Lamentations 2:20 and 4:10. At John 6:48-66, Jesus spoke figuratively of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. On hearing this discussion and not perceiving the spiritual significance of his words, some of his Jewish disciples were shocked and turned from following him. These accounts illustrate how some humans felt about eating human flesh.

Other sincere Christians today may feel that the Bible does not definitely rule out medical transplants of human organs. They may reason that in some cases the human material is not expected to become a permanent part of the recipient’s body. Body cells are said to be replaced about every seven years, and this would be true of any human body parts that would be transplanted. It may be argued, too, that organ transplants are different from cannibalism since the “donor” is not killed to supply the organ.