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This revised and updated edition is presented as a tribute to the late Rob Frost – a man of vision, compassion and unflagging zeal for sharing Jesus.

Rob Frost was a remarkable man. He had a passion for telling people about Jesus which was infectious…

Nicky Gumbel, Alpha
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Dedicated

to all those thousands of Christians
who have dared to share Jesus in the UK
and in different parts of the world.

Share Jesus INTERNATIONAL

Share Jesus International (SJI) is a mission charity
founded by the Rev Dr Rob Frost in 2001.

SJI works with a spectrum of Church denominations,
networks and organisations, communicating the
message of Jesus.

For many years SJI ran Easter People, a national conference
of over of 8,000 people; Share Jesus missions, working with
hundreds of local churches; and national tours celebrating
music and the arts including Hope and Dreams.

The work continues today with the Pentecost Festival and
numerous other mission projects.

For more details: www.sharejesusinternational.com
It was a blustery November evening when Rob passed into eternity. I stood in the quiet intensive care unit as my father, surrounded by complex machines and cables, breathed his last. It was a holy moment. Something of God touched our lives in the solemnity.

All the technical apparatus that surrounded his bed could not maintain his earthly existence. His spirit had left... his empty body was motionless... he had gone. But there was no doubt as to where he had gone. He was set for an eternity with his heavenly Father.

The reality of the situation brought home to me once again the truth of the gospel – the gospel that Rob had preached... the gospel that he had lectured on... the gospel for which he toured with vast casts and orchestras... the gospel he had made TV shows about... the gospel that he had written about in the pages of this book... this was the same gospel that carried him to be with his Maker.

In my father’s last weeks, he lived with the reality of death almost as if he was in a departure lounge between this life and the full newness of life. During this time of soul-searching, he knew a greater sense of the promises of Jesus. These promises gave him a depth of peace during the sleepless nights and painful surgery.

Rob leaves a great legacy. His life was well lived because his life was focused not on the temporary but on what was eternal.

For the past six years, I have lived and worked alongside my father at Share Jesus International. They have not always been easy times. I never planned to work with my dad! But, over these years, my dad modelled to me what is really most important in life.
I have a vast array of memories of how we dreamed and schemed for the kingdom of God together. We both loved to think creatively and it was often at one in the morning, seasoned with prayer, when the best ideas would come to light. Over late-night cups of tea or good curries, we would cast vision and allow God to birth fresh inspiration.

Rob achieved great things. He pioneered massive touring productions from which Cliff Richard’s ‘Millennium Prayer’ reached number one in the charts. He held massive televised services making the News at Ten with people such as Princess Diana. He travelled the globe speaking at prestigious conferences to thousands of people.

But the lasting legacy is not the big productions. The most important legacy he left is in people’s individual lives. In the condolence cards lining the shelves and floor of our home as I write this, two messages repeatedly shine through. First of all, people have written simply to say ‘thanks’. They share memories of how Rob introduced them to Jesus. Whether it was over a coffee or in a church gathering, God used Rob to introduce many people to Jesus. This ministry was not just about preaching Jesus from a platform but about taking everyday opportunities with the cabbie, the hairdresser and the person sitting next to him on the plane.

The other message that has come strongly through the messages of condolence is that many people discovered their call through Rob’s work. Between appointments, Rob always had time for a chat with all sorts of people. He encouraged them to share their faith. He allowed people to step up into new things. And through his work many people have been mobilised into mission and evangelism.

In a world that is losing all understanding of who Jesus is, those of us who love and follow him have an unprecedented opportunity. No denomination, no ministry, no book and no personality can bring change in the way that meeting Jesus can transform people. As Rob communicates so passionately in this book, we need to return to our core charge: to share Jesus. The same great commission that catapulted the early Church into creating a revolutionary Jesus-sharing movement mobilised my father to action – and now releases me to
see God’s kingdom come.

The baton passes to another generation. God used Rob’s surrendered life – and so God can use ours. We need to let Rob’s life well lived challenge us to be carriers of God’s grace and mercy into the world. It’s all about sharing Jesus – the core value that unpinned Rob’s life and all that we have ever done as an organisation.

When people ask us, ‘So, what do you do?’ let there be no hiding. We share Jesus.

Andy Frost
January 2008
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PRINCIPLES
OF
EVANGELISM
JESUS-CENTRED EVANGELISM

I was 21 and had invited a group of friends to join me on a beach mission in the Cornish surf resort of Newquay. It was a daunting experience and I was very nervous. On the second day, an elderly evangelist called Herbert Silverwood arrived unexpectedly. I was deeply moved that this man, almost 80, should come to spend time with me and the team on our first ever beach mission. He was known throughout the country as one of the most outstanding evangelists of his generation. I was even more amazed that he was willing to sleep on the floor in the church vestry! He obviously had an uncomfortable night because at breakfast the next morning he said, ‘I had to get up in the night for a rest!’

It was great to have someone around who had been an evangelist for nearly 50 years, and I was constantly pumping him for tips on how to do evangelism well. His advice was always simple but profound. ‘Tell them about Jesus,’ he said. ‘If you lift Jesus high, many will be drawn to him.’

Day after day I watched Herbert at work on the promenade at Newquay. By evening hundreds gathered to hear his amazing fund of jokes and hilarious experiences, all delivered in a broad Yorkshire accent. The holidaymakers loved it, and many stayed on while he went on to tell the familiar stories of Jesus in vivid detail. As he drew a meeting to a close, he would urge his audience to ‘follow my Jesus, because he’ll do you good!’ Afterwards, he would linger to talk to everyone, from kids to octogenarians, from families to teenage hecklers. He never missed an opportunity to talk about Jesus or to speak of his love for him, yet it was all so spontaneous and natural. It was
evident that Jesus was an integral part of Herbert’s life.

Sadly, not all the Christians who join me on mission teams each year have Herbert’s ability to talk about Jesus. They seem to have grown up in a church culture where Christ is rarely spoken of in a personal way. Some hardly know the story of Jesus, let alone how to communicate it effectively to people who know nothing about him. But true evangelism will only happen when Christians talk about Jesus in ways that make others want to know him for themselves.

What’s more, the activity of evangelism has been devalued by many churches. They seem under the impression that the occasional outreach event, special week of activities or leaflet drop is evangelism. But that may not be what is really happening. They may actually only be advocating the social activities of their local fellowship or promoting their particular denomination. This isn’t true evangelism! It is no more than a recruitment drive akin to something which might be undertaken by a golf club or bingo hall. The yardstick for true Christian evangelism is simply this: Are we telling others about our Saviour? Are we really sharing Jesus?

The uniqueness of Jesus
Right from the announcement of his birth, God made it clear that Jesus would be no ordinary man. The nature of his birth marked him out as very different, proclaiming him to be the Son of God and not the son of Joseph. While many people today will accept that Jesus was a great prophet, teacher or healer, they won’t accept that he is the Son of God. Yet without appreciating this aspect of his character, they haven’t even begun to understand who he is. The early Church was so concerned to emphasise this, they made belief in his Sonship their basic confession for baptism. Mark’s Gospel underscores its importance by opening with the words, ‘The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God…’

In the early years of this twenty-first century, I believe that the acknowledgement of Jesus as the Son of God is under greater threat
than it has been for many centuries. In a multicultural and multi-faith society, there is growing pressure to embrace those from other faith communities. We should welcome this kind of dialogue; but there are some tenets of our faith which are non-negotiable – and that Jesus is the Son of God is one of them. This contention over Jesus’ identity lies at the very heart of Christian faith, since only when we accept that Jesus is God and truly divine do we discover who God is and what God is like.

The relevance of Jesus
The task of the evangelist is to tell the story of Jesus, but to tell it in such a way that it relates to the lives of ordinary men and women. The challenge is to apply this story in ways that relate to people’s search for meaning, and to their deep-rooted and personal felt needs. The longer I do the work of an evangelist, the more amazed I am at just how relevant the Jesus story is. Whatever people are facing, however they are feeling and whoever they are, there is always some aspect of the Jesus story that can speak directly to them. There are hundreds of angles the evangelist can use to bring the gospel to contemporary men and women, but I will list here just a few of them to illustrate my point.

The New Age Jesus
One of the greatest contributions of Celtic Christians to the richness of our spirituality is that they recognised Christ is immanent – permanently pervading creation and the whole of life. They grasped the wonder that Christ is not only over all but also in all. His presence suffuses the whole of creation and fills every aspect of it. Christ’s involvement in creation began right from the very start of time. He is the one who envisioned the changing season, the scudding cloud, the delicate flower, the glowing sunset. He is the one who brought it all into being, who created it all for us to see.

[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible
and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Colossians 1:15,16

In a time of New Age spirituality, the Celtic view of Jesus may be surprisingly helpful in giving us opportunities to talk about Jesus in ways with which New Agers will connect. The New Age thesis that the divine is immanent in all things can offer a way in for us to present this view of Jesus, and we can build bridges by telling people about the one whose love infuses the planet.

The powerless Jesus

We live in a world in which many feel powerless and forgotten. But the story of Jesus can bring great strength and comfort to people feeling like this. Jesus was not born in a palace but a stable. He didn’t grow up among kings and princes but as a refugee in Egypt. He didn’t walk the corridors of power but the road to the cross. He wasn’t wealthy or of high social status; instead he mixed with tax collectors and prostitutes. And this Jesus didn’t just get alongside the powerless; he knew what it was himself to be marginalised by society.

Not only did Jesus identify with the powerless, he saw his ministry as one that would bring radical change to their situation, challenging the power structures of the world. At a synagogue in his home town of Nazareth, he used the words of the prophet Isaiah to underline this aspect of his mission:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

Luke 4:18,19
All through his earthly ministry Jesus challenged the powerful. The Romans demanded total allegiance to the emperor. The wealthy, land-owning Sadducees demanded allegiance to the status quo. The pious Pharisees demanded allegiance to the observance of ritual. But Jesus wouldn’t side with any of them. He refused to support their claims – because his priority was the kingdom of heaven, not the kingdoms of the earth. His was a currency that dealt in sacrifice, humility and meekness, which threatened the established power structures, interest groups and political regimes of his day.

‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’

Matthew 20:25–28

Jesus’ own ministry was a demonstration of servanthood. It sometimes overwhelms me that the Lord of all creation came to earth ‘in the very nature of a servant’. His life was lived in complete obedience to the will of his Father. This can speak poignantly to those who feel powerless, reassuring them that, whatever their circumstances, Jesus – bringer of good news to the poor – is with them just where they are.

The rejected Jesus

Jesus loved the world with a depth of compassion we can’t begin to understand. His leap from heaven to earth was made at enormous personal cost and led to painful experiences of rejection.

He was even rejected by those people he grew up with. Going back to Nazareth, to the carpenter’s shop, to his mother and brothers and the small close-knit community in which he’d been raised, he might have expected a hero’s welcome. Maybe they’d put the flags out for the small-town boy made good. Not a bit of it! Instead, he met resistance and murderous hostility.
He was snubbed by the religious elite. When Simon, a Pharisee, invited Jesus to dinner (Luke 7), he didn’t invite him to honour him, hear him or affirm him. He offered him none of the marks of hospitality that a Jewish host of the time would have offered his guests – there was no kiss of welcome, no ceremonial washing bowl, no neatly folded towel. Instead, Jesus met with cynicism and mockery. It seems that Simon invited Jesus to humiliate him!

He was rejected, too, by his fellow countrymen. I remember one evening at sunset, standing on the Mount of Olives, looking down over Jerusalem. It brought alive for me that moment when Jesus looked over that same city and wept:

‘O Jerusalem! Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.’

Matthew 23:37

Jesus had an aching burden for the people of that great city. He knew their needs and wanted to embrace them with his love. These were not empty sentiments but the expression of one who lived entirely for others and who was feeling deep within himself the pain of their rejection of him.

And finally he was betrayed and abandoned by his closest friends, the ones he might have expected to stick by him through any danger. When the guards came to arrest him in the Garden of Gethsemane they were led there by one of his own disciples and all the others fled in terror, leaving him to face his enemies alone.

Over and over again, the story of Jesus is a story of rejection. He was born in a borrowed stable and buried in a borrowed tomb, and between the two he knew what it was to walk a lonely road. It’s little wonder, then, that he was often the friend of the rejected and shrank from no one. He cared for crooks like Zacchaeus, those of dubious morality like the woman of Samaria, and outcasts like the ten lepers. He still comes alongside life’s outcasts today. His story speaks powerfully to anyone who has tasted the bitter experience of abandonment and loneliness. His life teaches that through him we
can find acceptance, healing and adoption into the family of God.

*The Saviour Jesus*

Jesus knew what it was to be human – to struggle with temptation, to wrestle with the will of God, to agonise over the cost of total obedience to the Father. He even knew hell, in one bleak moment of separation from God. There was no dark human experience he was not willing to go through as he made his painful pilgrimage to the cross. But as Jesus hung on the cross, taking on himself the sin of the world, he also became a sacrifice for us. His death is a profound mystery, yet ultimately it’s the most momentous event in human history: God taking on our humanity and dying on our behalf. Jesus died that we might know the depth of nature of God’s love. He died that he might reach down to where we are and lift us up into the Father’s presence. This is the quality of his caring and the magnitude of his compassion. The story of Jesus, then, is a story of hope; a gospel of forgiveness; an opportunity for new beginnings. The story of Jesus is the story of someone who came to rescue us and set us free:

> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.  
> *John 3:16,17*

No longer need we look to the future with despair or fear. No longer need we carry heavy burdens of guilt and failure. We can ask Jesus to save us, to forgive us and to bring us into the kind of beautiful relationship with God which really makes life worth living.

*The risen Jesus*

The story of Jesus is a story of personal renewal. Three days after his crucifixion, Jesus came back to life. He overcame sin and suffering; he defeated the power of evil; he broke the hold death has over us. Each of us is invited to share in his victory and to claim it personally. We are invited to live in the joy of his resurrection,
no matter what we face. We should know his resurrection power as part of our everyday lives. It should fill us with hope and help us see that whatever struggles we experience here on earth, we go through them in the strength of the one who has gone before us.

[Jesus]... endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

*Hebrews 12:2,3*

This has to be a relevant and timely message for the countless millions of ordinary men and women today who feel oppressed and beaten down by life.

*Jesus the Judge*

It is sobering to remember that when he returns at the end of time, Jesus will come as our Lord and our Judge. On that day we will each have to bow the knee to him and account for how we have lived our lives. It would be very convenient if we knew the date of his return! We could make sure that we had prepared ourselves to meet him. But, though his return is definite, the day and the hour remain God’s secret.

Those of us who have only ever thought of Jesus as our Friend and Comforter would do well to remember that he is also our Judge, lest we fall into the trap of overfamiliarity and fail to develop the respect he is due as the one to whom we are ultimately accountable. Jesus himself stressed the importance of this accountability, making it clear that it is an essential part of our relationship with him:

‘Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him’.

*John 5:22,23*

Many of us compartmentalise our lives to such an extent that judgement is seen as something in the future – distant, unreal, in another
time and place. But Christ’s judgement is not just destined for the
end of history: it is ongoing, constant, now. If our lives are not at one
with his life, we will feel the sharp sword of his judgement in our
lives, our spirituality and our ministry, now:

‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him,
he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone
does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and with-
ers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.’

John 15:5,6

Jesus is our Judge today and tomorrow; now and in eternity. This has
to be a part of our message to a fun-loving, hedonistic society where
‘live now, pay later’ is the rule. We should not play it down. When
we tell the story of Jesus, we are inviting people to make room in
their lives for confession, repentance and a chance to make amends.
Unpopular though such a message may sound, it is an integral part
of who Jesus is and what we believe about him.

The evangelist’s message

I used to believe in God as some vague cloud of power – mysterious,
unknowable, distant. But when I discovered who Jesus is, I discov-
ered the true God who is ‘I am’. One of the great joys of becoming
a Christian is that we come to know Jesus personally and are drawn
into the presence of God through him. There are some days when
the friendship of Jesus is very real to me: days when he shares my
burdens and carries my load. And there are other days when I don’t
feel him near at all. But even then I claim his promise that he will
never leave me nor forsake me:

‘My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give
them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them
out of my hand.’

John 10:27,28

As we seek to share the gospel with others, we must encourage them
to listen for his voice among all the clamouring voices of the world
we live in. There is much that will alarm us in this fast-changing and stressful society, but the voice of Jesus can still breathe its ancient peace into any situation. This is the voice they must know and follow, which will reassure them when things seem to be falling apart, and which will lead them to eternal joy at the end of this transient life. This is the voice whose Word rings true behind our words. When I’m briefing mission teams, I still repeat the advice of the old-time evangelist Herbert Silverwood: ‘Tell them about Jesus! – because my experience has shown that even in a complex multicultural society, this is what they want to hear.’

Jesus strides across the centuries to us today to address our sense of confusion, loss of direction and lack of meaning. His call to us, as to every generation, is simply, ‘I am the way’. This isn’t primarily an invitation to follow his teaching or to adopt a set of theological precepts. He is inviting us to share a relationship with him. He welcomes us as friends. This single relationship will have the most profound effect on our lives. Jesus will transform our priorities and change our perspectives. More than that, as we allow him to take over our lives he will actually redeem us, releasing us from slavery to failure, sinfulness and selfishness. He will set us free. He will take our scars – the wounds that go deep into our past, the hurts, the disappointments, the regrets, the dark shadows that haunt us down the years – and heal them.

This is not a once-for-all experience. As we welcome Jesus into the different areas of our personality, we will see his ongoing work of redemption. In knowing him, loving him and communing with him, we discover that he meets those needs nothing else can meet; for he is the One who gave us life and to whom, one day, we must give account as to how we have lived it.

Jesus is at the centre of all we believe. He is what makes Christianity distinctive and is the reason behind our evangelism. For over 20 years I have led Share Jesus missions in hundreds of churches.
As I go out on mission, the project’s title always reminds me of the purpose for my going. I must share Jesus, nothing more and nothing less. In sharing him, I share the heart of the gospel message. This has rarely been a matter of going through a theological formula. Rather, it has been an opportunity to introduce people to my best friend. Introducing them to the local church, the denomination or even the fellowship of local Christians is always secondary.

For far too long the word ‘evangelism’ has been a dirty word in the life of the Church. We have talked ‘mission’, we have talked ‘service’ and we have talked ‘political action’, but many church leaders have avoided the evangelistic task Jesus commissioned us all to undertake. Statisticians tell us that most churches spend less time talking about it, spend less money on it and expend less energy on it than almost anything else they do. Postmodernism, with its emphasis on connecting with our roots and on being real about what we believe, poses many new challenges. But perhaps, above all, it gives us a wonderful opportunity to put evangelism back at the top of the agenda.
‘For far too long the word evangelism has been a dirty word in the life of the Church. We have talked mission, we have talked service and we have talked political action – but many church leaders have avoided the evangelistic task Jesus commissioned us all to undertake.’

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