

## ANIMAL SCIENCE

**GOD'S FUTURE FOR ANIMALS: From Creation to New Creation** by Raymond R. Hausoul. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021. 284 pages. Paperback; \$34.00. ISBN: 9781666703405.

Raymond Hausoul's new book, *God's Future for Animals*, argues that the place of animals as part of God's intention for the world has not received enough attention as it pertains to how animals have fit into creation in the present time or as a part of the eschaton. It is derived from the author's doctoral dissertation and, as such, it is scholarly in tone and well sourced, at least from the standpoint of theology and church history. Hausoul takes the reader on a journey from the creation as described in Genesis and through biblical history: the consideration of animals by the early church fathers, modern society's relationship with animals, and on to how animals will be viewed during the end times. This is an ambitious task and it makes for very dense reading. The book is about animals but there are lengthy sections in which animals are hardly mentioned, primarily because the author takes considerable time to include details (outlined in a previous book) about the new heaven and new earth. Hausoul also takes a lot of time expanding on the creation story.

At this point in the review, I think that it is fair to be transparent about myself so my biases are clear. I have spent the last 42 years teaching, doing research, and assisting livestock producers in the ways that genetics can be used to improve the efficiency of producing animal products that can benefit humans. With few exceptions, my experience was with livestock producers who took impeccable care of their animals because to do otherwise would compromise the economics of their farm or ranch. I also witnessed producers who cared deeply about the welfare of the animals in their charge. I offer this background because the reader should know why I take considerable issue with the way that the author makes assertions about food that comes from animals, the production methods that are used to produce it, and the people who are involved in the production.

Unlike the detailed literature references concerning theology and church history, Hausoul makes numerous declarations about animals with little or no reference to the literature and, at times, with little or no reference to the reality I experienced and observed. His description of the foot-and-mouth outbreak of 2001 is a case in point (pp. 214–15). This

is a very debilitating disease which is highly transmissible. The United States has taken extreme care to ensure that the disease does not enter the country since the last outbreak in 1929. Hausoul implies that it is not very severe and dismisses the need for dramatic measures to eradicate it. He is confused about whether horses are cloven-hoofed (they aren't) and seems puzzled by the fact that horses were not included in the eradication measures (they do not contract foot-and-mouth disease). He also suggests that the cattle producers saw the eradication measures only in economic terms because "they had no emotional bond with their animals" (p. 214). This assertion differs from nearly all of my observations of livestock producers. A simple search of the literature would reveal the considerable evidence of the mental health problems suffered by livestock producers following the outbreak. Unfortunately, there were no references to any outside literature in the paragraph describing the foot-and-mouth disease.

Hausoul's enthusiasm for a vegetarian diet is clear. The entire last chapter is devoted to the topic of vegetarianism. There are certainly ways to have a healthful diet without using animal products but the author takes that argument in directions which strain credulity. He writes extensively about efforts to assert that Jesus was a vegetarian and seems to lament the idea that the evidence does not support that conclusion (pp. 211–13). It is argued that vegetarian diets were becoming more popular in the first half of the twentieth century but the fact that Hitler was a vegan turned people against such diets (p. 210). It is asserted that "eating meat can evoke immoral lusts in a human being" (p. 209) without supporting evidence. It is implied that the extreme ages of the Patriarchs were due to their vegetarian diets and that the human life span reduced rapidly as soon as they started eating meat (p. 213). Proverbs 15:17 is quoted as support for a vegetarian diet (p. 210), although it would appear that the more important point of the verse is that any meal eaten in love is better than even an elaborate meal eaten in hate.

The author expresses views about scripture that are consistent with young-earth creationism. However, there is very limited reference to that literature and, for the most part, the writing does not resemble the young-earth literature I have read. It may be that he simply accepts all of the scripture at face value or that it is more straightforward, theologically, to describe events in the Bible exactly as written. I have already mentioned his acceptance of the extreme ages of the patriarchs (p. 213). Hausoul appears to accept

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as factual the six-day timeline outlined in Genesis 1 and goes to considerable detail in describing some of the busier days. There is acceptance of the idea that there was no death in the original creation and that means that some of the original animals had to go through considerable change in order to start eating meat. There is in some, though not total, sense that whether animals (including humans) are herbivores or carnivores is simply a matter of choice. The topic in which this book most resembles the literature of young-earth creationism is in its consideration of the Genesis flood. There is considerable discussion (including tables) about how the ark could accommodate all of the necessary animals (pp. 93–96).

I will move toward closing this review with a sentence from the book which, frankly, stopped me in my tracks: “After having tried sex with all animals, Adam finally found his partner and extinguished his sexual urge” (p. 41). Hausoul goes on to suggest that the originators of that idea may have been referring to “intellectual or spiritual sex” (p. 41), as if that provides clarity about the idea or why it is a necessary addition to the book.

Overall, my conclusion about the book is that it edges very close to being an agenda that is searching for a theology. The theological discussion is quite deep but it is hard to avoid the notion that many theological points are driven to agree with preconceived conclusions about animals and the products they produce. Assessing this notion is not aided by the fact that almost all of the contemporary observations about animals are made as declarations without support from pertinent literature. This is, by far, my most significant criticism, especially for a book that is obviously presented as a scholarly contribution. Nonetheless, a reader with an interest in a theology of animals could benefit considerably from an examination of the sources discussed in the book.

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### EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE

**THE HOURS OF THE UNIVERSE: Reflections on God, Science, and the Human Journey** by Ilia Delio. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2021. 242 pages, index. Paperback; \$25.00. ISBN: 9781626984035.

In this exquisitely constructed book, Delio reveals the current state of her reflections on the central concern of her life and work: the relationship of God, humanity, and the universe in the context of the

evolutionary process. Her unscripted career leading to this publication, narrated in her memoir *Birth of a Dancing Star: My Journey from Cradle Catholic to Cyborg Christian*, has exhibited the same sort of development and diversity that she finds woven into the fabric of the universe. A Franciscan sister who began her religious life as a cloistered member of the Carmelite order, Delio earned doctorates in pharmacology and historical theology and has taught at Trinity College, Washington Theological Union, Georgetown University, and Villanova University. Today, she is an award-winning author, best known for her Center for Christogenesis, which seeks to promote dialogue between faith and reason and stimulate a Christian spirituality fully infused with evolutionary consciousness.

Communicating the urgent need and prospects for that kind of spirituality is the burden of this, Delio’s twentieth, book. A theology whose starting point is not evolution and the story of the universe, she insists, is a “useless fabrication” (p. xvi). Her work is rich in scriptural references, but the call to restore the book of nature to its primacy as the true first testament in Christianity’s sacred canon is one of her signature themes. Though she displays no interest in apologetics or polemics, her basic assumption is the distinctively Catholic principle of the revelatory character of creation, a conviction at odds with the Protestant Reformers’ suspicion of natural theology. A robust sacramental imagination permeates the entire book and provides its organizational design. Portraying the universe as the “new monastery” (p. xvii), Delio orders her reflections according to the liturgy of the hours that has structured daily prayer in Christian monastic communities for centuries: Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. Delio clusters her chapters—along with prologues of original poetry—around these times of contemplation and guides the reader through the prayers of one rotation of the earth and toward what she calls a new synthesis of faith and science.

Delio’s thirty-two brief chapters, each a free-standing essay, cover a broad spectrum of topics from the cosmic to the autobiographical—from quantum physics, gravitational waves, and artificial intelligence to the Eucharist during the coronavirus pandemic and the death of her beloved cat Mango. Delio addresses a number of social issues such as racism, consumerism, and homophobia and sets the full scope of her reflections against the backdrop of the threat of climate change. Her main objective is the nurturing of a Christianity mature enough to match the