

Faith perspectives on organ, eye & tissue donation



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Amish

The Amish will consent to transplantation if they believe it is for the well-being of the transplant recipient. John Hostetler, authority on Amish religion says in his book, *Amish Society*, "nothing in the Amish understanding of the Bible forbids them from using modern medical services, including surgery, hospitalization, dental work, anesthesia, blood transfusions or immunization."

Assemblies of God

The decision to donate is left up to the individual. Donation is highly supported by the denomination.

Bahá'í

There is no prohibition in the Bahá'í Faith on organ donation. It is a matter left to the individual conscience (Office of Public Information, Bahá'í International Community, November 10, 2005).

Baptist

Baptists generally believe that organ and tissue donation and transplantation are ultimately matters of personal conscience. The Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution in 1988 encouraging physicians to request organ donation and "voluntarism regarding organ donations in the spirit of stewardship, compassion and alleviating suffering." Other Baptist groups have supported organ and tissue donation as an act of charity.

Buddhist

Organ and tissue donation is considered an individual's decision. If an individual decides to become an organ donor, it is widely lauded as an act of compassion. In the case of deceased donation, the requests of the deceased take precedence.

Catholic

Organ, eye and tissue donation is an acceptable act of kindness in the Roman Catholic Church. Donation is considered an act of charity and love, according to Pope John Paul II in "Evangelium Vitae, no. 86."

Christian Science

According to the First Church of Christ Scientist in Boston, Christian Scientists normally rely on spiritual instead of medical means of healing. They are free, however, to choose whatever form of medical treatment they desire — including a transplant. The question of organ and tissue donation is an individual decision.

Disciples of Christ

Organ and tissue donation is accepted and actively promoted by the Christian Church. In 1985, the General Assembly adopted "Resolution #8548 Concerning Organ Transplants," which encourages members to register as organ donors and support transplant recipients through prayer.

Episcopalian

Organ donation is encouraged by the Episcopal Church. The 70th General Convention adopted "Resolution #1991-A097 Urge Members to Consider Donating Organs," which recommended that members donate their organs after death so that others may live. The Church also urges members to clearly state their decision to family, friends, the Church and their attorney.

Evangelical Covenant

Organ donation is encouraged by the Evangelical Covenant Church. Since the adoption of the Organ Donor Resolution in 1982, members of the Church are encouraged to register their decision to be a donor. Leaders of the faith, especially educators, are encouraged to promote awareness of organ donation in all Evangelical congregations.

Greek Orthodox

According to Reverend Dr. Milton Efthimiou, former Director of the Department of Church and Society for the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America, "The Greek Orthodox Church is not opposed to organ donation, as long as the organs and tissue in question are used to better human life, for transplantation or for research that will lead to improvements in the treatment and prevention of disease."

Hindu

There are many references that support organ donation in Hindu scriptures. "Daan" is the original word in Sanskrit for donation meaning selfless giving. It is also third in the list of the ten Niyamas (virtuous acts). Life after death is a strong belief of Hindus and is an ongoing process of rebirth. Donation is considered an individual's decision.

Islam

In 2019, the Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) announced that organ donation and transplantation is permissible within the Islamic faith and among American Muslims, making a clear religious ruling for Muslims living in North America. Organ donation is permitted in the Islamic faith as long as shar'i guidelines are met and that measures are in place to protect human dignity. Living donation is permitted in order to keep the recipient alive, or an essential function of their body intact. In the case of deceased donation, permission must be given by the deceased before their death or by their heirs after death.

Jehovah's Witness

Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe that the Bible comments directly on organ transplants; hence, decisions made regarding transplants must be made by the individual. Jehovah's Witnesses are often assumed to be opposed to donation because of their belief against blood transfusion. However, this merely means that all blood must be removed from the organs and tissues before

being transplanted. (Office of Public Information for Jehovah's Witnesses, October 20, 2005.)

Jewish

Organ, eye and tissue donation is encouraged in the contemporary Jewish faith. Donation and transplantation does not desecrate a body or show lack of respect for the dead, and any delay in burial to facilitate organ donation is respectful of the decedent. The Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards has stated that organ donations after death represent not only an act of kindness, but are also a "commanded obligation" which saves human lives.

Lutheran

Organ donation is permitted and encouraged in the Lutheran Church. In the Church's 1984 resolution "Organ Donation: A Resolution of the Lutheran Church in America," donation contributes to the well-being of humanity and is an expression of love for a neighbor in need. The Lutheran Church encourages members to make the necessary family legal arrangements, including registering as a donor.

Mennonite

Mennonites have no formal position on donation, but are not opposed to it. They believe the decision to donate is up to the individual and/or their family.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Organ and tissue donation is permitted by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. Donation is considered a selfless act, with great medical benefit to recipients.

Presbyterian

Organ donation is encouraged by the Presbyterian Church, but the decision to donate is up to the individual and what they want to do with their body. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encouraged all Christians to become organ and tissue donors as an act of ministry to others in its 1983 General Assembly.

Seventh-day Adventist

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a statement on the care of the dying, which includes the following excerpts: Decisions about human life are best made within the context of healthy family relationships after considering medical advice. When a dying person is unable to give consent or expresses preferences regarding medical intervention, such decisions should be made by someone chosen by the dying person. If no one has been chosen, someone close to the dying person should make the determination. Additionally, Loma Linda University Medical Center, a Seventh-day Adventist institution, provides heart, kidney, liver and pancreas transplant programs.

Sikh

The Sikh philosophy and teachings support the importance of giving and putting others before oneself. Seva (the act of selfless service) is at the core of being a Sikh. Sikhism stresses that saving a human life is one of the noblest things you can do. Sikhs also believe that your body does not need all its organs at or after death.

Southern Baptist Convention

Organ donation is considered an act of stewardship and compassion that alleviates the suffering of others by the Southern Baptist Convention. In its 1988 resolution "Resolution on Human Organ Donations," the Convention determined that resurrection does not depend on body wholeness.

United Methodist

Organ and tissue donation is encouraged by the United Methodist Church. In its 2000 resolution, "Resolution #139," the Church promoted the celebration of National Donor Sabbath as a way that its members can help save lives.

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