

David Augsburger. *Hate-Work: Working Through the Pain and Pleasures of Hate*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

When David Augsburger checked a local research library, he found 4000 titles about love but only 41 about hate. This 100:1 ratio, he suggests, indicates that we are in denial about hate. At minimum, our understanding of it is simplistic, much too limited, and too negative.

Augsburger argues that hate is not a single, simple emotion but rather is composed of a family of emotions. In Chapter 1, he describes a nuanced spectrum of hate, ranging from *simple hatred* through *spiteful hatred*, *malicious hatred*, *retributive hatred*, *principled hatred*, *moral hatred* and, finally, *just hatred*. While he does not assume a linear progress through stages, he views movement through this range as a journey from natural but unhealthy hate toward healthy hate. This journey involves an increasing ability to think objectively about the events and people involved, to separate wrongdoing from wrongdoer, and then to develop compassion for the wrongdoer while hating injustice. Hate becomes more “positive” as it moves through this spectrum. In *just hatred*, the highest form of hatred, love and hatred come together. The discussion of this subject is one of the book’s most important contributions.

Succeeding chapters explore the journey: why and how hate arises; how empathy can be developed and how transformation happens; the relationship between hate and memory and the stages of “hate-work”; and the respective roles of the “shadow self,” absolutes, and enemies. As well, the author analyzes real-life situations: hate-crimes, the Cold War, the holocaust, and others. Importantly, he argues that role of Christian theology in justifying anti-Semitism and the holocaust is one of the most pressing questions confronting Christianity today.

In Chapter 4, Augsburger explores the role of “re-membering” and re-storying (my word) in trauma and its transcendence. Brooding, he argues, is to hate as mourning is to grief: a normal and perhaps essential phase of recovery. In this chapter and in several appendices, he describes the hard but liberating work of hate-work.

The final chapter – on justice – opens with the story of Jacob and Joseph. It, and the book, ends with an analysis of the Psalter, especially the

difficult Psalm 139, as a paradigm of the movement from moral hate to just hate. In the process, the author concludes with a discussion of forgiveness and its many misconceptions. Most important here is his claim that in our individualistic culture, forgiveness has been reduced to individual therapeutic healing rather than a relational dynamic.

Augsburger argues that the thread of justice runs through the various stages of hate-work. He delineates five types of justice: attributive, retributive, distributive, redemptive, and restorative. He then explores the nature of justice and mercy involved in just hate, arguing that redemptive and restorative justice are the healthiest forms.

The overlap between categories of hate is confusing at points. While the author recognizes that these are neither inevitable nor linear stages, the reader could easily lose track of this. It might be helpful to conceive these as points on a spiral, similar to the way that the STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) program describes the victim/aggressor journey. (See Carolyn Yoder, *The Little Book of Trauma Healing* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books; forthcoming fall 2005). Other than that, I see little to criticize.

Augsburger has written this book first of all for caregivers – counselors, social workers, mediators, and lawyers – but also for nonprofessionals. He also has a Christian audience in mind – but not exclusively. This volume will be useful for study in many fields, and will be especially helpful for classes focusing on identity, trauma, reconciliation and the like. It is, moreover, essential reading for those involved in justice and peacebuilding work, and in pastoral care.

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