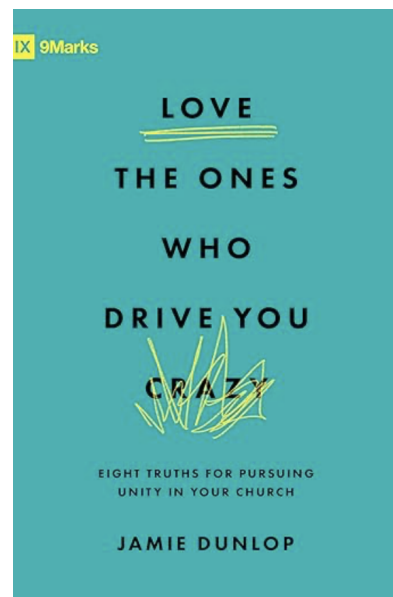


**Dunlop, Jamie. *Love the Ones Who Drive You Crazy: Eight Truths for Pursuing Unity in Your Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023**

Reviewed by Preston Pearce, IMB Personnel, Europe

Jamie Dunlop wrote *Love the Ones Who Drive You Crazy* to help the reader love the people in their church whom they struggle to love because of their differences. Dunlop argues that the existence of disagreement in a church, rather than being a sign that something is wrong, indicates that “things have gone gloriously right” (22) because God shows his goodness and glory through unity in Christ despite differences. The differences Dunlop has in mind are not the major doctrinal kind that cause one to separate from his or her current church; rather, he writes about the many situations in which one is able to stay in the church despite differences in, e.g., culture, political views, and strongly held preferences and opinions.



Most of the book focuses on eight lessons Dunlop draws from Romans chapters 12-15:

- Insistence on unity displays the glory of God: the purpose of the church is not to do things for God but to reflect his glory, and understanding this helps us seek God-honoring relationships with others.
- Impossible love flows from impossible mercy: grasping God's mercy for us takes us beyond obligation and changes our hearts toward others.

- Disunity at church lies about Jesus: the greatest threat to the church is not some outside force but its ability to divide the church into warring camps.
- You belong together: we need to learn from the faith of those with whom we disagree and realize we belong to them and they to us.
- Hope in God creates affection for others: hope in Christ enables us to rejoice that God will be glorified in others' lives and ours, that they are growing into the likeness of Christ, as we are.
- Divine justice empowers full forgiveness: we must forgive and seek reconciliation and avoid bitterness and anger, and embrace the "injustice of forgiveness."
- People you dislike often act in faith: We must learn to see that others are motivated by sincere faith to act differently from us, so we should not look down on them.
- We will answer to God: our accountability to God changes our hearts toward others and moves us from despising into love.

The book is very relevant to local church life and relationships in any culture, for virtually every church has some level of disagreement on secondary matters among members. Dunlop's emphasis on the glory of God as the purpose of the church is a helpful corrective to the consumer culture that is all too present in Western culture and churches. Though the biblical focus is Romans 12-15 (the practical portion of the epistle), this is not eight easy steps to unity, but a clear pointer to the ways the glory of God in the gospel serves as the foundation of unity despite real differences. Dunlop provides a clear gospel connection for each point he makes. The book is clearly written; most readers will find it easy to understand. Questions for reflection and discussion and prayer points at end of each chapter are helpful for personal reflection and group discussion. The book does reflect its American context

in some of the specific issues mentioned, but the author is also intentional to draw some examples from non-North American situations.

This book is especially valuable for cross-cultural workers. In the churches with whom we partner (and even those “*perfect*” churches we ourselves plant), people have real differences that have the potential for misunderstanding, conflict, and division. Many of those differences do not rise to the level of separation, and we must find a way to serve alongside and submit to leaders of local churches. Even in the case of serious disagreements, looking together humbly at the Scriptures allows us to understand one another better—and in God’s timing, his word does its work and those disagreements are resolved or put in proper perspective so that the Lord may be glorified in the church’s unity.