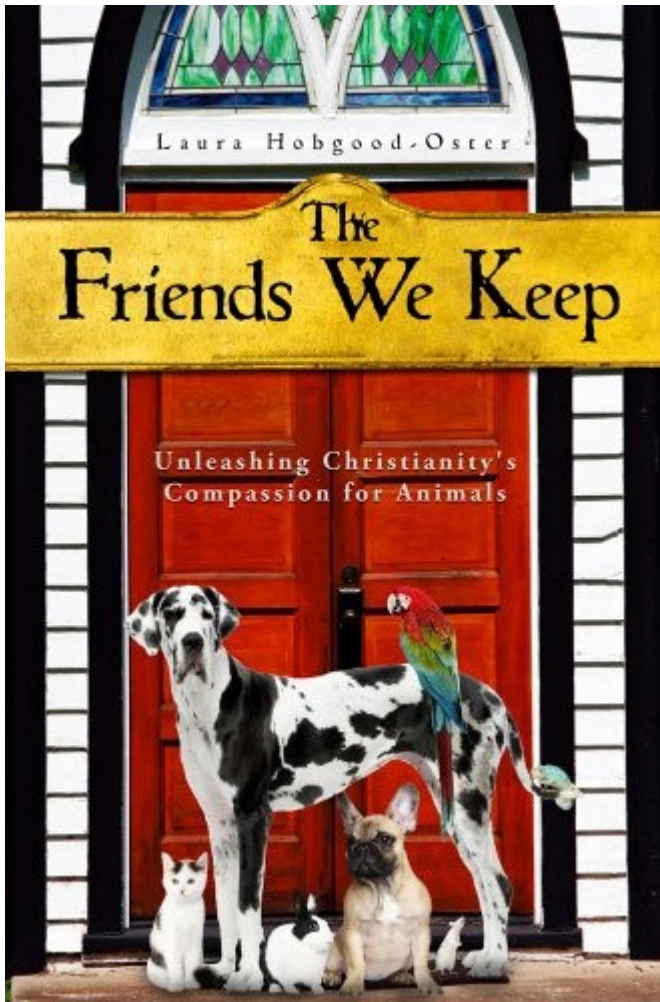


A review of *The Friends We Keep*

Books in the [September 21, 2010](#) issue

In Review



The Friends We Keep

By Laura Hobgood-Oster
Baylor University Press

Hobgood-Oster, who teaches religion and environmental studies at Southwestern University, describes her book as "both a religious-environmental history and a

contemporary theology." This survey covers the historical and theological importance of companion animals; animal abuse in puppy mills, sports and factory farming; hospitality to animals as a Christian virtue; and, above all, the need for a soteriology that embraces the whole earth and not just human beings. Hoping to reach beyond the academy to a general audience, Hobgood-Oster presents her views clearly, giving illustrations from Christian history and her own experience as a volunteer at an animal shelter. The book's popular appeal may be diminished, however, by its heavily footnoted approach and abundant academic locutions: the author is clearly a scholar, not a journalist. Included are a discussion guide, suggestions on ways that individuals and communities can help, and resources for including animals in worship services