



The Ethics of Global Organ Acquisition

Moral arguments about transplantation
Trevor Stammers

- Bloomsbury Academic, 2023, £19.79, 272pp
- ISBN: 9781350227187
- Reviewed by **David Smithard**, Consultant in Geriatric Medicine at Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, Visiting Professor at the University of Greenwich & Triple Helix Editor

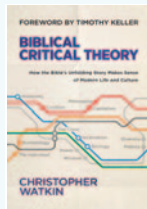
There is no doubt that organ transplantation is one of the most significant medical advances of the late twentieth century'. Releasing someone from the burden of dialysis (kidney), enabling them to move without becoming breathless (heart and lung), or to be able to produce hormones, proteins and cleanse the blood (liver), an organ transplant has the ability to transform lives.

In 2019, worldwide 153,863 solid organ transplants were undertaken (the majority were kidneys). Despite these successes and the (in general) gradual increase in the number of organs transplanted, demand still outstrips supply. In such situations people will seek alternative means to obtain such a valuable commodity. Some means will be ethical and (for some) morally justifiable, whilst others will be ethically and morally repugnant and need to be resisted and, if necessary, the perpetrators prosecuted.

In the case of organ transplant, the concern is that harvesting an organ from a deceased person is not necessarily proving the best opportunity for organ survival and hence benefit to the recipient. Consequently, ethical and moral issues have arisen over when death occurs (eg circulatory versus brain death), or when it is right to maintain someone on a ventilator when they are in

effect dead. Can organs be removed from people who are opting for euthanasia (see the News & Comment section in this edition)?

Live donor transplantation to a relative or a stranger is one way of increasing the availability of organs. ◦



Biblical Critical Theory: How the Bible's Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Life and Culture

Christopher Watkin

- Zondervan Academic, 2023, £24.99, 624pp
- ISBN: 9780310128724
- Reviewed by **Steve Fouch**, CMF Head of Communications

A critical theory is an attempt to critique what we think we know about reality. These theories have come to the attention of many in recent years through the increasing popularity of (and controversies around) cultural Marxist critical theories such as those around race, sexuality, gender, class, and so forth. Cultural theories use a dialectical approach, stating a thesis, it's antithesis, and paving the way to a new synthesis of the two. As we see from the history of the twentieth century, as well as more recently, these theories are not just academic – they have a real-world impact on how societies are run and cultures are shaped.

Watkin is here applying Scripture to critique contemporary culture in all its dimensions, from its understanding of physical reality and our relationship to the created world, to our understanding of self, society, politics, justice, human biology, and pretty much anything and everything else. It is, as one reviewer put it, trying to do what Augustine – the great foundational Christian thinker of late antiquity – did in

his seminal *City of God*, ie nothing less than an attempt to make sense of all aspects our current cultural moment and offer a genuinely biblical critique.

By the author's own admission, this is just a first stab at the idea – albeit a whopping great door-stop of a stab! So, whilst it cannot totally succeed in its lofty ambition, what it does do well is show us how to forensically deconstruct modern Western culture's assumptions and foibles. Watkin takes apart the conflicting narratives in a wide range of areas, to offer a biblical synthesis, or what he calls a 'diagonalisation' (the book is full of diagrams that makes sense of this term).

Essentially, Watkins thesis is that our culture's attempts to explain everything are riddled with half-truths and partial understandings, revealing them as sub-Christian heresies. He then 'diagonalises' these different, conflicting ideas with a more rounded, holistic, Christian perspective, rooted in Scripture and an understanding of the person and work of Jesus.

The result is a helpful, and very readable, volume that acts as primer on a range of topics. It does not get into enough depth to be really useful on everything it touches on, but it will start you thinking and searching for more comprehensive answers. This may be a volume to keep on a bookshelf and refer back to in years to come, but it is also one that can be read cover-to-cover.

If you want to understand how science and faith coexist, how we engage with concerns around bioethics, debates about gender and identity, and so forth, this book will give you good tools to ask the right questions, question the answers you hear in academia and wider culture, and dig deeper into the Bible. It is, as a result, a great resource for anyone engaged in Christian apologetics. ◦

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Steve Fouch & Catherine Butcher

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Sarah Louise Bedford

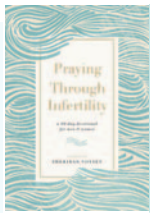
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CMF reviews Christian books relevant to readers interested in health, healthcare, and bioethical issues from a biblical, Christian perspective. If you would like to write a review or have a relevant book for review, please get in touch with CMF via communications@cmf.org.uk



Praying Through Infertility

A 90-day devotional for men & women compiled by Sheridan Voysey

- Thomas Nelson, 2024, £9.99, 224pp
- ISBN: 9781400334513
- Reviewed by **Sue McGowan**, a Speech and Language Therapist in Neurosciences at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, London.

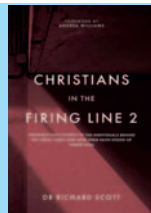
Infertility can feel dark and overwhelming in its griefs'. Sheridan Voysey acknowledges the difficulty of navigating the emotions that infertility provokes, and the sense that no one really understands. He offers a collection of vignettes and prayers compiled by both men and women who are struggling with infertility.

I suspect many of these stories will resonate deeply. That there are both male and female perspectives is a huge strength.

The vignettes show that infertility may be a lifelong struggle for some. In the early stages, the rawness of shock and disbelief can test marriages. Even as the rawness recedes and the years pass, navigating the complexity of emotions presents persistent challenges to those seeking to understand God's purposes. In older age, perspective may become clearer as it is shaped over the years by God's word, but there still may be pain in some form.

The collection of stories does more than cause the reader to simply empathise with couples and individuals. These men and women also reveal how Scripture illuminates their darkness, pain, and confusion and challenges, rebukes, and also encourages them to draw near to God. Their testimony is to a God who knows each situation intimately and who listens to their heartfelt cries.

The book doesn't offer a substantive



Christians in the Firing Line 2

Inspiring faith stories of the individuals behind key legal cases and how their faith stood up under trial
Dr Richard Scott

- Wilberforce Publications, 2023, £12.50, 250pp
- ISBN: 9781999584207
- Reviewed by **David Smithard**, Consultant in Geriatric Medicine at Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, Visiting Professor at the University of Greenwich & Triple Helix Editor

Richard Scott is a GP working in East Kent. This is the second volume of *Christians in the Firing Line*. The first volume was written following the author's own experience of being censured by the GMC.

He aimed with that book to bring to a wider audience the enormity of the problem faced by Christians being prosecuted for expressing their faith, and the effect that that a drawn-out disciplinary and possible judiciary process has on the mental health of those concerned.

Dr Scott suggests a second volume is required, detailing a further 21 cases, because the problems have not gone away. Whilst having a faith, particularly a Christian faith, is not prohibited, open expression, particularly of a Bible-based faith, is frowned upon. Expressing your beliefs openly can open up a torrent of abuse and persecution from the very members of society who demand tolerance and acceptance of their own views.

theology of the particular suffering of infertility, but it shows how the pain of infertility fits into a pattern of suffering which afflicts many biblical characters: not just Abraham, Sarah, and Hannah, but also Job, David, and the New Testament writers. When our human understanding fails, the book

Before presenting the case studies, Dr Scott provides an overview of the current relevant legislation, including the Public Order Act, 1986; the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998; Human Rights Act, 1998; Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 2006; and the European Convention of Human Rights.

The case studies all follow a similar pattern of a perceived offence, followed by a workplace investigation, suspension, and disciplinary action (often including the termination of employment). The disappointingly common factor is that in almost all cases, correct procedures and the organisation's own policies were not followed and the defendants were not provided with the opportunity to fairly present their case. In other words, justice was denied, as if the outcome had been predetermined. A couple of examples of street preachers being arrested by the police are included. These demonstrate a distinct lack of understanding of the relevant laws by the arresting officers.

All the cases demonstrate an increasing hostility towards expressions of the Christian faith in the workplace and public square. Although many organisations trumpet their equality and diversity credentials, there remains at the heart of our public services an underlying hostility towards Christians.

As J John says on the back cover, '*this is an essential read for those concerned about aggressive secularism that is sweeping across the nation*'. ●

helps us to fall back on God's loving character and his promises. In this way, the book is uplifting. It may provide for some a rescue from false hope and incorrect theology, and for others a comfort in knowing that there is a community of fellow sufferers who are also trying to work it out before God. If words elude us as we grieve, the short prayers may provide a template to follow.

I recommend this book highly. As someone who has remained childless for many years, it provided huge reassurance and encouragement.

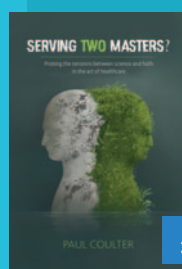
'Whatever your future, God gives you a legacy, a name "better than sons and daughters", and a place in his eternal kingdom' (Alex Pickering) Isaiah 56:3-5 ●



Whatever

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