

Surprise the World!

Week One: A Surprising Faith

Read the Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2 from Surprise the World by Michael Frost

Get Connected: Share your name, and tell about someone in the faith that you looked up to, considered a saint, and what was it about the way they lived that stood out to you.

Bible Study:

You are invited to engage with scripture each week using an ancient practice called *lectio divina*. Read the scripture once. Allow a minute of silence following, and then each person answers the first question. Read the scripture aloud the second time, followed with a minute of silence, and then each person answers the second question. Read the scripture a third time, hold a minute of silence, and then answer the third question. It is most helpful that everyone have the scripture in front of them so they can underline phrases and make notes regarding the question. The other important practice to this form of engaging with the scripture is holy listening. Each person listens deeply to the other's response without interruption or dialogue. At the end of the three rounds, if the group would like to enter into dialogue and conversation with the scripture that is the appropriate time. A person can certainly pass answering a question at any time. Listen for what the Spirit seeks to share with you in this living encounter with the Word.

Romans 12: 1-2

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life---and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

What is the word or phrase that captures your imagination?

Where have you become well-adjusted to the culture?

What is God inviting you to do, change or be through this passage?

Video: Show week one video of Rev. Cindy Gregorson introducing the idea of living curious lives.

Discuss:

- 1) Michael Frost sees engaging neighbors, connecting with each other, experiencing God's leading, understanding Jesus's life and teaching, and understanding ourselves as missionaries each as "essential" aspects of Christian faith? Do you agree? What do you think makes them essential? Which of these "essentials" are more natural or comfortable for you? Which of them are difficult for you?
- 2) What comes to mind when you hear the word "evangelism"?
- 3) Are there things you find yourself being a natural evangelist for? Things you just can't help sharing about with those you care about? What makes it easy or hard to share about our faith?
- 4) In what ways do you see the contemporary church surprising (or failing to surprise) the broader culture through its behavior?
- 5) The author suggests that Christian philanthropy and "a fine upstanding middle-class lifestyle" are not "questionable" in a way that leads people to faith. Why do you think that is? What makes a behavior "questionable" or "surprising?"

Action Step: Pay attention this week to how approachable you are, and try an experiment of smiling and saying hello to each person you meet and see what happens.

Conclude: Join hands and go around the circle, with each person saying what they thank God for, and what they ask God for, and then all join in the Lord's Prayer.

If you decide to use the Michael Frost videos that can be found at <http://www.crossover.org.au/surprise-the-world/>, you could show the Minnesota Conference one as you begin, and then you use the get connected question as a follow up, and show the Michael Frost video after the Bible study.