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# The Place of Friendship

What is friendship, and what place does it have in contemporary communities? Practical theologians begin by articulating the way things are, before reflecting critically on contemporary experience in the light of theological norms. Thus, it is appropriate to consider how friendship is currently defined, understood, and lived out, and the norms, metaphors, and visions that underlie actions and practices.

The meanings and practices associated with friendship vary. Friendship, it has been said, has a place within a continuum of interpersonal relationships, from intimacy to enmity, with friendship, friendliness, indifference, and unfriendliness in-between.[1] Yet friendship can co-exist with intimacy and even, it seems, with enmity, given the existence of the term *frenemies*.

Friendship is an important yet under-researched relationship. Within various treatments of friendship several themes and questions arise. This chapter is structured around key interrelated themes including definitions of friendship, friendship's relevance to what it means to be human, the place of friendship in our social world, the impact of technology on contemporary friendships and communities, theological, ethical, or spiritual dimensions to friendship, and whether friendship is a private, public, or political relationship.

Theological writings that have influenced the theological and social imagination of pastors and lay people over recent decades are included alongside broader cultural trends, works from the social sciences, and ethical, historical, and spiritual perspectives. This chapter focuses on the more recent past, while acknowledging that ancient understandings and ideals continue to influence contemporary understandings and ideals. Throughout the twentieth century, friendship has been variously regarded as a model for other relationships, disdained, valued from a primarily utilitarian perspective, and recognized as transformative. Controversy continues over the status of friendship in the early twenty-first century, and over the impact of new technologies on friendship.

I invite you, my readers, to consider the place of friendship in your own life and communities of practice. How would you define friendship? How has friendship been formative in your life, and contributed to the shaping of your identity and your life paths? Has friendship also been a source of pain, tension, or conflict? Is it messier and more lopsided than often portrayed? What impact have various forms of technology had on your friendships? Where have you experienced friendship contributing to community, and where has it detracted from community? What practices support the sustenance and growth of friendships? What questions do you have about friendship? The research presented in this

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chapter is primarily located within Western thought and culture, as is typical thus far for friendship studies. Are you immersed in non-Euro-Western understandings of friendship that may further challenge and enrich understandings and practices of friendship?

## What Is Friendship?

*Friendship* is used to describe a wide range of informal relationships, varying in levels of commitment and emotional attachment. The meanings attributed to friendship vary according to different historical and cultural contexts, making a consistent definition notoriously difficult to pin down. Nevertheless, friendships are consistently identified as chosen or voluntary relationships.

Current use of the word *friendship* in the Euro-Western world is challenged by a myriad of experiences and uses. Our lives and friendships tend to be segmented and compartmentalized: we may have leisure friends, business friends, and church friends. We can boast of how many *friends* we have on a social networking site yet have minimal contact with most of these people. Moreover, certain characteristics of friendship may vary through life stages. Childhood, teenage years, college, work, singleness, marriage, parenting, and retirement all provide diverse opportunities for and challenges to friendship. Currently many diverse interpersonal relationships go by the name of friendship, including easy friendships, not-so-easy friendships, increasingly difficult friendships, toxic friendships, aspirational friendships, ambivalent friendships, and unrequited friendship. Some would question the appropriateness of calling all these relationships friendship.

A variety of definitions of friendship have been proposed over the centuries. In antiquity, the Greek word *philia*, typically translated as *friendship*, included a range of relationships characterized by reciprocity in both willing and doing good for the other. Aristotle depicted *philia* as a symmetrical bond amongst equals, and *philein* as being characterized by reciprocity in wishing for another "what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for [the friend], and being inclined, so far as you can, to bring these things about" (*Rhetorica* 1380b36–1381a2). Such relationships could include family and business associates (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1156a7).

Subsequently, in the early Middle Ages, Isidore of Seville identified a friend (*amicus*) as a guardian of the spirit/soul (*animi custos*).[2] Commenting on this more open-ended definition, attributed to Gregory the Great, 540–604 CE, historian Brian McGuire identifies a sense of responsibility for another's well-being, and knowledge of this person's inner life, as elements implied by a *custos animas* relationship.[3] This sense of guardianship may or may not be reciprocal. Equality and mutuality are not essential, nor are they ruled out. Aelred of Rievaulx also focused on guardianship, alongside an emphasis on the ability to maintain confidences, exhibit patience and share all things. "A friend is called the guardian of love, or... the guardian of the soul itself" (*De spiritali amicitia* 1.20).

More recently, sociologists Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl have identified a variety of types of friendship, ranging from simple friendship, including associates and fun friends, to complex friendships, including helpmates, comforters, confidants, and soulmates.[4] According to Charlie Brown, an icon of contemporary popular culture from the *Peanuts* comic strip created by Charles M. Schulz, a friend is someone who loves you despite your faults. A similar sentiment is expressed in the title of a mid-twentieth-century book for children: *A Friend is Someone Who Likes You*.[5]

These definitions focus predominantly on personal relationships. Friendship has also been recognized as relevant to how we live together in community, and as providing a

model for civic relationships. This is evident in the writings of Pope Francis and contemporary political philosophers, as well as philosophers of antiquity. In *Fratelli tutti*, Francis advocates for *social friendship*, the love capable of transcending borders.[6] Social friendship calls for the recognition of the worth of every person, regardless of time or context, and makes possible true universal openness.[7] Social friendship is also called for by Southern Africa's concept of ubuntu, with its acknowledgement that "a person is a person through other persons" or "I am because we are."[8]

Aristotle and others speak of civic or political friendship (*politikē philia*). Some contemporary writers use this term narrowly, focusing predominantly on politics in the context of government. Others use it more broadly. For political philosopher Sibyl Schwarzenbach, civic friendship is "that form of friendship whose traits operate *via* a society's constitution, its public set of laws, its major institutions and social customs."[9] My understanding of civic friendship reflects this broader, systems-level use and is influenced by Danielle Allen's encouragement for us all to recognize ourselves as implicitly "founders of institutions," as we affect the shape of life in our communities.[10] Whereas personal friendship is characterized by affection and by both willing good and doing good for the friend, civic friendship is characterized by affection and by both willing good and doing good for the broader community.

In short, friendship has been understood in a variety of ways over the centuries. Variations tend to reflect some of the key changes and challenges of particular times and places. They also reflect diverse approaches to friendship. Anthropological, sociological, philosophical, and theological approaches will be further considered in this and subsequent chapters.

## Is Friendship Essential or Peripheral to Being Human?

Currently, friendship is treated as essential for children and optimal for the aged but given relatively little attention in the in-between years. It attracts minimal consideration within the church, academy, and workplace, or within the provision of social services. In religious contexts, friendship is rarely recognized as a virtue or personal discipline, integral to human flourishing. In the academy, friendship has been ignored or disdained as a focus for research. In the workplace, friendship is often regarded as a distraction. In some situations, friendship is recognized as unnecessary and even subversive. Within various environments, people relate to others primarily as clients, workers, consumers, and attendees rather than as friends.[11] There seem to be few contexts where having deep friendships is regarded as the most essential thing for human beings.

Anthropologists have focused on kinship, neglecting the sometimes-overlapping concept of friendship. When friendship has been studied, the focus has been primarily on formal relationships with well-defined mutual obligations, including kinship, trade, and working relationships. Most of these studies have focused on male friendships and disregarded friendships between females.[12] Nevertheless, in the early twentieth century the study of friendship emerged as a research field within anthropology, challenging the previous dominance of kinship studies.[13] As anthropologists have begun to take up the topic of friendship in their work, they have identified friendship as a highly flexible social phenomenon and advocated for contextualized studies.[14]

Anthropologists who have considered friendship include Agnes Brandt and John Terrell. Brandt engaged in ethnographic fieldwork within Aotearoa New Zealand in order to "uncover the everyday construction of friendship in different socio-cultural contexts."[15] Her exploration of friendship worlds features within Chapter 2. Brandt observes that

friendship has been regarded as a "social phenomenon of modernity."[16] This is somewhat ironic, given that contemporary theories of friendship are typically informed by Western-European traditions of thought, beginning with the writings of ancient Greeks and Romans. Furthermore, John Terrell's observations suggest otherwise.

In *A Talent for Friendship*, Terrell begins by asking "What does it mean to be human?"[17] He considers "what are most of us capable of doing?" rather than "what does everyone everywhere do?"[18] Terrell did not specifically set out to research friendship. Nevertheless, his research has convinced him that the human capacity to make friends even with strangers is a defining characteristic of our species, marking us apart from (most) other species on earth.[19]

Terrell discovered that in places near and far along the Sepik coast of Papua New Guinea, there is a longstanding tradition of inheriting friends, generation after generation.[20] The custom of inheriting friendships with families in other communities contributes significantly to the maintenance of social and cultural stability in one of the more environmentally challenging places in the world. Terrell's observation that this practice helped sustain a way of life prompted him and his co-researcher to take a much closer look at what it means to be a friend.

Terrell observes an interplay between questioning conventional wisdom about friendship and contesting conventional wisdom about human nature.[21] His observations and assertions are in stark contrast with the perception that friendship is a social phenomenon of modernity. However, Terrell speaks somewhat disparagingly of "ghost ideas" about human nature inherited from an Enlightenment-era reading of the book of Genesis.[22] He asserts that the basic unit of human society is the individual and her social relationships with others, rather than the individual (and perhaps a helpmate).[23] Is Terrell correct that friendship is innate to what it means to be human? Further, is he correct in considering this to be counter to the creation accounts of Genesis? Is this an area in which the Christian tradition needs correction? These are questions to which we will return in Chapter 6.

## What Is Friendship in Our Social World?

Friendship in our contemporary world is typically assumed as a sociological fact, and not particularly well-attended to. Until recently, friendship was considered unimportant relative to the key issues that characterized the comparatively young discipline of sociology. Friendship was discussed, however, by Georg Simmel, a German sociologist. Writing before the Great War, Simmel asserted that modernity is inevitably destructive of friendship, at least in the sense used in classical debates. Simmel was an admirer of friendship; he considered it to be the "purest, most transparent, most engaging form of interaction."[24] Yet as a *play* form of sociability, friendship was relegated to the private sphere. Simmel considered that modern people had too much to hide for friendship in the ancient sense to be possible. Rather, they were inclined towards *differentiated* friendships, where sympathy might bind them to one person, intellectual community to another, religion to a third, and common experiences to a fourth.[25] This differentiation presented challenges when it came to self-revelation and self-concealment, with friends reciprocally refraining from "obtruding themselves" into those "interests and feelings" not included in their own relationship with a friend.[26]

Subsequently, while sociological literature drew attention to the potential harm of social isolation and disconnection, concern typically focused on family and community

organization.[27] Friendship was increasingly seen as a private relationship and a play form of sociability. Overall, the importance of friendship was disregarded amongst social scientists, until the late twentieth century. Within sociology, friendship was considered (at best) to be of short-lived importance compared with other life issues such as family and work.[28]

Some speculate that friendship is an endangered relationship. In contemporary Western contexts, cultural writers and sociologists (including Charles Taylor, Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman, and Jürgen Habermas) have identified a widespread crisis in relationality. We have become more alone and isolated; we are currently experiencing a crisis of friendship and community, for which there is no single cure. While we advance technologically there is growing evidence of isolation, disconnection, fears of difference, and decline in social skills such as empathy.[29] A sociological study published in 2006 indicated that American personal networks had shrunk compared to two decades previously, with nearly a quarter of those surveyed having no close confidants and almost half reporting they had no one with whom they were able to discuss personal matters.[30] These findings generated tremendous public and professional interest and inspired some panic, as well as scholarly debate.[31]

In contrast to these pessimistic perspectives, other sociologists consider friendship to be a source of social glue. British sociologists Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl argue that contemporary Western societies are not in fact made up of isolated, self-absorbed individuals. Rather, friendship has become increasingly important as "social glue" within various forms of personal communities which they define as "the microsocial world of significant others for any given individual."[32] These personal communities may be invisible and unconsciously constructed and maintained.[33] For individuals who have no immediate family, or whose family has become estranged or is simply no longer local, friendship can provide a particularly invaluable form of social glue. Further, friendship can take many forms, including soulmates, helpmates, confidants, and purely sociable fun friends.

It is difficult to ascertain from the variety of social surveys undertaken whether Western people are in fact acquiring more differentiated and superficial friendships, or more life-affirming soul friendships. As Pahl asserts, while sociologists and social psychologists attempt to quantify the importance and significance of friendship for various categories of the population at different stages of the life course, they often have little knowledge of precisely what they are measuring.[34] The classifications used in such surveys are typically lacking in sophistication; respondents are rarely asked what they mean by friend.[35] Unsurprisingly, those who have attempted to measure "true" or "real" friendships have come back to the question of whether we are becoming more or less able to trust one another.[36] Moreover, there is no simple correlation between quality and quantity of friendships. A few close friends, infrequently met, or even met digitally, may be of greater significance socially, ethically, and spiritually than large numbers of superficial friends.

## How Does Technology Shape Contemporary Friendships and Communities?

Digital technologies are altering the ways in which friendships are maintained and perhaps even the way some conceptualize friendship. Various forms of technology allow opportunities for fostering preexisting relationships and developing new ones. Mobile phones, social networking sites, and video-chat software and devices make it possible to stay connected in new ways. While patterns of friendship and opportunities for friendship are being shaped by new technologies, the long-term impact of these technologies on

friendship patterns and opportunities remains to be seen. Currently, both benefits and challenges are evident.

New technology, for those who can afford it, has the potential to sustain and deepen friendships and has certainly been invaluable in allowing for social connections to take place remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet contemporary addictions to digital technology inhibit human capacities such as empathy and self-reflection; various technological innovations enhance the pressure to conform, providing "new tools for ancient impulses."[37]

Mobile phones play a role in organizing, planning, and celebrating friendship activities, yet prove to be a distraction during face-to-face time. "Fear of missing out" (FOMO) contributes towards attentiveness to digital communication at the expense of in-person communication. Paradoxically, friends can be hyper-vigilant in their attention to texts from one another when apart yet lack attentiveness to one another when they are together.

Online social networking sites allow old friends to rediscover one another and geographically dispersed friends to maintain some degree of connection. Yet time spent online can detract from time given to the maintenance of local friendships. Social networking can be addictive, providing cold comfort in the search for intimacy. As philosopher Diane Jeske notes, "social media threatens to reduce friendship's contribution to the good life."[38] While social media makes it easy to connect to those with common interests, ideals, and ideas, it also makes it easy to avoid interaction (face-to-face or otherwise) with those with differing perspectives.[39] Social media fosters a comparison-based culture, and has been used to spread disinformation, thus exacerbating political polarization.

Facebook has co-opted and devalued the word *friend*, using it as an active verb for an activity more appropriately described as networking. This may contribute to *friend* now being used to include those who are simply acquaintances. Further, Facebook is guilty of dishonoring its stated intent to not only connect people but build community. Facebook first described itself as an online directory, connecting people at colleges through social networks. In 2006, it broadened to "a social utility that connects you with the people around you." In 2013, founder Mark Zuckerberg wrote a Facebook post called "Is Connectivity a Human Right?" describing the mission of his company to make the world more open and connected.[40] By mid 2017, the stated mission of Facebook was "to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together."[41] Yet Facebook has become an advertising agency (both collecting data *and* selling ads) and a media company.

In the pursuit of profit, Facebook appears to have broken the vows implicit in its mission statement by detaching wealth-creation from social responsibility. As Harvard historian Jill Lepore notes: "During the years of the company's ascent, the world has witnessed a loneliness epidemic, the growth of political extremism and political violence, widening political polarization, the rise of authoritarianism, the decline of democracy, a catastrophic crisis in journalism, and an unprecedented rise in propaganda, fake news, and misinformation."[42] While Facebook may not be directly responsible for any one of these concerns, "evidence implicates the company as a contributor to each of them."[43] During the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, Facebook has both provided tools for staying connected with friends and allowed for the nurturing of division.

Social media and other technologies do provide useful strategies for the maintenance of friendships. However, the most commonly used aspects of social media are not well-suited to building, reinforcing, or maintaining trust, openness, and authenticity. It is tempting to turn to technology when we are busy, rushed, and spread thin; it is easier to engage via social media than to find ways to meet in person. In times of crisis, or when it comes to maintaining long-distance relationships, the connectivity that technology allows can be a

gift. Clearly, however, we need to be discerning in the use of technology, in order that inherent dangers and disadvantages do not outweigh the benefits.[44]

## What Theological, Ethical, and Spiritual Dimensions Does Friendship Have?

Christian friendship is often viewed as simply sociological, "a matter of people who like one another and enjoy associating with one another at church and at various church-related functions."[45] Without an intentionally cultivated theological imagination, cultural norms take precedence within the social imagination of Christians. Yet despite being undervalued in Christian theology, friendship is embedded in the Christian social imaginary.

Throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, the friend has been identified or portrayed in a variety of ways by Christian authors, theologians and otherwise, including as a model of the neighbor, a model for Christian love, a cornflower in the wheat field, a support in the struggle against evil, and as unnecessary yet invaluable. Whereas some Christians identified friendship as an ethical relationship, or as having ethical value, others discounted its ethical significance. For some, the recognition of friendship's importance was solidified through the experience of war.

In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, written during the inter-war period and profoundly shaped by his experience of the First World War, friendship-love is portrayed as integral to the overcoming of evil. Within this implicitly theological saga, set in a pre-Christian and non-religious world, friendships develop through commitment to a shared quest, within small communities seeking to resist evil.[46] Tolkien portrays friendship as being characterized by love, loyalty, respect, and trust. Strider admits to the hobbits that he hoped they would take to him for his own sake: "A hunted man sometimes wearies of distrust and longs for friendship."[47] The wizard Gandalf recognizes that friendship, rather than simply tenacity, will be needed by the younger hobbits Merry and Pippin, as they are selected to go on a dangerous journey.[48] Through the relationships among his various characters, Tolkien identifies the pain and loss that accompanies authentic friendship, particularly when friendship sustains service in the pursuit of a greater good.[49] Ancient conventions of distrust between races are challenged by the friendship between Legolas the Grey-Elf and Gimli the Dwarf and between the hobbit Merry Brandybuck and the human King Théoden.

In the same inter-war period, European theologians grappled with the relationship of friendship to the love of neighbor to which God's people are called in both testaments.[50] Reformed German theologian Karl Barth identified the friend as a model of the neighbor, asserting that the concept of friendship is neither more nor less than "the root of" the concept of neighbor.[51] Friendship provides a corrective to a potentially egotistical life, Barth argued. Mature relationships with family members may have the character of friendship; likewise, the marriage relationship has the potential to acquire this character.[52] Similarly, while Swiss theologian Emil Brunner viewed friendship as a form of culture, springing from natural spiritual impulses and belonging to the recreational realm, he recognized potential for friendship to become a bridge to the "ethical realm" and to foreshadow community.[53]

Other Europeans, however, discounted friendship as being of ethical significance. During the early decades of the twentieth century, much was made of the nuances between the various biblical and Hellenistic Greek words for love. The differences were at times overstated, as is apparent in Swedish Lutheran scholar Anders Nygren's influential *Agape and*

*Eros*. This work proposes a sharp distinction between two kinds of human love: self-giving altruistic love descending from God (without attachment or the need for reciprocation) and self-loving desiring love seeking to climb to God.[54] Nygren had little use for *philia*, the love of friends, which he regarded as essentially selfish in nature and being based in part on desire for the other.[55] It is worth keeping in mind that Nygren's fundamental concern in this work is the source of human fellowship with God, rather than relationships between humans. Nevertheless, while his personal practice, as teacher and bishop, may have been substantially different, his writing effectively dismissed *philia* as a subsidiary of *eros*, a love that seeks reward. While Nygren's anti-Hellenistic theory is now widely recognized as extreme and as inconsistent with linguistic evidence within the Greek Bible, his polemic has nevertheless been highly influential. His perception of Christian love as unconditional altruism was widely accepted. Nygren's work has been described as "the most influential Protestant account of love in the twentieth century."[56] Friendship became a disdained term among seminarians, or at least among certain types of seminarians.[57] The ideas of *Agape and Eros* ruled in many classrooms and pulpits.[58]

Nevertheless, in 1938, Anglican priest and Cambridge scholar John Burnaby became the first academic since Thomas Aquinas to argue on a scholarly level for friendship as the quintessential model for Christian love. In *Amor Dei*, Burnaby challenges Nygren's anti-mystical tendency and champions the love *for* God that energized the Christian mystical tradition. Burnaby found the delight, desire, and devotion inherent to friendship with God to be immeasurably greater, both like and very unlike that shared with a human friend.[59]

Subsequently, a variety of reflections on friendship emerged from the Second World War years. Simone Weil, a French philosophical writer, mystic, and activist in the wartime Resistance, asserted that whereas natural affection tends to be based on a relationship of necessity, pure friendship surpasses nature. For Weil, friendship was a miracle, with a sacramental character.[60] In a letter written from prison shortly before his execution by the Nazis in 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wondered about friendship as a subdivision of the concept of culture.[61] Noting the challenge of classifying friendship sociologically,[62] Bonhoeffer questioned the restrictiveness of Reformed domains of ethical existence, namely family, state, and work,[63] and the Protestant sidelining of the whole sphere of freedom, including friendship, art, education, and play.[64] As Liz Carmichael notes, "it is in the experience of such struggles as that in which Bonhoeffer was caught up in that the ethical significance of friendship makes itself starkly evident."[65] Bonhoeffer depicted friendship as a rare and precious treasure, not to be compared with the values of the divine mandates (church, marriage and family, government, culture, and work), yet "as much in place amongst them as the cornflower in the wheat field."[66] Friendship was thus portrayed as self-sown, unique, and fragile. It is not deliberately planted, nor does it belong to or receive support from the main crop.

C.S. Lewis wrote broadly and explicitly on friendship. In *The Four Loves*, Lewis sought to establish, from his nuanced understandings of love, implications for contemporary living. Yet Lewis tended to overdraw the distinction between the terms *agapē*, *eros*, *philia*, and *storge*. Reality is more complex than his four categories of love allow. Friendship is depicted as invaluable, yet unnecessary. Lewis considered the cultivation of true friendships to be almost a lost art and expressed disappointment at the neglect of friendship within modern society.[67] Lewis favored friendship love as being the most closely aligned to divine love, because he viewed it as the most spiritual and least physical of the loves, an affair of "disentangled, or stripped minds."[68] Yet within this work he made minimal use of the tradition

of ethical or theological writing on friendship, but rather wrote a somewhat personal essay, reflecting the kind of companionship he himself enjoyed. While Lewis does not explicitly target Nygren's *Agape and Eros* in *The Four Loves*, this work implicitly criticizes Nygren's denigration of *eros* as having no part in *agapē*.[69] Lewis's portrayal of these four loves in the novel *Till We Have Faces* is perhaps even more critical of Nygren.[70]

Liberation-oriented thoughts on friendship emerge in the writings of German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who, after being drafted and taken prisoner as a teenager in the Second World War, was helped and forgiven by his captors. These experiences contributed towards a sense of sympathy and solidarity with those experiencing oppression, along with a deep awareness of God's participation in human suffering and hope.[71] He invites his readers not only to know Jesus as friend, but also to live out his love as "open friendship."[72] Further, he suggests the addition of *Jesus the Friend* to the traditional titles given to Jesus, asserting that it best describes the "inner relationship between the divine and the human fellowship."[73] When other roles have been left behind, friendship remains. Moltmann came to see friendship as essential to ethical life, and as the enduring element in all loves.[74]

In the late twentieth century, a variety of theological perspectives on friendship emerged with the potential to enrich the theological imagination. Belgium moral theologian Servais Pinckaers asserted that ethics could be approached by the question of happiness or of obligation. Friendship, he wrote, had disappeared from modern ethics due to the latter's emphasis on obligation. After all, "friendship, being free, could hardly be considered an obligation."[75] Yet friendship is easy to reinstate when we begin with a consideration of happiness rather than obligation.[76]

North American feminist and ecological theologian Sallie McFague found that friendship-love thrives on difference and extends to strangers, as she explored *friend* as a non-authoritarian, non-familial, non-gender-related metaphor for God in *Metaphorical Theology* and in *Models of God*.[77] While including both classical and newer ideas of friendship, McFague accepted Lewis's assertion that friendship is the least necessary of loves and the associated implication that friendship is the freest of loves.[78] Yet once chosen, friendship denotes a strong bond of trust. Bound by a common vision, friendship is an inclusive relationship, characterized by reciprocity and mutual responsibility.[79] Friends are invited to collaboratively work towards the fulfilment of God's vision for this world. *Sustaining* is identified as an activity of God as friend, providing hope, companionship (the sharing of food and joy), and the opportunity for shared meals as God invites friends to "break bread together in fellowship and joy."[80]

In *Friendship and the Moral Life*, Catholic ethicist Paul Wadell also explores friendship as an analogy for relationship with God. Wadell identifies friendship as integral to the moral life and the development of virtue. "Friendship is the crucible of the moral life, the relationship in which we come to embody the good by sharing it with friends who also delight in the good."[81] A subsequent book explores the relationship between worship, justice, and Christian friendship.[82] As Tobias Winright asserts, in a tribute to this author and his work, Wadell promotes an ethics of koinonia, and thus of friendship, for theology, the church, and beyond.[83]

Theological perspectives on friendship with the potential to enrich theological and social imaginaries continue to emerge in the early twenty-first century, briefly summarized as follows. Paul O'Callaghan, an Orthodox priest, presents a vision of friendship as revealing the communion of the Holy Trinity in *The Feast of Friendship*. For O'Callaghan, Christian friendship can be iconic, allowing a glimpse into divine and human reality.[84] The love of friendship emerges as a necessary model of love within the Christian tradition in Liz Carmichael's *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love*. The need for the church to rediscover its nature as a relational and hospitable community on behalf of the world is expressed in

a variety of works, including writings by Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, Steve Summers, John of Taizé, and Wesley Hill.[85] Practical theologian Chloe Lynch explores ecclesial leadership as friendship, in her book by that name.[86] Priest-scholar Victor Lee Austin identifies friendship as at the heart of being human.[87] In *Politics in Friendship: A Theological Account*, Christian ethicist Guido de Graaff considers the intertwining of theology, politics, and friendship, framed around a story of friendship between Bishop George Bell and German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.[88]

Acknowledging that many contemporary people of faith are more familiar with the language of discipline than of virtue, sociologist and spiritual director Susan Phillips encourages the cultivation of friendship as a spiritual discipline in *The Cultivated Life*.[89] Phillips uses the imagery of soul gardening, suggesting that relational gardens need to be kept in good repair.[90] Friendship is identified as an heirloom plant that is precious and requires tending, yet is often overlooked.[91]

In the writings of Australian theologian-activist Charles Ringma, friendships are gifts that require nurture and must be shared.[92] Readers are warned not to make friendship exclusive: clinging to this fragile gift can deter the practices of hospitality and solidarity and "the politics of radical openness to the other."[93] Contemplation, through attentiveness to God, self, and ultimately others, is recognized as integral to the nurturing of friendship and community, allowing us to see and hear what may otherwise elude us.[94]

While, as we will see, biblical and medieval writers have spoken of friendship with God, current authors writing from a Christian perspective are divided on this issue. For some, friendship *with* God is unthinkable. To speak of friendship with God is to trivialize or sentimentalize relationship with God. For others, the possibility of friendship with God is exclusively for those saints who have been formally acknowledged as holy or virtuous. Yet others have become convinced that friendship is an appropriate analogy for the relationship God desires with human beings. Carmichael, for example, concludes, "God reveals what friendship is."[95] Nevertheless, concern is expressed that friendship with God implies a comfortable, casual, kitschy, or sentimental relationship. The possibility of friendship with God will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

## Is Friendship a Private, Public, or Political Relationship?

Is friendship simply a private, recreational relationship based on sentimental attachments, as currently portrayed, or is it relevant to communities, to politics, and to the common good?[96] Relatively little attention has been paid to the relationship between friendship and community. While friendship is relevant to the church, to monastic and apostolic communities, and to various other communities of faith, as well as to the broader community, it is not unusual for friendship to be ignored, devalued, or discouraged within many of these communities of practice.

Contemporary Euro-Western societies have privatized friendship. Moltmann encourages Christians to reverse this trend, de-privatizing friendship as they rediscover its public character, and living out this friendship as a "fellowship of friends who live in the friendship of Jesus."[97] Friendship is spread in society as friends of Jesus encounter the forsaken and despised with affection and respect.[98] We may add that the despised and oppressed engaging in nonviolent resistance to oppression also contributes to the spread of various forms of friendship.

Friendship can and has served as a hiding place from politics. Yet in a variety of contexts and countries the power of friendship (in its various dimensions) to transform politics has

become evident. Within struggles for social change and justice, and against various forms of oppression, friendship has been recognized as a model for a new kind of world and a way of bringing a new kind of world about.[99] Friendship has both generated *and* been an outcome of such solidarity.

Friendship was central to the twentieth century civil rights movement within the United States. For Martin Luther King Jr., the goal of nonviolent activism was ultimately to win the understanding and friendship of opponents.[100] Here it is worth noting that King drew significantly on Nygren's work on *agapē*, critiqued above, to advocate for nonviolent resistance that intentionally seeks the good of white oppressors. He did not, however, follow Nygren's emphasis on love as uncalculating and unmotivated.[101] Rather, King's developed definition of love "combines dimensions of equal regard, mutual love, and delivering love, in addition to echoes of Nygren's sacrificial love."[102] These themes of equal regard and sacrifice will be further explored within Chapter 8.

King's understanding of love contributed to him seeing the *other* as friend and neighbor rather than as enemy.[103] His work took place within contexts where friendship between white and Black were difficult to conceive, due to racist attitudes, oppression, and the use of violence to generate fear. While personal friendships *within* Black communities made sense, friendships between Black and white was for many inconceivable. Further, where attempts at such friendships did take place, radical inequalities could contribute to such relationships being sources of pain for those with less power.[104] Nevertheless, the attitudes and actions that King advocated for are essentially those of *civic* friendship. King expressed an ideal that had the potential to be transformative, as he called America to return to its founding principles, while strategically adapting his message for a variety of audiences.[105]

King did not lead the civil rights movement alone. Rather, he was one of a tight group of friends, including John Lewis, James Lawson, Andrew Young, and C.T. Vivian, who collaboratively strategized and coordinated protests.[106] As with each of these friends, King accomplished what he did because of and through the friendships that supported him. Another friendship that sustained King was with Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel, fellow civil rights activist and lecturer. Susannah Heschel describes her father and King as being brought together by the biblical prophets with their "rhetoric of indictment and hope, irony and promise, but above all, the prophetic understanding of God."[107] Their friendship was further fostered through working together on various projects. The transformative and Spirit-filled friendships that King called for were consistent with his experience of what these various friendships gave him personally.

Friendship was also vital to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, sustaining South African activist Nelson Mandela and other African National Congress colleagues through long years of imprisonment and separation from family. The relationship between the American civil rights movement and the South African anti-apartheid movement was characterized by gestures of friendship.[108]

Themes of solidarity and friendship have captivated the imagination of some theologians. Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian founding father of liberation theology, advocates for solidarity with the poor through *friendship* with people whom one knows and loves, along with compassion for those who share their unjust situation. Solidarity cannot be abstract; it cannot simply be with a class of people.[109] Nor can solidarity ultimately be undertaken by isolated individuals. Rather, the way of solidarity is a community endeavor to be undertaken with and by the entire church.[110] Solidarity is not a duty or obligation, but rather an outworking of the love that exists between equals. "It is a work of concrete, authentic love for the poor that is not possible apart from a certain integration into their

world and apart from bonds of real friendship with those who suffer despoliation and injustice."[111] As such, solidarity is characterized by affection and tenderness.

Friendships across racial barriers are a statement against ethnic privilege and a challenge to various assumptions. Yet such friendships have been, and continue to be, challenged by paternalistic attitudes, requiring the learning of difficult practices such as giving up power, listening, and not speaking for the other. Further, as becomes evident in *I Bring the Voices of My People*, the terminology of love and friendship can and has been misused. As Chanequa Walker-Barnes articulates a womanist vision for racial reconciliation, she critiques the terminology of love and friendship as far too often being used to "manipulate victims of oppression into silent complicity with their quotidian experiences of racism, including those that occur in relationship with White Christians who claim to be pursuing reconciliation."[112] Walker-Barnes asserts that the posture needed for racial reconciliation is not that of friendship where people run towards one another, but rather that of solidarity, with people collaboratively pursuing a greater objective. When it comes to racial reconciliation, this greater objective is identified as threefold: "the destruction of white supremacy, the healing and repair of the historical wounds of racism, and the establishment of a racially just society."[113] Walker-Barnes notes that systemic oppression both shatters the psyche of the oppressed and wounds the soul of the oppressor. Being an agent of oppression inflicts moral injury, requiring moral repair, "albeit of a different sort than that which is necessary for the victims of oppression."[114]

Friendship has also been important to the struggle against sexual oppression. The rediscovery of friendships that nourished women, both in the past and the present, was an important aspect of feminist scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s. Feminist scholars from a variety of disciplines noted a cultural tendency to trivialize women's relationships.[115] One feminist response was to make visible the political nature of women's friendships. In *Women Talk*, Jennifer Coates identifies female friendship conversations as non-trivial and as providing a focus for the discussion and re-evaluation of social norms along with the construction and maintenance of personal identity.[116]

Bridging philosophy and politics, Jacques Derrida's *Politiques de l'amitié*, translated into English as *The Politics of Friendship*, examines the political history of the idea of friendship. He identifies a basic tension between unity and difference, and advocates for taking seriously the place and voice of the *other*. His comprehensive contemporary analysis expresses concern about the exclusion of women from the political, along with the phallocentricity of the history of the philosophy of friendship. When, Derrida asks, "will we be ready for an experience of freedom and equality that is capable of respectfully respecting that friendship which would at last be just…?"[117]

In the early twenty-first century, friendship is increasingly being invoked academically by political theorists as a potential model to illuminate issues such as citizenship and international relations.[118] Danielle Allen advocates for a "citizenship of political friendship"[119] that promotes confidence rather than fear in talking to strangers and acknowledges our shared responsibility for the shape of life within our communities.[120] Sibyl Schwarzenbach suggests that incorporating values of friendship into the political, in the form of civic friendship, may contribute towards determining "the limits of legitimate freedom and equality" within the context of a genuine democracy.[121] Political philosopher Astrid H.M. Nordin argues that the focus on Western experience and thought when it comes to friendship has both marginalized friendship from the discipline of international relations and limited its decolonizing potential.[122] Nevertheless, she asserts, friendship can contribute to a rethinking and decolonizing of international relations and related disciplines.[123] Friendship provides an important perspective for considering political relationships both

locally and globally, yet this most important relationship when it comes to politics has not been adequately explored; there is plenty of scope for more politically directed research on friendship.[124]

Clearly, friendship is relevant to communities, politics, and the pursuit of the common good. Research into friendship's potential as a public and political relationship, whether pursued by political philosophers, religion scholars, theologians, or scholar practitioners, will need to engage with the interrelationship of empire, imperialism, and colonialism. (Imperialism refers to economic and political control over a dependent country or territory, whereas colonialism is a practice of domination that typically involves part of a population moving to a new territory as settlers/pioneers, settling among Indigenous people, and establishing control over people and land).[125] While many assume we live in a postcolonial age, this is not the experience of many Indigenous peoples. Power over other peoples has been exerted through settlement and the establishment of sovereignty; power continues to be exerted through "indirect mechanisms of control."[126] Decolonization includes various forms of resistance including deconstructing colonial ideologies, addressing imbalance within power dynamics, and valuing Indigenous knowledge. Decolonizing friendship will allow for multiple ways of relating, being, and knowing.

## Summary

This chapter has explored various themes and questions concerning friendship and its place in contemporary communities. Friendship has been recognized as a challenging word to define, yet as typically including reciprocity in affection as well as in willing good and doing good for the other.

Is friendship essential or peripheral to being human? Terrell argues that the human capacity to make friends is characteristic of our species; this befriending extends even to strangers. This befriending capacity is outworked within the context of varying cultural ideologies about relationships, gender, and friendship. Cultural ideologies are reproduced, reinforced, and reified through relational practices as well as through various forms of media.

Some consider friendship to be an endangered, marginalized relationship; others consider it to be more important than ever and a source of "social glue." It is difficult to ascertain from the variety of social surveys undertaken whether Western people are in fact acquiring more differentiated, superficial friendships, or more life-affirming, soul friendships; respondents to surveys are rarely asked what they mean by friend. Various forms of technology, for those who can afford it, have the potential to sustain and deepen friendships, but can also function as a distraction from friendship. While social media and other technologies provide strategies for the maintenance of friendships, they must be used with discernment in order that the inherent dangers of use do not outweigh the benefits of use.

Cultural norms currently take precedence within the social imagination of many Christians. Nevertheless, there are clearly ethical, theological, and spiritual dimensions to friendship. While Anders Nygren discounted friendship as an ethical relationship, friendship has variously been depicted or described as integral to the overcoming of evil, sustaining service in the pursuit of the greater good, a corrective to a potentially egotistical life, the enduring element in all loves, a model for Christian love, and a model of the moral life. Friendship has been identified as a metaphor for God and an analogy for relationship with God. Christian friendship is a gift to be shared, is iconic, and can be cultivated as a spiritual discipline. While contemporary communities have privatized friendship, faith communities reverse this trend as they rediscover the public character of friendship.

Is friendship a private, public, or political relationship? While friendship has been regarded as a private relationship and a play form of sociability, friendship has been integral to struggles for social change and justice, and against various forms of oppression. Friendship is a goal of nonviolent resistance to oppression. While the terminology of love and friendship can and has been misused, friendship is identified as a potential model for citizenship and international relations. Friendship can contribute to decolonization; decolonizing friendship will allow for multiple ways of relating, being, and knowing. One hope for this project is that it contributes to the cultivation of friendships that will sustain such processes.

Whether regarded as an endangered relationship or an important source of social glue, friendship plays an invaluable role within twenty-first century communities, including communities of faith. While there has never been a golden age of friendship, there is much to be gained by developing a practical theology of friendship that demonstrates the social, ethical, political, and theological importance of friendship, bringing contemporary relational concerns into dialogue with relational traditions that have been obscured by modernity, including biblical, classical, and Indigenous traditions.

## Notes

1 See Eliot Deutsch, "On Creative Friendship," in The *Changing Face of Friendship*, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 17.
2 Isidore, "Book X," in *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. Stephen A. Barney, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 213, A.4. Isidore, bishop of Seville (c. 560–636) compiled this work between c. 615 and the early 630s. Further, Isidore identifies *amicus* as being derived from hook (*hamas*), "that is, from the chain of charity, whence also hooks are things that hold" (A.4).
3 Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience, 350–1250*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), xv.
4 Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 60–71.
5 Joan Walsh Anglund, *A Friend is Someone Who Likes You* (New York: Harcourt, 1958).
6 Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of the Holy Father Francis on the Fraternity and Social Friendship* (2020), 25.
7 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 25, 27.
8 Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, "'Fratelli Tutti' is Ubuntu by any other name," https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/fratelli-tutti-ubuntu-any-other-name. Accessed 6 October 2020.
9 Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, "Fraternity, Solidarity, and Civic Friendship," *AMITY* 3, no. 1 (2015): 11.
10 Danielle S. Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), xxi.
11 In the provision of services for those with disabilities, the intellectually handicapped, the mentally ill, the emphasis is typically on independence rather than friendship. Yet there are exceptions, as can be seen in the work of John Swinton.
12 See B. Beer, "Friendship, Anthropology of," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2001).
13 Agnes Brandt, *Among Friends? On the Dynamics of Māori-Pākehā Relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2013), 16.
14 Brandt, *Among Friends?*, 16.

15 Brandt, *Among Friends?*, 17.
16 Brandt, *Among Friends?*, 25.
17 John Terrell, *A Talent for Friendship: Rediscovery of a Remarkable Trait* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3.
18 Terrell, *A Talent for Friendship*, 5.
19 Terrell, *A Talent for Friendship*, 17.
20 This fact flies in the face of centuries of the widespread prejudice which perceives New Guinea as a place where savage violence, treachery, cannibalism, and warfare predominate.
21 Terrell, *A Talent for Friendship*, 93.
22 Speaking of a view of human origins derived from Genesis 2, Terrell observes: "It is not surprising that Enlightenment thinkers would take it as read that human beings living in a state of nature would be able to survive as solitary forest creatures or as close-knit families on their own divorced from any need to associate with other people. After all, hadn't this first couple done so quite handily?" Terrell, *A Talent for Friendship*, 14, 190.
23 Terrell, *A Talent for Friendship*, 14.
24 Georg Simmel and Everett C. Hughes, "The Sociology of Sociability," *American Journal of Sociology* 55, no. 3 (1949): 257.
25 Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," *American Journal of Sociology* 11, no. 4 (1906): 458.
26 Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," 458.
27 Graham Allan and Rebecca G. Adams, "The Sociology of Friendship," in *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant and Dennis L. Peck (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 123.
28 Ray Pahl, *On Friendship* (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 36. The analysis of friendship continues to be marginal in mainstream sociology. See Alice P. Julier, *Eating Together: Food, Friendship, and Inequality* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 2.
29 See Sara H. Konrath, Edward H. O'Brien, and Courtney Hsing, "Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 15, no. 2 (2011).
30 Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and Matthew E. Brashears, "Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades," *ASR* 71, no. 3 (2006).
31 Anthony Paik and Kenneth Sanchagrin, "Social Isolation in America: An Artifact," *ASR* 78, no. 3 (2013): 339. Ivaylo Petev's research corroborates these trends of civic disengagement and social isolation. Ivaylo D. Petev, "The Association of Social Class and Lifestyles: Persistence in American Sociability, 1974 to 2010," *ASR* 78, no. 4 (2013). However, Anthony Paik and Kenneth Sanchagrin assert that interviewer effects, including interviewer training and interviewer fatigue, bias many estimates of social connectivity. See Paik and Sanchagrin, "Social Isolation in America: An Artifact," 353–355.
32 Ray Pahl and Liz Spencer, "Family, Friends, and Personal Communities: Changing Models-in-the-Mind," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 2, no. 3 (2010): 197.
33 Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today*, 190–212.
34 Pahl, *On Friendship*, 43.
35 Pahl, *On Friendship*, 73.
36 Pahl, *On Friendship*, 64.
37 Frank Bruni, "How Facebook Warps Our Worlds," *The New York Times*, 21 May 2016.
38 Diane Jeske, *Friendship and Social Media: A Philosophical Exploration* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 133.
39 The widespread usage of smart phones and social media has had a further benefit, in that these forms of technology have enabled the capture and sharing of life-threatening (or

life-ending) acts of injustice, allowing citizens to see racial disparities and police brutality with their own eyes and provoking citizens to engage in acts of solidarity. See Walker-Barnes, *Voices of My People*, 21. On the other hand, widespread sharing can also have a retraumatizing impact.

**40** Mark Zuckerberg, "Is Connectivity a Human Right," https://www.facebook.com/isconnectivityahumanright. Accessed 4 October, 2021.

**41** "Facebook Investor Relations," https://investor.fb.com/resources/default.aspx. Accessed 4 October 2021.

**42** Jill Lepore, "Facebook's Broken Vows: How the Company's Pledge to bring the World Together Wound Up Pulling Us Apart," New Yorker, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/08/02/facebooks-broken-vows. Accessed 4 October 2021.

**43** Lepore, "Facebook's Broken Vows," 4 October 2021.

**44** See Jeske, *Friendship and Social Media*.

**45** John Fitzgerald, "Christian Friendship: John, Paul, and the Philippians," *Interpretation* 61, no. 3 (2007): 284.

**46** Fleming Rutledge, *The Battle for Middle-Earth: Tolkien's Divine Design in The Lord of the Rings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 6, 30.

**47** Rutledge, *Battle*, 78.

**48** Rutledge, *Battle*, 115. "I think, Elrond, that in this matter it would be well to trust to their friendship rather than to great wisdom." Merry tells Frodo: "You can trust us to stick to you through thick and thin – to the bitter end. And you can trust us to keep any secret of yours – closer than you keep it yourself. But you cannot trust us to let you face trouble alone and go off without a word. We are your friends, Frodo..." J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring: Being the First Part of The Lord of the Rings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954), 103. Friendships (characterized by loyalty, courage, honesty, and hospitality, along with shared insight, interests, and vision) also feature in C.S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia, originally published in the 1950s.

**49** Rutledge, *Battle*, 115.

**50** Texts focused on love of neighbor include Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 5:43, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, and James 2:8.

**51** Karl Barth, *Ethics*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (New York: Seabury, 1981), 189.

**52** Barth, *Ethics*, 189, 190.

**53** Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative: A Study in Christian Ethics*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth, 1937), 517.

**54** Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. A.G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1932), ch. 8.

**55** Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 138.

**56** Alan Vincelette, "Introduction," in *The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution*, ed. Pierre Rousselot (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 11.

**57** Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, ch. 8.

**58** See Martin Marty, "F is for Friendship: A Theological Dictionary," *The Christian Century*, 24 February 2009.

**59** John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 311. Yet depicting God as a cozy and tolerant companion, thus trivializing what could otherwise be a transformative relationship, is identified as *kitsch* piety.

**60** Simone Weil, "Friendship," in *Waiting for God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1951).

**61** Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics ["Ethik"]*, trans. Neville Horton Smith (London: SCM, 1955), 253 n.1.

**62** Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM, 1971), 192.

**63** Reformed understandings of the moral or ethical life focused on family, work, the state, and church. Liz Carmichael, *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 160.

**64** Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 192–193.
**65** Carmichael, *Friendship*, 161.
**66** Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 253 n.1.
**67** C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), 69–70.
**68** Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 84.
**69** See Jason Lepojärvi, "Does Eros Seek Happiness? A Critical Analysis of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren," *Neue Zeitschrift Für Systematische Theologie Und Religionsphilosophie* 53, no. 2 (2011): 210.
**70** See Risto Saarinen, "Eros and Protestantism: From Nygren to Milbank," in *Gudstankens aktualitet: Bidrag om teologiens opgave og indhold og protestantismens indre spændinger*, ed. E. Wiberg Pedersen (Copenhagen: Anis, 2010), 344–346.
**71** Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life* (London: SCM, 1997), 1–9.
**72** Jürgen Moltmann, *The Open Church: Invitation to a Messianic Lifestyle* (London: SCM, 1978), 50–63. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 114–121.
**73** Moltmann, *Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 115.
**74** Moltmann, *Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 116.
**75** Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 19.
**76** Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 20.
**77** Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987). In these earlier works Sallie McFague (1933-2019) focused on metaphorical theology. In her later works she focused on ecological theology. In her 2013 book she described herself as "a theologian who investigates the connections of religion with economics and ecology" and observed that "we live within our models and make decisions on the basis of them." Sallie McFague, *Blessed Are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2013), ix, xii. Her final book is *A New Climate for Christology: Kenosis, Climate Change, and Befriending Nature* (Fortress Press, 2021).
**78** McFague, *Models of God*, 159.
**79** McFague, *Models of God*, 159.
**80** McFague, *Models of God*, 159.
**81** Paul J. Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 120, 142.
**82** Paul J. Wadell, *Becoming Friends: Worship, Justice and the Practice of Christian Friendship* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002).
**83** Tobias Winright, "Thanks Be to God for Paul J. Wadell: Essays in Honor of a Friend and His Work," *Journal of Moral Theology* 10, no. 1 (2021): 106–107.
**84** Paul D. O'Callaghan, *The Feast of Friendship* (Wichita: Eighth Day, 2002).
**85** Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *Rediscovering Friendship: Awakening to the Power and Promise of Women's Friendships*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001); Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, "Friendship—The Forgotten Category for Faith and Christian Community: A Perspective for the Twenty-First Century," in *Passion for God: Theology in Two Voices* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003); Steve Summers, *Friendship: Exploring its Implications for the Church in Postmodernity* (London: T&T Clark International, 2009); John of Taizé, *Friends in Christ: Paths to a New Understanding of Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012); Wesley Hill, *Spiritual Friendship: Finding Love in the Church as a Celibate Gay Christian* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015).

**86** Chloe Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership as Friendship* (London: Routledge, 2019).
**87** Victor Lee Austin, *Friendship: The Heart of Being Human* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic).
**88** Guido de Graaff, *Politics in Friendship: A Theological Account* (London: T&T Clark, 2014).
**89** Susan S. Phillips, *The Cultivated Life: From Ceaseless Striving to Receiving Joy* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2015), 180–182.
**90** Phillips, *The Cultivated Life*, 168.
**91** Phillips, *The Cultivated Life*, 167.
**92** Charles Ringma, *Hear the Heartbeat with Henri Nouwen: Reflections on the Way of the Seeking Heart* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2014), 62–65.
**93** Ringma, *Hear the Heartbeat*, 64.
**94** Ringma, *Hear the Heartbeat*, 68.
**95** Carmichael, *Friendship*, 201.
**96** While friendship continues to be celebrated in a variety of popular works, friendship is sometime portrayed as taking precedence over civic responsibilities. This is evident in the Captain America movies and the ongoing Star Wars saga. For the latter, see Greg Littmann, "The Friends of a Jedi: Friendship, Family, and Civic Duty in a Galaxy at War," in *The Ultimate Star Wars and Philosophy: You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned*, ed. Jason T. Eberl and Kevin S. Decker (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2015), 128.
**97** Moltmann, *Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 316.
**98** Moltmann, *Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 316. Cited, with modified translation, in John of Taizé, *Friends in Christ*, 86.
**99** Mark Peel, "The Importance of Friends: The Most Recent Past," in *Friendship: A History*, ed. Barbara Caine (London: Equinox, 2009), 329.
**100** Martin Luther King Jr., "Loving Your Enemies," in *Strength to Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963). See also Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter From Birmingham Jail," *The Christian Century*, June 12, 1963.
**101** Glen H. Stassen, "Peacemaking," in *Bonhoeffer and King: Their Legacies and Import for Christian Social Thought*, ed. Willis Jenkins and Jennifer M. McBride (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 197.
**102** Stassen, "Bonhoeffer and King," 197–198.
**103** As summarized by L.D. Ivory, "Towards a Theology of Radical Involvement: The Continuing Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." (PhD diss., Emory University, 1994), 111.
**104** See, for example, Glynis Carr, "The Female World of Love and Racism: Interracial Friendship in US Women's Literature, 1840-1940" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1989).
**105** Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Political Order, Political Violence, and Ethical Limits," in *Bonhoeffer and King: Their Legacies and Import for Christian Social Thought*, ed. Willis Jenkins and Jennifer M. McBride (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 47.
**106** Friendship is also reflected in the name of a New York-based organization formed to direct economic aid to the civil rights struggle in the South: *In Friendship*. See "In Friendship," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/friendship.
**107** Susannah Heschel, "A Friendship in the Prophetic Tradition: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King, Jr," *Telos*, no. 182 (2018): 67.

**108** Lewis V. Baldwin, *Toward the Beloved Community: Martin Luther King Jr. and South Africa* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1995), 12.
**109** Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*, 20th anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 104.
**110** Gutiérrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells*, 101.
**111** Gutiérrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells*, 104.
**112** Chanequa Walker-Barnes, *I Bring the Voices of My People: A Womanist Vision for Racial Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 215.
**113** Walker-Barnes, *Voices of My People*, 216.
**114** Walker-Barnes, *Voices of My People*, 190.
**115** Pat O'Connor, *Friendships between Women: A Critical Review* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 26.
**116** Jennifer Coates, *Women Talk: Conversation between Women Friends* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 1.
**117** Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 1997), 306. See also Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994).
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**119** Allen, *Talking to Strangers*, 140.
**120** Allen, *Talking to Strangers*, xxi.
**121** Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, *On Civic Friendship: Including Women in the State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), xiii.
**122** Astrid H.M. Nordin, "Decolonising Friendship," *AMITY: The Journal of Friendship Studies* 6, no. 1 (2020): 89.
**123** Nordin, "Decolonising Friendship," 109.
**124** See Devere, "Amity Update: The Academic Debate on Friendship and Politics," 25.
**125** See Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy, "Colonialism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N Zalta (2017).
**126** Kohn and Reddy, "Colonialism."

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