



---

Volume 59 | Issue 1

Article 80

---

2016

## Veatch and Ross's "Transplantation Ethics" (Book Review)

John D. Laing

*Havard School for Theological Studies, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*

*The Christian Librarian* is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit <http://www.acl.org/>

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl>

---

### Recommended Citation

Laing, John D. (2016) "Veatch and Ross's "Transplantation Ethics" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 59 : Iss. 1 , Article 80. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol59/iss1/80>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

**Teilhard de Chardin - Seven Stages of Suffering:  
A Spiritual Path for Transformation,**

by L. M. Savary and P. H. Berne. New York: Paulist Press, 2015.  
115pp. \$15.95. ISBN 9780809149407

*Reviewed by Rebecca H. Givens, MLIS student, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL*

*Seven Stages of Suffering: A Spiritual Path for Transformation*, is based on the writings of Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a French Jesuit Priest. His teachings “integrating modern science and evolutionary theory into Christian theology” (p. 8) did not agree with his superiors in Rome and he spent most of his life in China, then, after World War II, in America. The seven stages of suffering developed by the authors include: 1) Outer Resistance, 2) Inner Resistance, 3) Prayer, 4) Patience, 5) Choice, 6) Communion, and 7) Fidelity. For each stage they list thought exercises, mantras, and prayers; the idea being to project the energy of your suffering into the evolutionary good of the world, to help man evolve and mature as a species. Teilhard’s theology is a mystic evolutionary cosmic theology, and this book is meant to be a practical application of his writings in the realm of suffering.

---

**Transplantation Ethics,**

by Robert M. Veatch and Lainie F. Ross, second edition. Washington, DC:  
Georgetown University Press, 2015. 451 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 9781626161672

*Reviewed by John D. Laing, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology & Philosophy,  
Harvard School for Theological Studies, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary,  
Houston, TX*

It has been 14 years since the initial publication of *Transplantation Ethics*, a work that has become the standard text on the subject. This revised and expanded edition offers up-to-date discussion of the ethical challenges in the ever-expanding field of medical research and work in organ transplantation, including new chapters on elective transplants, vascular composite allografts (transplants of face and hands), and markets in organs.

The book is organized into three major sections plus a short introduction. It begins with an overview of ethical theory and a brief discussion of cultural and religious attitudes toward transplantation, noting that none of the major world religions prohibit it. It then examines the medical and legal meanings of death in the first section. The purpose is to provide an agreed-upon method for determining when organ removal is ethically permissible or preferable. The authors note that brain-state definitions of death are now in the majority, while more traditional circulatory or respiratory definitions have fallen out of favor. This is problematic because there is little agreement over the brain functions necessary to consider the patient alive, and organ viability typically requires oxygenated blood until the time of removal.

In the second major section, Veatch and Ross consider the difficult issues related to organ procurement. They note that while presumed consent models are more effective than voluntary donor models at procuring the necessary organs, they may appear to take advantage of the economically and educationally disadvantaged and can effectively function as routine salvaging by the state. They challenge lawmakers to be more honest in legislative language and to defend salvaging on its own merits rather than hiding it behind terminology suggestive of gift giving (i.e., donation). They also take seriously the problem of markets in organs. After surveying the laws of many countries, they examine the complex moral issues involved in the exchange of money for organ donation, from the universally condemned sale of organs to the more ethically vague scenario of compensation to donors for the pain, loss of income, and increased medical and living expenses associated with organ donation.

In the third section, the authors set forth the key factors in a general utilitarian approach to organ allocation: survivability, quality of life, age of recipient, likelihood of organ acceptance, and the possibility of alternative treatments. They also note the difficulties associated with such decisions: assigning weights to the various considerations and possible conflicts with theories of justice. They conclude that a proper balance of equity and efficiency is key, with justice taking priority over utility, “even if that means a less efficient system for allocating organs” (301).

*Transplantation Ethics* was written for a broad audience of those interested in the subject, including medical professionals, policy makers, bioethics students, social workers, and patients and their loved ones. The intent was to provide a relatively detailed discussion of the various issues at stake in the 21<sup>st</sup> century field of organ transplantation for an audience with no specialized training in science, medicine, or ethics. The authors successfully met this goal; the book is simple enough for the novice, but focused enough to provide the expert with food for thought. It is a must-read for medical, bioethics, and ministerial students.