

6

Love and Friendship

*In this life we have three lasting qualities—faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love.**

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW

Several years ago a popular song echoed a theme present for centuries in literature, music, philosophy, and religion: “What the world needs now is love. . . .” Psychologists and other students of human behavior see the age-old call for love as being central to human relations. Smiling flower children of the sixties bounced their way through that decade with simplistic slogans of love. Greeting cards for all occasions sell well with verses of love and friendship. A television preacher tells his contributing national audience that God loves them and so does he—and a medal so inscribed is available from his corporation without charge. With so many words about love for so many centuries, we might assume that the idea has caught on and all would be well with the world. But it hasn’t, and it isn’t.

A Gnawing Void

Unhappiness. Surveys by the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research have since 1957 shown a clear deterioration in Americans’ feelings of happiness with life and their sense of well-being.¹ Doubts about education and employment, marriage and family life, friendships, finances, mental health, and global affairs are particularly bothersome to young adults. Unclear goals and a general loss of confidence in life’s possibilities contribute to these feelings of depression that affect people of all ages.

*First Letter to the Corinthians, I Corinthians 13:13.

¹Angus Campbell, *Sense of Well-Being in America: Patterns and Trends* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980)

Asked what they want out of life, many individuals respond, "I want to be happy." Yet the quality of happiness achieved seems mediocre. Given the predominance of "love" among words said and sung, it is interesting that more people do not respond with "I want to love and be loved." Perhaps we have not settled whether love is one ingredient of happiness or whether happiness is an aspect of love. In any case there is a prevailing sense that something is missing.

Loneliness. Both the Bible and biologists, as well as psychologists, agree that it isn't good for people to be alone. Feeling alone occasionally, though, is very common. Some individuals, however, feel alone chronically.

Lonely people are dissatisfied with everything about their lives: their living arrangements (whether solo or with others), the number of friends they have, the quality of those friendships, their marriages or love affairs, the number of conversations they have each day, and their sex lives.²

Regardless of the circumstances that help create occasional or chronic loneliness, the accompanying feelings of dissatisfaction and insufficient love accentuate any gaps between what *is* and what we believe ought to be. A lonely person senses something is missing.

Common to many forms of chronic unhappiness and loneliness is a gnawing void, a sense of incompleteness. The individual often feels that the quality and the quantity of love in his or her life is insufficient to meet his or her needs.

"Love" as Purpose and Basic Moral Norm

The clue to feelings of happiness, well-being, and belonging is caring, concern, or love. Successful performances and being good at something do not guarantee happiness or satisfying relationships. Achieving is not the answer. We share the assumption that love is essential to human fulfillment.

Who am I? I am a person/child of God. What is the fundamental purpose of my life? It is to love and be loved. Whatever changeable gender images, roles, activities, performances, or secondary inheritances enter my life, my identity can remain constant. Rooted in this identity is a basic calling, a common human vocation of mutual love.³

²Carin Rubinstein, et al., "Loneliness," *Human Nature* (February 1979), pp. 58-65.

³See Willard Gaylin, M.D., *Caring* (New York: Knopf, 1976); *Feelings: Our Vital Signs* (New York: Harper, 1979); Ashley Montagu, *On Being Human* (New York: Hawthorn, 1966); Norman Pittenger, *Loving Says It All* (New York: Pilgrim, 1978); and Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966).

We are convinced that implicit in this view of human identity and purpose is the basic moral norm—love. (Whether love is to be applied situationally or legalistically is another matter.) We are among those persons convinced that caring makes the difference in life; love is the fundamental standard by which human moral behavior should be guided and evaluated.

Another song a few years back began “What is this thing called ‘love’?” Have all the songwriters, authors, and scholars meant the same thing by “love”? Is there a consensus on what love is? We shall describe some views of love we believe are deficient in various ways and then consider an interpretation of interpersonal love proposed by Ashley Montagu; we are convinced that interpersonal love satisfies human needs most adequately.

RECIPROCAL LOVE: A ROOT NEED

That there is a need for reciprocal love is a widespread assumption within contemporary psychiatry. The evidence seems to indicate a human necessity both to give and receive love. . . . “Love” is difficult to define precisely, but in this sense we may characterize it as a state of responsiveness with others as its goal. . . . there does seem to be some evidence that it is a root need, not only in humans but in other living beings as well.

Paul Kurtz, *Decision and the Condition of Man* (New York: Dell, 1965), p. 152.

Paul W. Kurtz is professor of philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo. (He is quoted also in Chapter 2, p. 32).

VARIETIES OF LOVE

Springtime Love

Some individuals thoroughly enjoy the feelings of the chase and the initial phases of a relationship. This “springtime love” may be an early ingredient in a relationship; it is often a feeling of attraction, exhilaration, newness, testing, flirting, hoping, and tentative acceptance. The ego is fed; life is wonderful! The feelings accompanying the courtship and romance are valued perhaps more than the other person. “Falling in love with love is wonderful!”

Such infatuation is common and normal at the outset of a relationship, but some individuals identify these feelings as perfected love. These emo-

tions persevere as long as both partners nurture them. These emotions, however, unfortunately serve as masks covering the actual individuals. In most cases, an ongoing relationship begins to strip away some of the masks, and real persons with strengths and weaknesses are revealed in whole or part. The illusion of absolute perfection with every moment aglow begins to crack. If the initial feelings have been identified as mature love and "right," the lovers are now likely to withdraw from the relationship; "We aren't in love anymore." The relationship is now "wrong." The search for the initial springtime feelings begins again, and again, with person after person—a regrettable cycle continues.

If we have understood the initial feelings not as love but as normal infatuation, we are more willing to let reality replace illusion. The initial "up" feelings can give way to a deeper relationship with another person; being in love with love can be replaced with a different, deeper emotion between persons, that of interpersonal love.

Dependent Love

The feelings of needing someone are familiar to many individuals. The needing, though, can be more acute than the basic desire for companionship. The needing, instead, can be a sense of inability or lacking in oneself. Clinging rather than sharing is a dominant feature of dependent love. "I need particular strengths you have that I lack; I cannot function well without being fed by those strong points."

The strengths may be real in the other person. The love can then flourish as long as the feeding continues. If the needed strengths are not actually present and only imagined, the relationship can suffer with chronic unmet expectations or rupture.

The individuals involved in parasitic, dependent love evaluate their relationship as good as long as the dependency is fed; it is evaluated as bad when lackings in one are not compensated for by the other. Labeling a person "my other half" may be in some cases an indication of some degree of dependent love.

Dependent love is like springtime love in that each is a relationship between images instead of persons. In springtime love, the images are feelings. In dependent love, the images are selected real or imagined features of a partner. Images are masks, however, not whole persons.

Solo Love

Self-infatuation owns the themes "I am the center of the universe" and "The best things in life are *me*." The word "love" means little when directed outwardly to someone else. When used in regard to others it desig-

nates a feeling of inner satisfaction: "I love you" means "I feel good inside me about myself because I have been entertained and/or praised." Solo love is evident when "he's all wrapped up in himself." It may also take the form of continuous self-focus; for example, some gurus enable disciple solo lovers to raise their individual consciousnesses and to regard that as the primary emotional goal of life. An exaggerated sense of self-importance, general indifference to others (except as others can be used), exploitation, and ongoing applause-seeking are other signs of solo love.

Curiously, the real person engaged in solo love usually wears two masks: the image of low self-esteem covered with another layer as solo lover.⁴

Debit Love

"I owe you/you owe me" is central to the emotions between persons in debit love. "You do for me and I'll do for you" is a bargaining quality found in such relationships.

A co-worker goes out of the way now and then to be nice to you. Coupled with the niceness is the follow-up: "Will you do such and such for me?" After you complete the task, the co-worker "owes you one" (unless the original niceness was prepayment).

Some relatives who receive emotional satisfaction from frequently giving have, in their minds, purchased a response; they are owed. Particularly obnoxious relatives love with the debit system; one hand offers, but the other hand is held out (or is keeping score).

Debit love can be very controlling and manipulative for the participants, but its rewards can include a sense of well-kept records and productivity. Morally responsible behavior consists of a good inventory and accurate payments; irresponsible behavior is incorrect billing and not paying up.

The emotions of debit love are not essentially between persons, but rather between the masks of performances, things done. "I have feelings for what you do for me, and for what I do for you." There is little deep involvement in another's life; the relationship is based on bargaining and manipulation.

Aggressive Love

A primary ingredient in feelings of aggressive love is a sense of contest or victory. "Love" on the part of one or more individuals loving in this way is stimulated by challenge, attack, and/or winning. Constant competition dominates most of the togetherness.

⁴See Otto Kernberg, M.D., *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York: Aronson, 1975).

The person as a human being is not the object of aggressive love; the object of such love is the competitive feeling itself or the images projected by the aggressor on to the victim. Extreme examples include rape and sadism in which the rapist or sadist might interpret his attacks as making love to the conquered. More common is the couple who seem to thrive on psychological warfare and are, in their own view, very much "in love." The feelings of the relationship are in some ways gratifying and are the satisfying focus. Without the contest, the persons in such relationships may have little in common.

Martyr Love

The emotions of misery are idealized by some persons as love. Not to be confused with the self-sacrifices we may be called on to offer, martyr love is the active, subtle, sometimes subconscious collection of injustices. The "poor me" feelings that result can be valued highly.

Some individuals choose to be "losers." Though positive options are in fact open to them, they consistently select alternatives that backfire. Their hobby appears to be collecting injustices.

Jay is bright, from a good home of hard-working parents who are emotionally supportive, willing to contribute significantly to Jay's educational costs, and who continue to provide a place in their home for Jay, even though Jay is an adult. Jay chooses, instead, to live with an unstable drifter, parent a child, wallow in complaints, and attribute the misery to fate. In addition, Jay is miserable to the parents. Jay glows as the misery is nurtured and identifies the glowing feelings as love: "Of course I love my parents, my lover, my child, and myself! Things aren't perfect, but there's plenty of love in my life." In fact, the more miserable things and relationships are, the more Jay glows.

The courting of injustices and other forms of masochism can be understood in terms of various psychological theories, some of which would deny that a choice is involved at all. Disappointment is provoked by the subtle misuse of crucial or routine situations. After achieving the setback, the injustice collector indulges pleasurably in self-pity.

Regardless of psychological explanations for such self-defeating behaviors, we offer this capsule summary: the glow of misery and joyful self-pity are identified as loving emotions by martyrs who nurture such feelings in their own lives.

Possessive Love

"You belong to me" characterizes relationships between or among individuals who enjoy the feeling of power, control, and/or ownership. One

type of possessive love involves a dominating person who exerts power and control in a relationship with a submissive counterpart who welcomes being possessed. (Such feelings duplicate dependent love.) Statements such as "my woman" and "he's all mine" may be indications of possessive ingredients in a relationship.

Another type of possessive love is one in which everyone involved possesses everyone else. Two examples follow:

As the necessary signatures are gathered after a wedding, the guest minister is astonished to hear the new husband firmly warn his wife to be near enough to the telephone to answer within three rings whenever he calls from work. She counters by announcing that his Tuesday nights out with the boys are over. The guest cleric wonders what type of premarital guidance has taken place, if any!

This relationship does not consist of a possessor and dependent, but two possessors. If they remain together, the emotional content of their marriage will be governed by feelings of ownership, with each partner setting aside respective privileges of ownership or domination. In their view, they are very much in love!

The Weaver family does everything together. Grandmother, mother, father, the married son and his wife and children, and the married daughter and her husband and children are always together—on vacations, weekends, parties, and so on. If one is invited, it is assumed that all are invited; and if they're not, they all come anyway or all stay home! What a loving family! When you see one, you see them all. Individuality is practically nonexistent.

Possessive love can take two primary directions: managerial feelings of the possessor toward the dependent person(s) or feelings of mutual control shared between or among possessive persons. In both cases, genuine freedom is limited and nonconforming initiatives have no place. Individual, authentic personality is discouraged, not by words but by assimilated restrictive patterns. Interpersonal addiction is masked by "togetherness."

Longing Love

In general conversation, erotic love refers to sex acts. A motion picture labeled an "erotic film" is assumed to be sensual and explicit. "In some Greek theories of nature *eros* was the basic creative energy that could 'move worlds.' In the psyches of individual human beings, it has a strength that threatens to overcome reason."⁵ Longing love is the main ingredient in this use of *eros*.

⁵Tom L. Beauchamp et al., *Philosophy and the Human Condition* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 398.

For Plato, longing at its highest level is of a different sort. In an analysis of eros, Nygren has written

The Platonic eros is desiring love. As such it is marked by two elements: the consequences of a present want and the direction of this want toward the freedom of a higher and more blissful state. . . . Eros is rightly called a "wanting to have." . . . Its desire is, however, not directed toward the nether world of the senses. Eros is love directed toward the higher regions; it is the longing upward toward the world of ideas, and in relation to the present world it assumes the form of fleeing from the world.⁶

Interpretations of eros have ranged from the sexual cravings of one person for another to spiritual longings. In these contexts, "to love" may have different meanings that have in common a "wanting to have," an "urge to merge" with something beyond ourselves: a longing or a craving.

Selfless Love

Some individuals have been taught that true love means the utter abandonment of any self-concern or self-regard. Not necessarily infused with self-contempt or martyr-love components, selfless love means that one's feelings of affection and implied service are directed exclusively to the needs of others. Such an interpretation of love could be considered religious or secular; its proponents usually view selfless love as the heart of their religions.⁷ Any love of self in this interpretation is equated with self-centeredness, deification of one's self, pride, and what we have called "solo love." Therefore selflessness is the norm.

True love, wrote Nygren, "is selfless, serving, and helping love."⁸ In his classic volume comparing love (*agape*) in the New Testament with eros, Nygren proposed the following understanding of selflessness or opposition to self-love.

This brings us to one more feature that is specially characteristic of the Pauline idea of Agape: its opposition to all that can be called "self-love." It has often been thought necessary to distinguish between a right and a wrong self-love, and the attempt has been made to give a place to the former as a third kind of love alongside of love to God and neighbourly love. Indeed, it has even been supposed that a commandment of self-love was implicit in the commandment of neighbourly love. But we have already seen the error of any such

⁶Anders Nygren, "Eros and Agape," in *A Handbook of Christian Theology* (New York: New American Library, 1958), p. 98.

⁷See John F. Crosby, "On the Origin of the Taboo Against Self-Love," *The Humanist* (November-December 1979), pp. 45-47.

⁸Nygren, p. 98.

attempt to read the idea of self-love into the Gospels, and it is equally wrong to try to find a place for it in Paul's outlook. Self-love is excluded by Paul's fundamental principle. "The love of God which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 39) is for him the archetype of all that can rightfully be called *Agape*, and it is characteristic of this love that it gives itself, sacrifices itself. . . . [Paul is condemning] all self-love whatsoever, even in its most highly spiritual forms.⁹

Selfless love is by nature not mutual or reciprocal; it is unconditionally given. Some theological contexts for selfless love view human beings as not having the capacity for such love; the true source of selfless love is God; only God's *agape* channeled through persons can be true love.¹⁰

Selfless love can demand from persons the mask of "giver." Individuals who adopt this understanding of love from religious or secular sources frequently recoil from receiving. They can provide but are difficult to provide for. They are willing to "give you the shirt off their backs" but cannot joyfully accept gifts from others; they are ready to help but cannot easily ask for help. Counselors may hear from an individual in isolated anguish: "People are always coming to me for help, but where are they when I need them?" Chances are the mask of omnipotent giver has been so constantly worn that no one would imagine the giver could ever need help! Parents and people in the helping professions (nurses, clergy, social workers, teachers, doctors, and so on) may view selfless love as the best way of relating to others. The results will frequently be "burn out" or a depletion of "giving energy." The idealization of selfless love in religious literature and among some saints fails to give an accurate picture of the extent of their actual wholesomeness, true state of mental health, and actual interpersonal relationships.

Interpersonal Love

If I embrace my identity as a person or a child of God, I have reached a basic sense of positive self-acceptance; this does not imply that I affirm every aspect of my life as good or perfected. Self-acceptance does not automatically promote springtime love, dependent love, solo love, debit love, aggressive love, possessive love, craving love, or selfless love; it does not mean that everything about me and you is o.k. Self-acceptance means that my identity, who I really am, is fundamentally worthwhile. To feel good about my identity fosters a sense of being "at home" with who I am, of being concerned about *me*, of loving myself, and of becoming more human as my life progresses.

There are theologians who view *agape* not as selfless but as involving "I"

⁹Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (London: SPCK, 1957), pp. 130-131.

¹⁰See Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love* (New York: Harper, 1968), p. 71 and Chapter X.

as well as "Thou" as both a source and receiver of love. One such theologian has written that

love includes the following ingredients: commitment or engagement for the good of the other or others, mutuality or openness to others and willingness to give and take, faithfulness to those whom we say we love, hopefulness or expectation that from our relationship better and more enriching life will follow, and an urgent desire for as intimate and complete a communion between persons as is possible for both parties.¹¹

More emphatically an evangelical preacher has written

Love yourself or die—physically and spiritually. . . . Lack of self-love definitely affects the physical organism. Lose your sense of self-love and you will be depressed, discouraged, and lacking the enthusiasm which is the great energy-producing force of life.

Love yourself or you will die spiritually. If you do not love yourself, you cannot love your neighbor. If you do not love yourself and do not love others, you are merely a dead man who is walking, sleeping, working, breathing, eating.¹²

The element of mutuality absent from selfless love is integral to interpersonal love. Communion with others instead of merely giving is a goal.

Among some social scientists, interpersonal love, love of self and others, has been valued for many years. One of the most articulate scholars to have written on the nature of humanity and love is the anthropologist Ashley Montagu. In one of his major books he argues well for interpersonal love based on a positive view of human nature. Montagu's view of the qualities and characteristics of love follows:

Love implies the possession of a feeling of deep involvement in another, and to love another means to communicate that feeling of involvement to them. Essentially this means that while love begins as a subjective state, it must be activated and made objective, that is, it must be demonstrative if it is to be fully realized. Love is not passive, it is active, it means involvement.

Love is unconditional, it makes no bargains and trades with no one for anything. It is given freely and without any strings attached. It says, in effect, to the loved one: "I am for you because you are you—and not because you are going to be something I want or expect you to be, but simply because you are you as you now are."

Love is supportive. It conveys to the loved one that he can depend upon those who love him, that they will always be standing by to give him the support he most needs, with no questions asked, neither condemning nor condoning, but endeavoring sympathetically to

¹¹Pittenger, p. 60.

¹²Robert H. Schuller, *Self-Love: The Dynamic Force of Success* (New York: Hawthorn, 1969), p. 43.

understand, that no trust will be misused, that no faith will be broken; that he will never under any circumstances be failed in his needs.

Love is firm. Love is characterized by a firmness and integrity which not only conveys a feeling of security to the loved one, but serves also as a discipline in that it helps the loved one to respond in kind. But love continues even though we know that the loved one may never respond in kind. The firmness of love conveys to the loved one that both one's "Yea" and one's "Nay" are equally the firm evidence of one's love. The loved one, therefore, comes to incorporate this kind of firmness within himself. . . .

Love is most needed by the human organism from the moment of birth. Our evidence indicates that love is the birthright of every human being, the birthright which is indispensably necessary for the optimum development of the person. It seems to be clear that the best environment, in which love is most efficiently and satisfactorily provided, is within the warm ambience of the bosom of the family. The pattern of love which the child learns within the family, if he learns it well, he will later extend to all human beings.

Love is reciprocal in its effects, and is as beneficial to the giver as it is to the recipient. To love another means to love oneself as well as the other; in this sense, love is the highest form of selfishness as well as the highest form of unselfishness, the best of all forms of conduct for the development of the self, one's own self, and the selves of others.

Love is creative in that it actively participates in the creative development of the loved one as well as contributing toward the further development of the lover.

Love enlarges the capacities of those who are loved and of those who love so that they become increasingly more sensitive in probably all areas of their being.

Love continually elicits, by encouragement, the nascent capacities of the loved one. In the absence of love, those capacities will either fail altogether to be elicited or fail of healthy development. For example, the capacity to feel sensitively, to feel warmly toward others, the capacity to perceive rapidly the changing character of a situation, the capacity to identify with others, the ability to adjust rapidly to rapidly changing conditions, and the like. In all these capacities the person who has been loved is more efficient than the person who has been inadequately loved.

Love is tender, with a tenderness that abjures every form of insensitivity and every form of violence.

Love is joyful, it is pleasure-giving, happiness-producing, it is goodness itself. This does not mean that love is necessarily associated with states of ecstasy or gaiety. Love may produce temporary states of nonpleasure or displeasure, as for example, in children and others who are forbidden some immediate satisfaction for their own "good." Prohibitions stemming from love contribute to the development of the capacity for love and mature character.

Love is fearless. Love has no element of fear in it, and produces no

fear in others. Love braves all conditions and situations in a security-producing manner; hence, love tends to reduce fear, allay suspicion, soften all harshness, and produce peacefulness.

Love enables the person to treat life as an art which the person, as artist, is continually seeking to improve and beautify in all its aspects.

Love as an attitude of mind and as a form of behavior is adaptively the best and most efficient of all adjustive processes in enabling the human being to adapt himself to his environment.

For the person and for the species, love is the form of behavior having the highest survival value.¹³

We do not suggest that within this view a person can say "I love you" only if all these qualities and characteristics are fully matured. It is our understanding that interpersonal love is a growing process with the various components reaching varying plateaus at different times for different individuals. To say "I love you" means the relationship is on a progressive journey; integral to the process is the intention to live toward or in conformity with the view of love set forth by Montagu. An ongoing sensitivity to the likely intrusions of incompatible or wounding forms of love is called for; if these intrusions are effectively guarded against, the ingredients of interpersonal love can deepen throughout the relationship.

Supports for Love. In an interpersonal love relationship, a readiness for patience, for errors confessed and forgiven, and for appropriate self-sacrifice is supportive. Patience is helpful because the rates of progress differ for different persons. For example, two friends may differ in their respective degrees of tenderness, thereby requiring a patient tolerance by one or both of them. Too, mistakes will be made in relationships; debit love or even a serious betrayal might intrude. Wrong decisions, when acknowledged and regretted, can be forgiven and buried. Finally, without adopting martyr love, one person might in a given situation set aside his own needs and desires for the sake of another; patient self-sacrifice in this sense is not the context or goal of the relationship, but a caring act in a particular situation.

In interpersonal love a relationship becomes something different when the qualities and characteristics surveyed in this text are replaced by contradictory ingredients. Though there is no exact science by which we can measure the irretrievable breakdown in interpersonal love, in principle, a relationship is no longer loving in this sense when its quality and characteristics have changed decisively. What may start as interpersonal love can alter; to begin the journey does not guarantee its continuance. An occasional realistic audit can help prevent or accurately declare bankruptcy.

¹³Ashley Montagu, *The Direction of Human Development*, (New York: Harper & Brothers © 1955), pp. 296–298. Reprinted by permission.

Choice of Loves

It is our conviction that interpersonal love, like the other forms of love, can be established between spouses, between parent and child, among other family members, among friends, and so on. Entire communities can be characterized by one or more types of love. It is not enough to agree simplistically that love is the moral norm for human relations; we must also choose the kind of love from the varieties available.

If the fundamental purpose of each person or child of God is to love, it is crucial that an informed choice be made from among conflicting or contrasting "loves." At stake are the relationships each type of love creates and sustains. If love is selected as the fundamental moral norm as well as life's purpose, we benefit by understanding the basic moral implications of each interpretation. In any case, we are again confronted with a pluralism: love has more than one meaning; longing love, selfless love, and interpersonal love are among the historic interpretations chosen by philosophers and theologians, religious and secular. A choice of "loves" and its consequences for a sense of purpose and morality are open to each of us; a mixture of more than one love in a relationship is common and consequential, too.

Love of One's Neighbor: A Moral Norm

Many religious and humanistic moral norms focus on, or at least include, neighbor love. "Love at work" involves paying attention to those people whom our love must reach or encounter. To round off a discussion of love we need to look at its impact on (and our moral obligations toward) neighbors and friends. In the preceding sections we have seen that "love" can mean different things to different people. So can "neighbor."

The Franciscan Neighbor. For St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) there were no limits to "neighbor."

Franciscan monks observe the divinity in all created beings. They are remarkably Eastern in the extent of their reverence for all of life. Much of Christianity has been human-oriented, viewing the human species as God's noblest creation, alone possessed of soul and reason. Francis, however, taught that God was everywhere and in everything and every creature. The Franciscan way is, therefore, one of total humility, the total rejection of ego and the pride engendered in man by his achievements. There can be no meaningful distinction among people or between people and animals. Hence there can be no meaningful separation between oneself and all that is not oneself.¹⁴

¹⁴Richard Paul Janaro, *Philosophy: Something to Believe In* (Beverly Hills: Glencoe, 1975), p. 314.

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be traveling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have.' Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbor to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?" "The one who took pity on him," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Go, and do the same yourself."

Luke 10:25-37 (*The Jerusalem Bible*)

In this view all creation is one's neighbor and should be loved accordingly. The Good Samaritan parable teaches mankind to reach out with love to all. (An ecological implication of this position will be considered in Chapter 16.)

The Universal Neighbor. A second understanding of "neighbor" is based on a prior understanding of something we share in common with all human beings—the gift of creation, the gift of human life. We are automatically neighbors with those with whom we share this common gift, that is, with all other human beings. We are so personally related to the rest of the world that one could argue that the roads down which we walk, directly or indirectly, circle the entire earth. We are living in a time when our responsibility to those who are beaten and lying beside the road must be recognized; we must take into account the fact that we are all part of an international community, we have international institutions that reach to all parts of the globe. The Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches humankind to reach out with love to all fellow human beings. The Danish philosopher

Kierkegaard interpreted the universal neighbor (without reference to international institutions) as follows:

The category *neighbour* is just like the category human being. Every one of us is a human being and at the same time the heterogeneous individual which he is by particularity; but being a human being is the fundamental qualification. . . . No one should be preoccupied with the differences so that he cowardly or presumptuously forgets that he is a human being; no man is an exception to being a human being by virtue of his particularising differences. He is rather a human being and then a particular human being.¹⁵

The Individual Neighbor. A third understanding of “neighbor” is based on an interpersonal view of love, that to “love” one’s neighbor includes the qualities and characteristics of reciprocity as an actual possibility. This kind of love is very much person-to-person, individually and communally. Neighbor loves neighbor face-to-face in the wider context of the human community.

This interpretation does not exclude persons not identified as neighbors from one’s concern, compassion, or outreach. It holds that for love to be truly personal, love for neighbor is different from the broader caring for persons throughout a nation or the entire planet. I *love* my neighbor as myself; I am *concerned about* and *care for* humanity in general. A contemporary theologian has put it this way:

Love of man is still too general a description. We are speaking certainly of universal humanity, but we must be more precise. In Jesus’ way of speaking, there is not even a hint of “embracing millions,” of “a kiss for the whole world,” as in the poem by Schiller, turned by Beethoven in the Ninth Symphony into a great hymn to joy. A kiss of that kind costs nothing: it is not like kissing this one sick, imprisoned, underprivileged, starving man. . . . love is *not simply love of man but essentially love of neighbor*. It is a love, not of man in general, of someone remote, with whom we are not personally involved, but quite concretely of one’s immediate neighbor. . . . But *who* is my neighbor? Jesus does not answer with a definition or a more precise qualification, still less with a law—but—as so often—with a story, an exemplary narrative. According to this, my neighbor is not merely someone who is close to me from the very beginning: a member of my family, my circle of friends, my class, my party, my people. My neighbor can also be a stranger, anyone who turns up at this particular juncture. It is impossible to work out in advance who my neighbor will be. This is the meaning of the story of the man fallen among thieves: my neighbor is *anyone who needs me here and now*.¹⁶

¹⁵Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 142.

¹⁶Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 255–258.

The primary difference between the “universal neighbor” and the “individual neighbor” is a matter of scope, or in other words, the boundaries of the neighborhood. The former excludes no one from love; the latter distinguishes between neighbor love and concern (not “love”) for all persons. Love for my universal neighbor calls for my active, personal, moral responsibility and affection for all persons; love for my individual neighbor implies primary personal moral responsibility and affection for anyone who needs me at this particular juncture here and now, wherever we meet face to face. (Whether a legitimate need consists only of a *victimized* person on the road or of anyone with *any* need is an issue for additional consideration and debate.)

Unlike love for a Franciscan or universal neighbor, love for an individual neighbor can accommodate a prioritizing of love and personal moral responsibility. My love can be limited to my “significant other(s),”¹⁷ my family, my friends, and any others (co-workers, residential neighbors, and strangers) I meet on the road.

Others beyond my neighborhood, that is, persons I do not meet face to face on the road, I do care about, seek justice for, support the real needs of as I am able—but with a lesser degree of personal, moral responsibility than for my individual neighbor. In the view of individual neighbor, I *love* my neighbor as myself; I *care* actively for the rest of humankind. (Within the individual neighbor view, it is arguable whether one’s moral responsibility and affection are merely different from what one feels for the rest of humankind or simply engender less personal involvement.)

A Choice of Neighbors

“In our law, there’s no duty to rescue someone or save someone’s life. . . . Our society is based on the right and the sanctity of the individual.” . . . As a factual claim about the law in the United States, Judge Flaherty’s statement is essentially correct. Furthermore, it is probably true that the law as it is today reflects a conception of the rights and sanctities of the individual that has prevailed throughout much of our legal history. But it is not uncommon for legal theorists and philosophers to bemoan the opinion cited by Judge Flaherty and to argue for the introduction of Bad Samaritan laws. Such laws would place civil or criminal liability on an individual for failing to rescue another, even if the parties are strangers.¹⁸

“And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29) has been answered pluralistically within secular and religious contexts. Franciscan, universal, and indi-

¹⁷By “significant other(s)” we mean the person(s) with whom a person is most intimate emotionally, the one(s) with whom a person is bonded and self-disclosed. Examples may include one’s spouse or lover, celibate men and/or women living in community, and so on.

¹⁸Eric Mack, “Bad Samaritanism and the Causation of Harm,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1980), p. 230.

vidual models of "neighbor" can be found among poets, legal theorists, philosophers, theologians, social scientists and citizens. Those persons committed to a conservative interpretation that "our society is based on the right and the sanctity of the individual" may find these three models of "neighbor"—and perhaps all views—incompatible with their convictions. Not only do we have before us a choice of "loves" but also a choice of "neighbors"—and we have the option of rejecting them all!

We now turn our attention to a particular type of neighbor with whom love is fundamental—those neighbors we call friends.

FRIENDSHIP

Someone Else Should Be Your Friend

Independence when carried too far can lead to isolation. In the extreme, "Do your *own* thing" fails to account for the other things that can be shared by companions. Doing my thing independently can permeate institutions that by their very nature are communal rather than lone ventures. An elderly, self-sufficient New Yorker commented in one brief conversation on both her loneliness and her fondness for the large cathedral in which she worshipped—where she "didn't have to bother with anybody." (No doubt in lonely leisure she enjoyed the book *How To Be Your Own Best Friend*.) She perceived no sense of community at her place of worship; if friendship were there, she probably would have rejected it as an invasion of her privacy and self-sufficiency. It is our belief that friendship is not an optional luxury or nuisance; it is essential to the social or communal nature of human beings. We propose further that friendship is best shared with other human beings, not with oneself, a book, a car, hobbies, or pets. It is pathetic to believe seriously that "a dog is man's best friend."

The topic of friendship has surfaced recently in magazines and books.¹⁹ However, there has been surprisingly little focus on friendship in religious literature.²⁰ Instead the religious groups that do talk about human relations appear to be preoccupied almost exclusively with the nuclear family. Family relationships, as central to life as they are, do not meet all the relational needs of most people. Many individuals want relationships of significance beyond immediate blood-family bonds. Those persons with few or no family ties may seek fellowship, too. This is not to downgrade nuclear family relationships (which we shall examine in the next chapter); it is to affirm the goodness of other consciously chosen relationships, relationships usually labeled "friendship."

¹⁹See Charles Fried, "Love, Friendship, and Trust," chapter 5 in *An Anatomy of Values* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970); Christine Leefeldt and Ernest Callenbach, *The Art of Friendship* (New York: Pantheon, 1979); and *Psychology Today* 13, no. 4 (March 1979).

²⁰Religious explorations include Andrew M. Greeley, *The Friendship Game* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970) and Martin E. Marty, *Friendship* (Allen, Texas: Argus, 1980).

The Meaning of "Friend"

At the outset we ought to distinguish between "friendship" and "being friendly." Friendliness is being well-disposed toward people or having a friendly disposition. However, one can be friendly but not have one single friend; friendliness does not imply the actuality of friendship.

The word "friend" originates from an Anglo-Saxon verb meaning "to love." A dictionary meaning is "one attached to another by esteem, respect, and affection; an intimate." Less formally, "a friend is simply someone you spend time with because it's enjoyable to do so and not because it's profitable, useful, or necessary. Friendship is a free and equal nonutilitarian relationship."²¹ In a sense, a friend is an intimate neighbor.

The Bonding Principle

A key to understanding human relationships is the "bonding principle." When we walk into a room full of people we don't know, we look for something we have in common with the people we meet. As conversations begin, we listen for something that will bond us with others: a common interest or experience, persons known in common, and so on. Whatever bonds us for the moment or longer can be called the "bonding principle" for a particular relationship.

The bonding principle sets the boundaries and style of a relationship. If we bond as co-workers, we are likely to "talk shop" and relate as colleagues (not necessarily agreeably). If we bond as students, we will probably focus on school experiences. Bonds such as these, while perfectly wholesome, are not friendships. Collegial relationships are not personally close, affectionate or intimate, although they may be very congenial in terms of a particular limited experience. Yet it is not uncommon to be introduced or referred to as so-and-so's *friend*, even though the most you've shared are desks in the same room, income from the same employer, or beds in the same hospital room! (Perhaps a new use of "neighbor" would be better.)

Investments and Expectations

We frequently expect too much from relationships bonded by work and other limited aspects of life. "We've got to get together sometime" is said frequently by co-workers who get along well on the job. If they do visit, they may experience a let-down feeling; everyone is a congenial person, but, at least initially, conversations about the few matters known to be in common may be sparse. If too much is expected from new relationships, if

²¹Leefeldt and Callenbach, p. 6.

people visit initially with a pretense of intimacy, disappointment can result. We often invest more in new relationships than is actually there; our unrealistic expectations for instant companionship cannot deliver the quality of a relationship nurtured by years of love.

Visits with relatives can likewise be a disappointment. We may assume that because we're related biologically, we have a great deal in common and will get along well. With great anticipation we host or vacation with cousins, aunts and uncles, and even brothers and sisters. In fact, some relatives for whom we have a genuine fondness and concern are not friends. We do not spend much time with them, and we are not attached to them by esteem and respect, though elements of affection are genuine. The bonding principle may be a combination of a nostalgic affection and biology rather than an active common history of ongoing love. Consequently, many central holidays spent with some relatives are anticipated with much excitement but cannot provide more than a somewhat hollow, congenial tolerance. In some cases such occasions result in cold or hot wars as individuals compete for status.

Workers who bond with co-workers solely on their common experiences on the job are destined to isolation or reminiscences after retirement. Alumni gatherings every five or ten years can be of the same quality.

We are not proposing that we ought, therefore, to ignore all our relatives, co-workers, fellow alumni, and the like. Instead, such relationships can be seen for what they are; as with any relationship, they have boundaries and styles determined by whatever bonding principle exists in fact, not fantasy. We cannot expect more from any relationship than has been actually invested by the persons involved.

"Friendship," by its root meaning, implies the bonding principle of love, not merely biology, performances, roles, a common ethnic background, gender, or sexual orientation. The very essence of friendship depends on which view of love is linked to the meaning of friendship. Friendship consisting of selfless love as the bonding principle will differ somewhat from longing love or from interpersonal love. Each can give substance to "friendship" as can any combination of "loves." (Leefeldt and Callenbach's informal definition of "friend" seems to imply interpersonal love as ideal.) Friendships sour when the quality and type of love we believe is essential is inactive; sometimes friendships are doomed to failure because each person brings to the relationship a different view of love. For example, if one person's idea of love is debit love and the other's is possessive love, the relationship in fact has two different bonding principles, each labeled "love."

MORALITY, LOVE, AND FRIENDSHIP

A discussion of love, neighbor, and friendship is integral to the study of morality because we can safely predict that most people will continue to

echo the theme "what the world needs now is love. . . ." We can be equally sure that most individuals will seek to bond with others casually or as neighbors and friends, and we will find love proposed as the ideal norm for human relations and morality by the majority of scholars and citizens.

We cannot expect, however, a consensus on the meaning of "love," "neighbor," or "friendship." We shall not be surprised to discover interpretations of love that imply a set of absolute rules as moral maxims; other interpretations will be applied situationally with moral guides.

The inevitability of pluralism on these and other issues does not necessitate moral chaos, but moral differences. Some remaining questions confront us: Which interpretations of love, neighbor, and friendship can coexist in peaceful tolerance? To what extent can we agree to differ? By what method do we rule out particular views? As an individual, what are my criteria for choosing or rejecting a particular interpretation of love, neighbor, and friendship, and a particular method of moral decision making?

CHAPTER REVIEW

A. What the world needs now

1. For centuries "love" has been seen as central to human relations.
2. In recent years a clear deterioration in feelings of happiness and well-being prevails among Americans.
3. A sense of loneliness accompanies much unhappiness; a sense of incompleteness and a feeling that the quality and quantity of love in the individual's life is less than what is needed.
4. Our assumption is that love is essential to human fulfillment; to love and be loved is the fundamental purpose of life and the basic moral norm.
5. "Love" has been interpreted with various meanings.

B. Varieties of love

1. The various meanings of "love" include springtime love, dependent love, solo love, debit love, aggressive love, martyr love, possessive love, longing love, selfless love, and interpersonal love.
2. Each has a different impact on human relations.
3. A choice of "loves" and its consequences for a sense of purpose and morality is open to each of us.
4. Neighbor love can mean the "Franciscan neighbor," the universal neighbor, or the individual neighbor.
5. Respective answers to "Who is my neighbor?" have consequences for the scope of neighbor love.

C. Friendship

1. Friendship is best shared with other human beings, that is, in chosen relationships among men and women not limited to one's biological family.
2. Friendship is a free and equal, nonutilitarian relationship of interpersonal love.
3. The bonding principle, whatever bonds people for a particular relationship of any duration, sets the boundaries and style of a relationship.
4. Unrealistic investments and expectations in a relationship cannot provide a friendship, bonded by interpersonal love nurtured over a period of years.

D. Morality, love, and friendship

1. Love will continue to be proposed as the ideal norm for human relations and morality by the majority of scholars and citizens.
2. The *meanings* of love, neighbor, and friendship will continue to vary, thereby offering options as choices are made.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Blum, Lawrence A. *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.

A study of the nature and moral significance of friendship and a defense of sympathy, compassion, and concern for other human beings; also, a critique of moral views that have their roots in Kant's philosophy.

Boas, Charles. "Love," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, V (89-95). New York: Macmillan, Free Press, 1967.

An historical survey of love from classical mythology through Freud; an excellent bibliography of primary and secondary sources concludes the essay.

De Rougemont, Denis. "Love," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, III (94-108). New York: Scribners, 1973.

Five basic concepts of love and their manifestations in Western civilization; a useful but limited bibliography.

Leefeldt, Christine and Callenbach, Ernest. *The Art of Friendship*. New York: Pantheon, 1979.

A human relations study that draws on the actual experiences of hundreds of men and women as they provide insights on how friendships are built and preserved.

McGinnis, Alan Loy. *The Friendship Factor*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979.

A pastoral counselor's views with case histories and anecdotes.

Outka, Gene. *Agape: An Ethical Analysis*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1972.

The most comprehensive account to date of modern treatments of the love commandment bringing together analytic moral philosophy and theological ethics; liberal footnotes provide valuable bibliographical data.

Yankelovich, Daniel. *New Rules*. New York: Random House, 1981.

A psychologist's proposal that Americans are moving culturally further and further away from a common, rigid set of personal and social values, toward a widening acceptance of cultural pluralism and at the same time toward an ethic of interpersonal commitment.