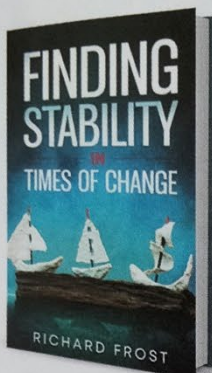


Reviews

In *Preach Magazine* Issue 35 (Spring 2023):

FINDING STABILITY IN TIMES OF CHANGE

Richard Frost (Endulini Publishing, October, 2022)
105pp, paperback, RRP £6.99



Richard Frost is a licensed lay minister in the Church of England who has worked with people who have disabilities or other health conditions, particularly mental ill-health. This is a short book which is very well described by the title. It is built around the story of Jesus calming the storm on Galilee and written out of the Benedictine tradition, which he explains as listening to God, conversion of life (or change) and stability.

It has some helpful insights. Jesus saying 'Do not be afraid' is not the same as saying, 'There is nothing to be afraid of.' The question 'Where is your faith?' can be seen as an invitation to build up one's faith rather than an expression of disappointment.

Frost looks at what other Bible characters have to bring, too; plenty of others who met Jesus were 'in the same boat', and Jesus' encounters with them were very instructive. He has also collected stories of people who have been through their own storms, and who testify to the presence of God with them at these times.

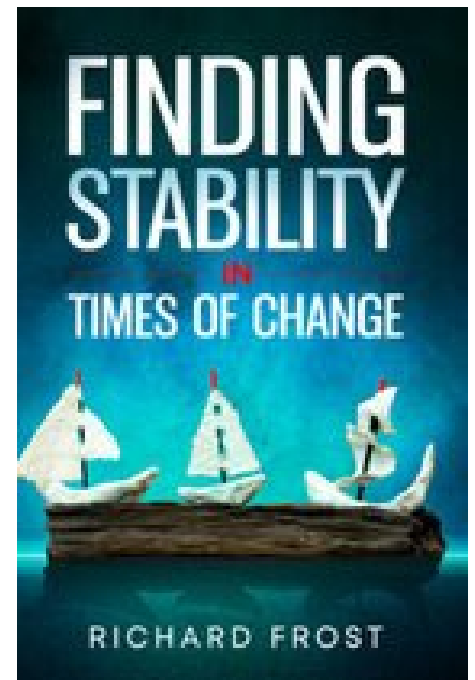
He takes us through events in the life of Jesus, using them to illustrate how Jesus found stability. There's lots of good practical advice about dealing with negative thoughts and making progress towards being more effective and integrated people, and a valuable section on how to pray. He concludes with a sensible warning – just because one storm is over, it doesn't mean that another isn't on the way.

There's much to be grateful for in this book. I was not entirely convinced that 'stability' was quite as valuable as he thinks it is – Jesus did not come to bring peace, after all, but a sword – but then I am not a Benedictine. I wondered whether all his illustrations really illustrated what he says they do. These are quibbles, though; there are plenty of insights here for the preacher and this is a worthwhile read.

Richard Frost blogs at workrestpray.com.

Mark Woods

Rev Mark Woods is Head of Communications for Bible Society.



Church of England Newspaper 26 May 2023:

Christian reflection on the pandemic has been rare and we should be grateful to Richard Frost for helping us not to forget this time of anxiety, fear and trauma for the world. He takes Jesus's stilling of the storm over Galilee as his starting point. And his reflections often point to practical ways Christians can respond to rapid and daunting change. He argues that when Jesus refers to the 'little faith' of his followers this is not to belittle but to encourage growth and development of their trust in him. Frost has previously written on the rule of Benedict and here he returns to this tradition to help the modern disciple find space for spiritual exploration within a rule of life.

Rev Dr Adrian Burdon, *Methodist Recorder* 24 February 2023: [click here to read](#).

David Sellick, *Transforming Ministry* (Spring 2023 edition):

The book opens with ringing endorsements from four Anglican priests. The two pegs on which the author hangs his ten brief chapters are: firstly the turbulence imposed on society by the pandemic; and secondly the dramatic stilling of the storm over Galilee as recorded in the Gospels. In both cases people are plunged into sudden and potential life changes, including the possibility of death. The early chapters identify a number of experiences that people today are likely to be confronted with in the course of their lives involving varying degrees of stress. Chapter 4 identifies ways to calm fears about such changes. Further chapters recount some of Jesus' encounters with people involving significant change for both him and them. Some individuals give short accounts of life-changes they have had to face. The author adds some brief advice to people who find themselves asked to listen to similar life stories. The last three chapters explore the time of recovery from stressful change. There are many references to books, journals and bible commentaries that bear on coping successfully with change.

John Woods in [Inspire Magazine](#) on 6 February 2023 & republished in [Baptist Times](#) on 20 May 2023

Is this another one of those "I survived the lockdown; let me tell you about what I learned" books? Yes and no. It is certainly a book that speaks about lessons learned in the process of living through the times of uncertainty during and in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, but it is not a predictable formulaic book. It is instead a fresh and honest reflection on how to trust God when everything in life gets thrown up into the air.

The author skilfully deploys the story of Jesus calming the storm as told in Mark's Gospel, to help the reader understand a bit more about what it means to trust and not be afraid. The author deals very well with the way that Jesus speaks to the disciples about their "little faith" in the story. The author makes the helpful suggestion that this is not an intended by Jesus to belittle the disciples, but his attempt to draw out and strengthen their faith.

The author uses several little stories from Scripture from other people that relate to this theme before returning to the story of the calming of the lake in the final pages. He concludes by reminding the reader, realistically: "Like it or not, for most of us, a calmer day is not coming."

Deborah Jenkins

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) A wise and lovely book with much to offer in these uncertain times

Reviewed on Amazon (30 January 2023)

I read this wise and lovely book at the turn of the year and found it such a great way to approach a new season. The author explores the way in which change can take us unawares, swiping us off our feet in the blink of an eye. It then goes on to describe a comprehensive set of tools with which to approach and deal with it. This is well done with a reflective, biblical approach, based on the Calming of the Storm, and a range of other resources and spiritual practices. There are also personal examples from the lives of others which helpfully illustrate the points made.

Richard writes with clarity and depth. His background in mental health and lay ministry clearly qualifies him to offer much in this area, which he does in a gentle, un-patronising way. He inspires and challenges with a light touch, enabling us to apply his observations for ourselves without the sense of failure that can sometimes result from less sensitive writing. His suggestions for dealing with both positive and negative change are wonderfully reassuring, practical and wise.

A highly recommended read whenever the future is uncertain, which is every day really. But as the author himself says, 'Jesus places us safely in the boat. He climbs in with us. He calms the storm and takes us on our journey. A journey, yes, into uncharted waters...but also a journey of certainty because we will never be allowed to drown.'

Also on [Goodreads](#)

Donato Tallo

5.0 out of 5 stars Great Book

Reviewed on Amazon on 11 December 2022

There are many concepts in the world today that are widely debated but one that many people are likely to agree on is that life is full of change. Change is something that impacts each and every one of us every single day and while some change is positive, some is unfortunately negative and while some types of change can bring many benefits, some types of change can generate fear and uncertainty.

In the book *Finding Stability in Times of Change*, Richard Frost examines the concept of change from several different perspectives acknowledging that change is part of life and reminding the reader in many different ways throughout the book that God is always present through all types of change. The book is one that provides the reader with many opportunities for reflection and thought provoking suggestions for how stability can be found through God. The book does not seek to lead the reader into thinking that all change is filled with happiness and that change is not something that will not continue but it offers a range of suggestions and tips centred around the concept of not being afraid.

With reference throughout the book to the miracle of the calming of the storm at sea Richard Frost explores through scripture and the reflections of a variety of individuals how different types storms in life can and have been navigated in different ways by different people. Finding stability in times of both positive and negative change can be filled with many different challenges and emotions. The reflections of the lived experiences of different individuals included in this book are very powerful and the references from a number of different writers help to make a number of key points clear and accessible to the reader.

While the book as a whole is interesting, enjoyable and thought provoking, for me chapter 7 was extremely powerful. In Chapter 7 the author explores how Jesus found stability in his time on earth and is a useful reminder to us all that like us, Jesus had human flesh and faced his own times of change.

Change has and will continue to impact us all, this helpful and practical book provides hints, tips and reflections throughout that can help the reader to find stability in an ever changing and increasingly stressful and complex world. A book that can be read at a pace that suits the reader it is accessible to a wide audience, rooted in scripture and reminds us all that change is part of life and that seeking different forms of stability might not be as hard as it sounds.

Also available to read at [Independent Catholic News](#) and [The Portal](#)

Will Marjoram

5.0 out of 5 stars on [Goodreads](#) on 6 December 2022

I am both delighted and proud to say that I am now the owner of three of Richard's books. Three years ago he gave me a signed copy of one of his first books: *Life with St Benedict*. About the same time Richard very kindly gave me permission to use extracts from his second book: *A Story to Tell* to help a group of church-going people who have learning disabilities and/or special needs to understand the Bible stories and explain a bit about them.

The title of this new book, *Finding Stability in Times of Change* is I think very apt for me personally as many years ago I found out that my lifestyle is blighted by having traits of autism which affect how I currently live my life. From that point onward and how I go about life now, I have found times of change very difficult to adapt to and deal with and finding that level of stability. Sometimes I have dealt with those times of change as best as I am able to but at other times I have been unable to. Therefore, I have subsequently struggled with whatever the change might be, and have never quite managed to find that level of stability I would have liked.

Returning to the theme of the book and what it's trying to tell us: I have discovered that the underlying theme recounts the story of Jesus disciples' encounter in the storm in the boat on Lake Galilee. Suffice to say most of life's events, from my viewpoint, probably compares with events that happened to the

disciples in that boat when the storm arose and there being a level of doubt, insecurity, and how can I overcome my fear? However, whenever the 'storm' has arisen in my life's journey what have I wanted to do? Well, like the disciples, I have wanted to panic and jump off the side – however there is a problem here: I can't swim and don't like being near water!

OK, so I've 'navigated my way' through the book and reached chapter 10 titled 'After the storm'. Now it's time for me to sail back the other way. How am I feeling after that first journey and what has it all meant to me personally? Will the return journey be any smoother than the one coming over? There could well be another storm on the way back. Can I handle things better now should a storm ever brew? I think I'll be able to! I'll now be able to ask for help rather than throw my hands in the air and do something disastrous.

Tony Bennett, Editor, British Church Newspaper on 30 November 2022

This is the first book published by Endulini Publishing, named after a isiXhosa (Bantu) word meaning: 'On the Hill'. Richard Frost MBE spent most of his career helping disabled and otherwise disadvantaged people to find work and was awarded his MBE in 2018 for 'services to mental health'. So he is well qualified to make pronouncements on 'finding stability in times of change', the chosen title of his book. It carries a two-page foreword by the Dean of Southwark, Very Rev Andrew Nunn, who writes of changes in his own life, telling us: "My life has been formed, more by chance than decision, by the Benedictine principle of *stabilitas*'.

Frost's book is intended primarily for those undergoing very significant changes in their life, such as a sudden bereavement, redundancy, a relationship breakdown, or a disabling accident or health crisis. After an introductory chapter, Frost warms to his theme, which consists of three chapters reflecting on the account of the storm on Lake Galilee recounted in the three 'Synoptic' Gospels, and applying it to how we react to change. In this reviewer's view, though ingenious, this analogy doesn't work well. But Frost attempts to draw lessons from this event, followed by a chapter dealing with the 'times of change' that faced the Woman of Samaria, Nicodemus, Jairus, Mary Magdalene, Bartimaeus and the Apostles, Thomas and Peter. An 18-page chapter includes several personal stories of how people reacted to change, followed by a chapter on "how Jesus found stability", and then two more chapters discussing some more practical solutions to coping with change, supported by numerous thoughts from mostly secular sources of wisdom.

The book is a kindly, gentle book that contains some practical examples of how people have coped with big changes, and some suggestions of where to go for help - and it was at this point that we wondered if Frost was pointing to the right resources. He recommends, for example: praying with icons; the Roman Catholic contemplative meditation techniques of *Lectio Divina* and *Viso Divina*, and (p. 87) "the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, best done with the accompaniment of a spiritual director or a guided retreat" and (p.

88) “following St. Ignatius’s *Prayer of Examen of Consciousness*...[developing] an increasing awareness of God’s presence and the Holy Spirit’s movement through the day”. This book, sadly, fails to highlight the permanent contentment and stability, amongst all manner of trials and tribulations, that is provided by trusting entirely in our Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, because He provides “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7) and gives us “my peace, **not as the world giveth**...let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Julia

5.0 out of 5 stars A treasury box of help

Reviewed on Amazon on 17 November 2022

What a wonderful book this is: like an oasis of reassurance, wisdom and gentleness with a treasury box of practical advice.

This is a book to keep nearby, to read multiple times and to dip into, particularly during life's difficult times.

Richard Frost achieves a beautiful balance between providing an accessible read whilst writing richly and deeply, not afraid to plunge into the depths and rawness of suffering. He shows an innate understanding of human nature and employs this to great effect throughout the book. A wonderful gift.

Sheila Walker, Priest/Author

4.0 out of 5 stars Gentle, much-needed wisdom

Reviewed on Amazon on 23 October 2022

At a time when the rate of change – of all kinds – far outstrips our ability to negotiate the transitions, Richard’s book is undoubtedly timely. Whilst it is easy simply to encourage a believer in God to ‘have faith’, so often that is the one thing that may prove difficult in times of storm and stress. Richard draws on his experience of the Benedictine Rule with its emphasis on listening, conversion of life and stability, as well as the accounts of Jesus calming the storm on Lake Galilee to aid our search for wisdom.

Many people find it easier to learn from stories than from theory, however wise and Biblical: and Richard uses these to good effect, looking at both Biblical characters, contemporary testimony and Jesus himself. Remembering that faith is both receptive – a gift of God – and active, requiring a response on our part, is salutary, as are the questions interspersed in most chapters prompting us to reflect on our own circumstances.

Given that those who are perhaps most in need of finding stability will by definition be facing challenging times, this book is neither too long nor too difficult a read. Several other authors are quoted and

referenced for those who may want to dig deeper, but Richard's 'prescription' here should prove both accessible and reassuring for many.

Also on [Goodreads](#)

B. Meldrum

5.0 out of 5 stars A Helpful, Practical Take On Dealing With Change

Reviewed on Amazon on 15 October 2022

Since Covid hit we've all had to deal with a lot more change than we would otherwise have done. How we work, how we conduct our friendships, how we shop ... for some, how we deal with death. Change is one of the few constants in life, and it seems like there's more of it now than ever before. Richard Frost's book, written from years of personal and professional experience as a vicar (*sic*), is an easy-to-read and helpful guide to how Christians can navigate these inevitable experiences of change. We don't have to like the fact of change, but much change is hard or impossible to ignore. So we all need tools and guidance in how to deal with all the different types of change that life throws at us. This book is a great take on that, and one that will help Christians live more fully in the way Christ calls us to. (Disclosure: I am part of the team which published this book)