

*Surprise the World by Michael Frost | Chapters 1 – 2*

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

On p. 2, Frost writes that, “[believers] bear responsibility to share out love for Jesus with others.”

- He then asks, however, “**Are we really all evangelists?**”
- **What is your answer? Why?**

Frost challenges the idea that every Christian is expected to be an evangelist, suggesting instead that:

The apostle Paul assumes a twofold approach to the ministry of evangelism. First, he affirms the gifting of the evangelist – interestingly, not the gift of evangelism but the evangelist herself is the gift (see Ephesians 4:11). Second, he writes as though all believers are to be evangelistic in their general orientation.

Examples from Paul:

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? (1 Cor. 12:27-30)

And he gave [to the Church] the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12)

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone (Col. 4:2-6)

Based on Frost’s reading of Paul, God appoints in the church men and women who are *gifted* evangelists to *equip* the church to be effective *witnesses*.<sup>1</sup>

Type of Minister	Priorities	Type of Spoken Ministry
Gifted Evangelists	Clarity in the Gospel; Alertness for Opportunities.	Bold Proclamation
Evangelistic (or “missional”) Believers	Prayer, Watchfulness, Wise Socializing	Gracious Answers

**Discussion Question 5 (p. 110):** Does the twofold approach to evangelism described by the author ring true for you? Why or why not?

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<sup>1</sup> “Witness” is a New Testament word that is helpfully broad. Evangelism fits under the umbrella of witness, but so do acts like blessing, eating, praying, being generous, etc.

I find Frost's approach *freeing*. Those who aren't gifted evangelists aren't excluded from being evangelical (or missional).

- They can still witness to God's kingdom and contribute to its unfolding by "living questionable lives," which Frost defines as "the kinds of lives that evoke questions from their friends, [which present] opportunities for sharing faith" (5).

How do we practice, "living questionable lives"? Writes Frost, "the answer has something to do with the kind of missional habits we adopt" (20).

- Habits *both* reveal *and* form values.
- We need to adopt (and *practice*) habits that reveal and reinforce Christianity's *core value*: *That God has, in Christ, reconciled the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them.*
  - o We need "missional habits."

Frost writes, "By *missional*, I mean all that we do and say that alerts others to the reign of God... Mission is both the announcement and the demonstration of the reign of God through Christ" (21).

- The habits Frost recommends (B.E.L.L.S. model) are:

<b>Bless</b>	I will bless three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.
<b>Eat</b>	I will eat with three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.
<b>Listen</b>	I will spend at least one period of the week listening for the Spirit's voice.
<b>Learn</b>	I will spend at least one period of the week learning Christ.
<b>Sent</b>	I will journal throughout the week about all the ways I alerted others to the universal reign of Christ.

The missional values these habits reveal and reinforce:

**Bless** → Generosity  
**Eat** → Hospitality  
**Listen** → Spirit-led  
**Learn** → Christlike  
**Sent** → Missional

**Discussion Question 1 (p. 109):** The author sees [such habits] as "essential" aspects of Christian faith. What do you think makes them essential?

**Discussion Question 2 (p. 109):** Which of those "essentials" are most natural and comfortable for you? Which of them are difficult for you?

What it looks like when the church "surprises the world" – pp. 7-10.

- Read the correspondence between emperor Julian (AD 331-363) and his officials about the Christian community.

**Discussion Question 6 (p. 110):** What surprises you about the behavior of the early church and its impact on Roman culture?

**Discussion Question 7 (p. 110):** In what ways do you see the contemporary church surprising (or failing to surprise) the broader culture through its behavior?

A question to reflect on in closing: 1 Peter 3:15-16 instructs, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

- If *habits* and *behaviors* are what raises question about our lives, consider your life: *Who's asking?*