

Staff Conversation

*** Who in this room is saved?**

*** Who in this room will be saved
some day in the future?**

*** Who in this room is being saved
more and more each day?**

The “Three Tenses” of Salvation

1. Past Tense – Kingdom people “have been saved” (Ephesians 2:5)
2. Future Tense – Kingdom people “will be saved” (Matthew 24:13)

3. Present Tense – Kingdom people “are being saved” (I Corinthians 1:18)

*** God is “saving us” by transforming our characters into the image of Jesus through the intentional human relationships we share together**

The Woodland Hills Church Covenant

As a follower of Jesus Christ, I recognize the biblical call to, and spiritual value of, covenant relationships with other Christians. I choose to unite in covenant with the local body of Woodland hills Church.

I have read and I affirm the Statements of Mission, Vision, Values, and Faith, and I commit to

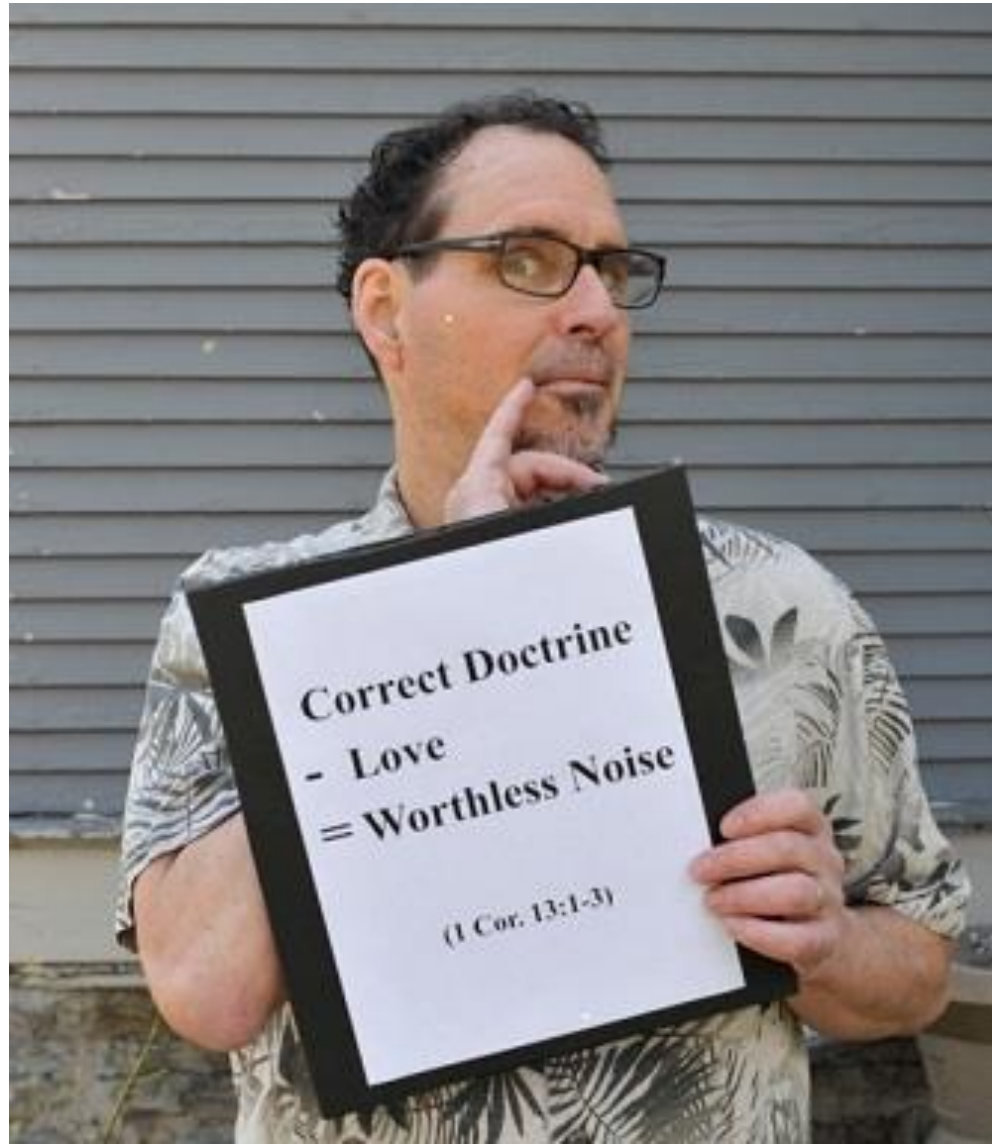
- Follow the leadership of Woodland Hills as they seek to accomplish the mission**
- Live a life that is consistent with Scripture**

- **Use my spiritual gift(s) in ministry inside and/or outside the church**
- **Support the ministry of Woodland Hills Church through prayer, attendance, and, as the Lord leads, finances.**

- **Practice right relatedness with God and others by maintaining relationships that are characterized by covenant trust and faithfulness, by avoiding dissention, gossip, and self-centeredness, and by doing all I can to heal broken relationships.**

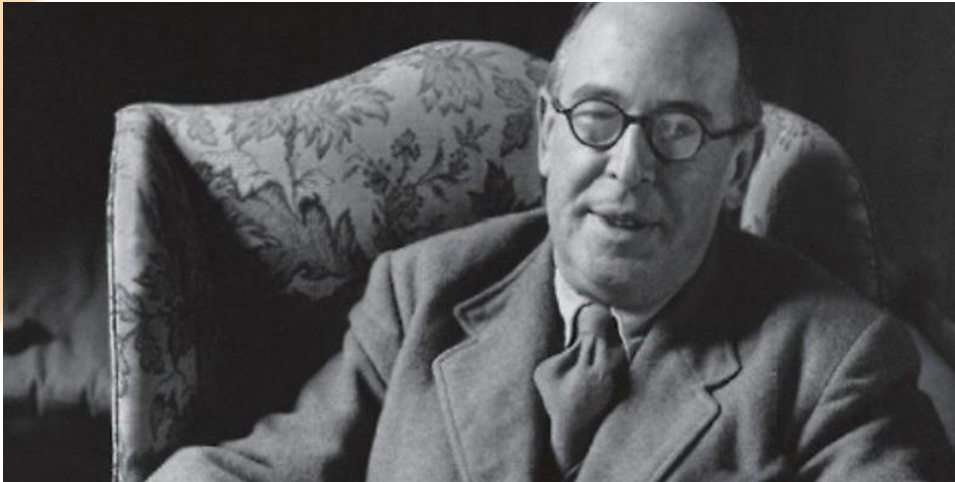
*** A new idea that is really a very old idea**

Greg's Big Idea!



- **The modern world “ignores it” We treat it as something quite “marginal, not as a main course in life’s banquet. It’s a diversion.” We use it as something that fills up the empty spaces of our time.**

– C. S. Lewis



FRIENDSHIP

*** Throughout the centuries, Friendship was an important relationship for spiritual growth & discipleship**

*** The modern church has largely lost this vision of Friendship**

*** We will need to deconstruct and reconstruct our understanding of Friendship if we want to recover it as an important Kingdom relationship!**

The Importance of Friendship in the Ancient World

* “To the ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it.”

– C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

1. *The Four Loves*

a. *Storge* – Affectionate love

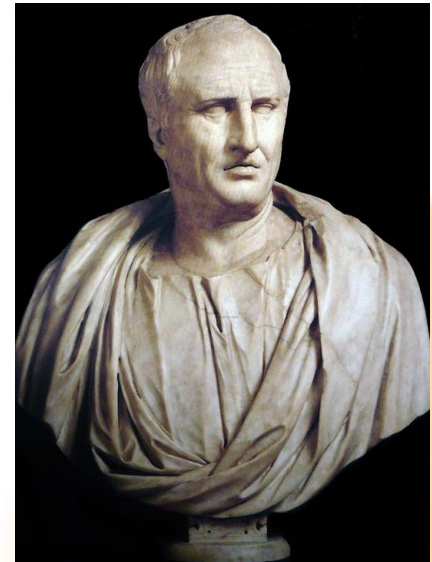
b. *Eros* – Romantic love

c. *Philia* – Friendship love

d. *Agape* - other-oriented, choice-based love that is self-sacrificial when required, and which seeks the ultimate well-being of others, including one's “enemies”

2. Cicero (Roman Philosopher & Statesman)

*** “We need friendship all the time, just as much as we need the proverbial prime necessities of life, fire and water.”**

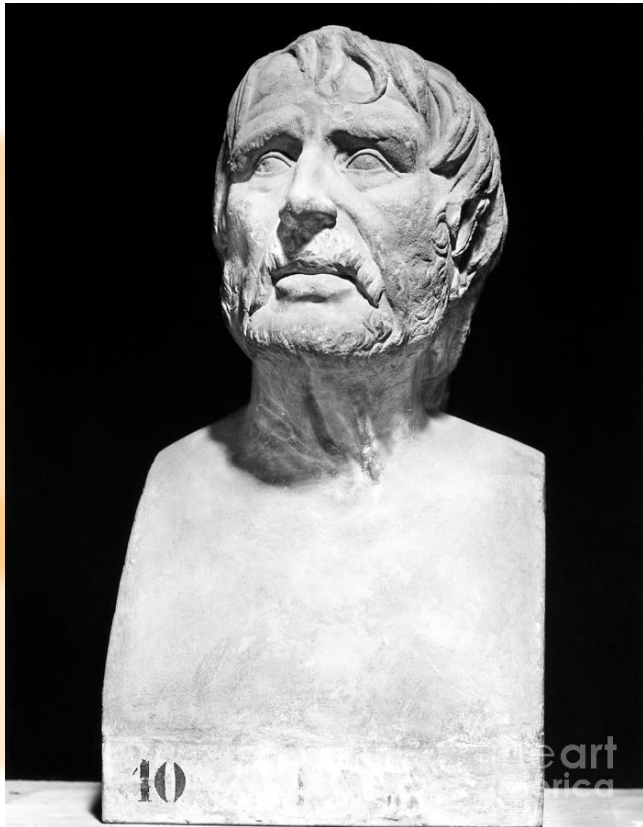


*** “Friendship is “the most valuable of all human possessions”**

*** “The bonds which nature has established to link one member of the human race with another are innumerable. But friendship not only surpasses them all, but is something so choice and selective that its manifestations are normally restricted to two persons and two persons only – or, at most, a very few.”**

3. Seneca (Roman Philosopher & Statesman)

* “To lose a friend is the greatest of evils”



*** “For what purpose, then, do I make a man my friend? In order to have someone for whom I may die. A man whom I may follow into exile, against whose death I may stake my own life, and then go on to pay that pledge.”**

*** “If you consider any person a friend whom you do not trust as much as you trust yourself, then you are seriously confused about real friendship and do not understand what true friendship means... Before we enter a true friendship with someone, we must assess their character carefully to see if they are trustworthy. But once we enter into a committed friendship with someone, we are called to place our trust in them.”**

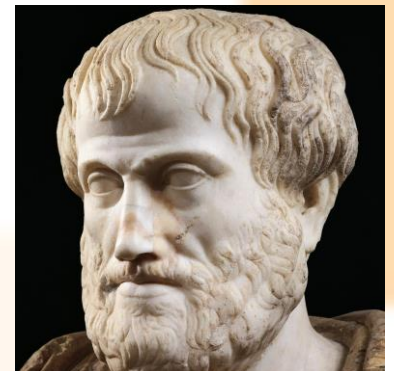
4. Aristotle

*** Without friends, no one would want to live, even if he had all other goods.”**

*** Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship itself is a slow ripening fruit.”**

*** “The antidote for fifty enemies is one friend.”**

– *Nicomachean Ethics*



*** “A friend is a second self.”**

*** “What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies.”**

Bonus Aristotle quote:

*** “Mothers are fonder of their children than fathers are, because they are more certain they are their own.”**

*** Aristotle theory of friendship –**

True friends share three things:

a. They enjoy each other's company

b. They are helpful & useful to each other

c. They share a commitment to “the Good,” and to a mutual pursuit of growing in character & moral virtue

The Importance of Friendship in the Bible

*** “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born to share adversity.”**

– Prov 17:17

*** “A man of many friends comes to ruin.
But there is a friend who sticks closer
than a brother.”**

– Prov 18:24

Biblical models of Friendship

1. Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17)

**2. David and Jonathan (I Sam 18:1-4;
I Sam 20)**

*** “I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother. You were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women”
(II Sam 1:26)**

3. Jesus and his close friends

- * Peter, James & John**

- * Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-44)**

*** “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.**

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing. But I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.”

– John 15:12-15

The Decline of Deep, Intimate Friendships in the Modern World

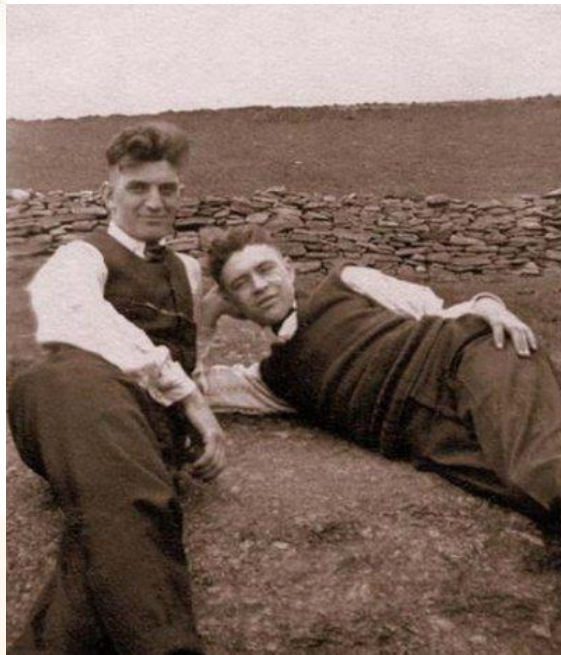
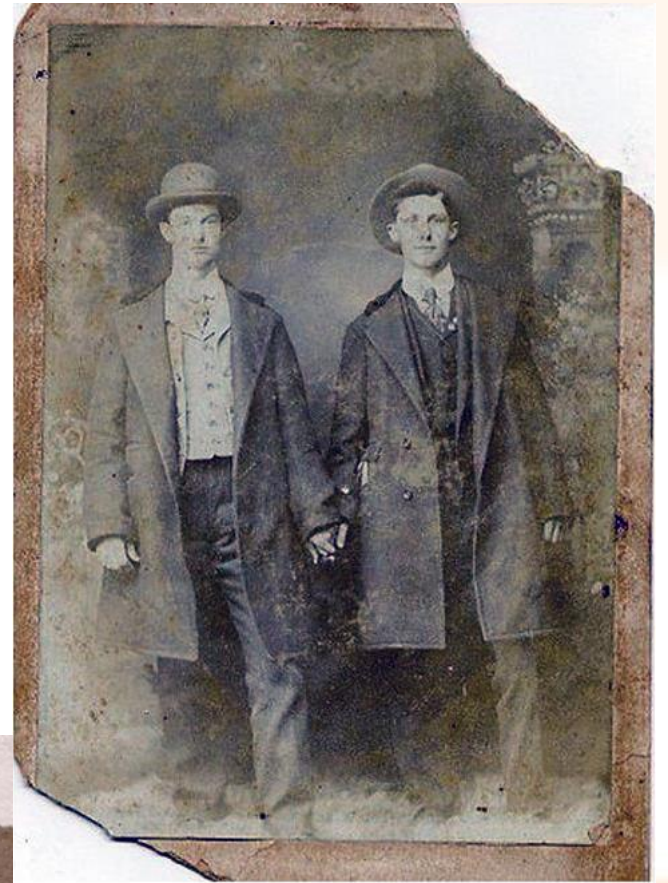
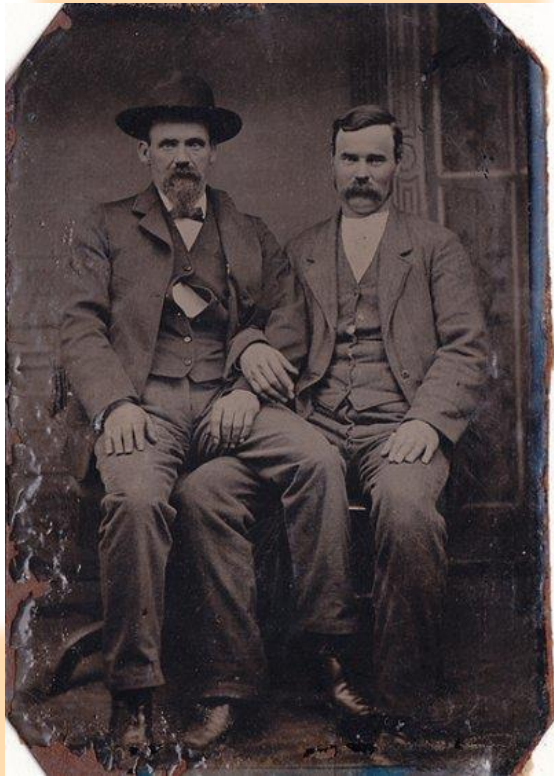
*** For thousands of years, deep, intimate same-sex friendships were common for both men and women**

*** Common characteristics of deep, same-sex friendships up until the 20th century**

1. They were formed by strong bonds of commitment

2. The main thing that people were attracted to in a friend was the person's character qualities & trustworthiness

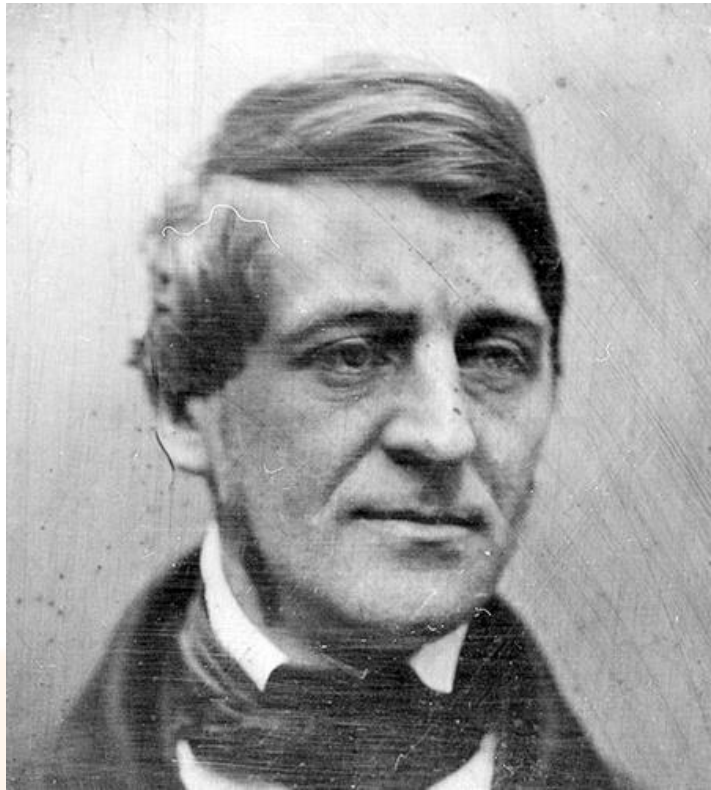
3. Same-sex friendships were both verbally and physically affectionate (*philia* and *storge* loves) – even for men!





“Malcomb, I love thee more than women love. And pure and warm and equal is the feeling, which binds as one our destinies forever.”

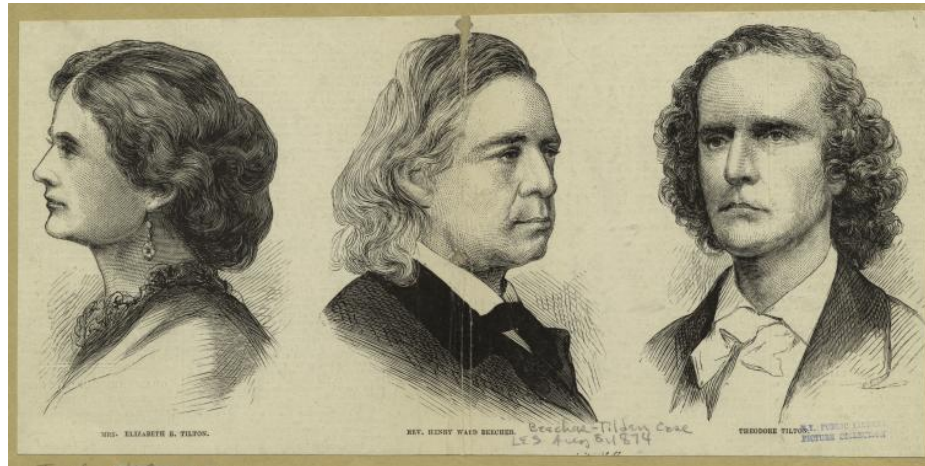
– Ralph Waldo Emerson to his friend Malcomb



*** “I can hardly trust myself to speak or write of him: so is my whole being seized with love and admiration of his most worthy character”
– Theodore Weld (19th c. abolitionist)
of his friend Stuart**



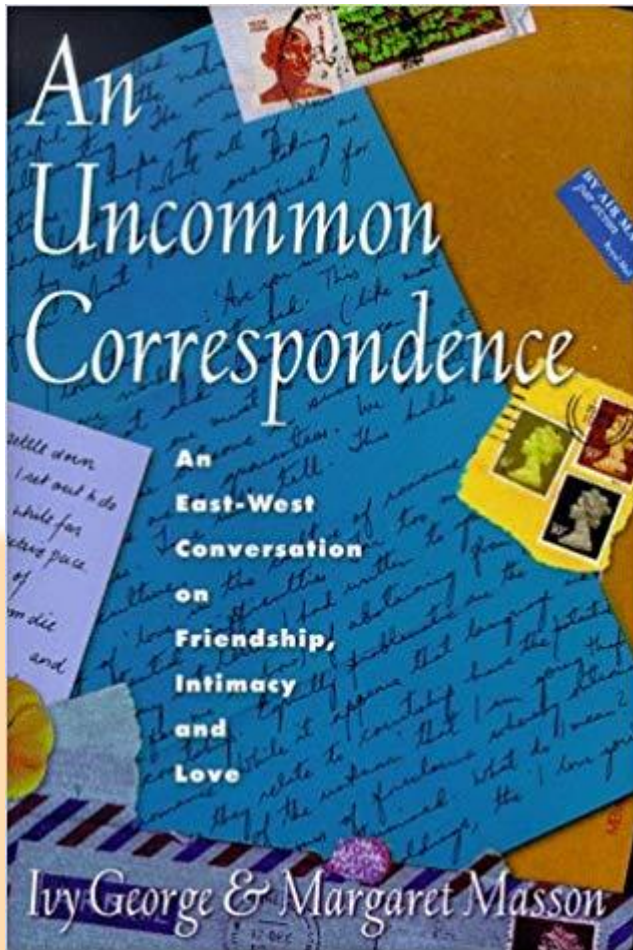
Theodore Tilton described his friend Henry Ward Beecher's letters to him as "so many kisses . . . Send some more! . . . I toss you a bushel of flowers and a mouthful of kisses." Tilton often expressed his desire to gaze into Beecher's eyes.



*** Intimate same-sex friendships were generally free of suspicion or fear of becoming erotic**

– A pre-homophobic culture

*** In the early 20th century, this common trend of deep, intimate friendships – especially among men – began to decline in the Western world**



Ivy George

Male Friendship in America (2006 study)

- * Adult men report having the fewest friends**
- * When men get together, they're more likely to do stuff than have a conversation**

- * The male friendships that men do have tend to provide less emotional support and involve lower levels of self-disclosure and trust than other reported types of friendship**
- * When men report having a close confidant, three-quarters of the time it's a woman (usually a wife or girlfriend)**

1981

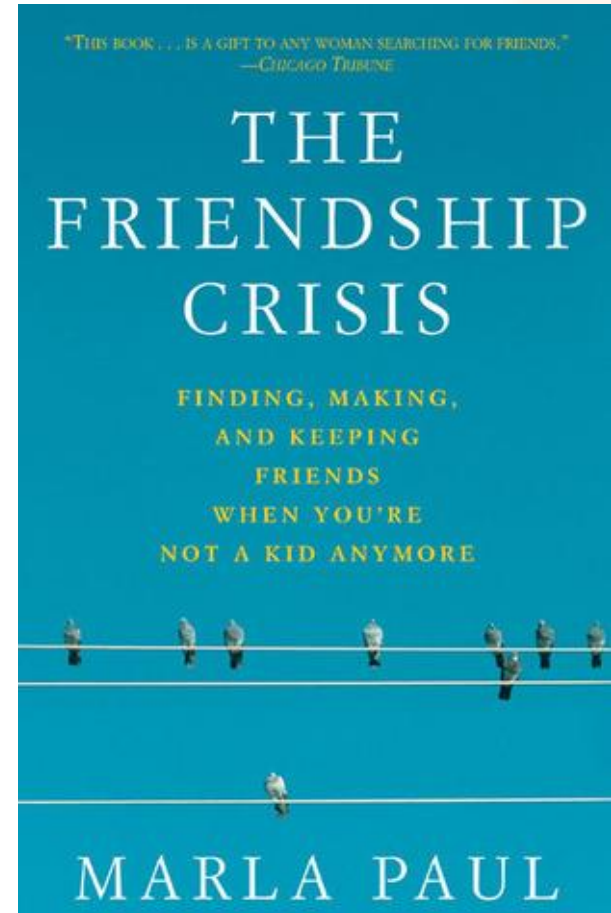
THE FRIENDLESS AMERICAN MALE



DAVID W. SMITH

FOREWORD BY JIM CONWAY

Marla Paul



– “We don't talk about friendship troubles. We're embarrassed about it, even ashamed of it. We blame ourselves, and then we start to question our likability, and we wonder why we don't have that fantasy group of friends that everybody else in the world must have. What women have to realize is that having a lot of close friends is, in fact, a fantasy for most people.”

– Marla Paul, *The Friendship Crisis*

The Challenge of Friendship in our Culture

*** 2008 BarnaGroup Poll**

1) 74% of American adults stated that having “close personal friendships” is one of their chief goals in life

2) But 40% of American adults stated that they are still trying to develop “a few good friends”

