

### Overview

As disciples of Christ, we invited to become caught up in His work of renewal and transformation - change is part of the Christian life. Starting something new can be both exciting and daunting at the same time. For some, this may involve a significant change in their life and work. For others, it can be something apparently very small. However, we never quite know what the long term impact will be, of even something small. In this topic we will explore how God might be pointing us to something new and consider how we might respond.

***This is your worksheet; for notes, ideas and questions***

### Activity

**Take a look at these bible stories of new beginnings.**

The Call of Abraham	Genesis 12
The Call of Jeremiah	Jeremiah 1:4-10
The Call of Mary	Luke 1:26-38
The Call of Peter	John 21:15-19

### Discussion

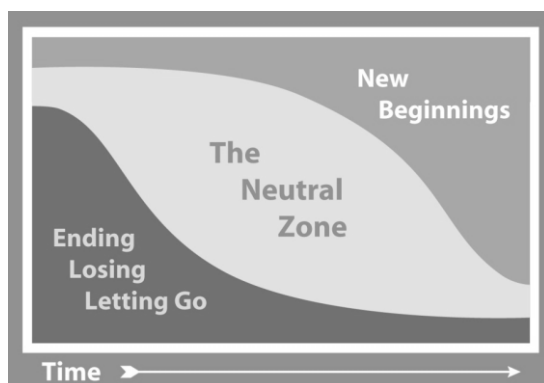
**What was involved for each of these people as they embarked on their new beginning?**

### Activity

**Using your completed 'People with a Mission' sheet, talk about your heroes /heroines and what you have learned about them and what it means to engage with a mission.**

### Perspective

**Exploring New Beginnings**



*From 'Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change' by William Bridges, (2009 Nicholas Brealey Publishing)*

Transition is the process of letting go of the way things used to be and taking hold of the way they will become. In between letting go and taking hold again, there is a chaotic but potentially creative 'neutral zone' when things aren't the old way, but aren't really a new way either yet.

### **Ending / Letting Go**

To enable us to move on to new beginning there invariably have to be some endings. In the ending phase we lose or let go of our old outlook, our old reality, our old attitudes, even our self-image. We may resist this ending for a while. We may try to talk ourselves out of what we are feeling and then we give in, we may be swept by feelings of sadness and anger.

### **Neutral Zone**

The neutral zone can either be a period of disorientation or a highly creative period of new possibilities. We can feel caught between old and new and can end up immobilised. Dangers of the neutral zone are that anxiety rises and motivation falls, we doubt ourselves, energy is drained into coping tactics and our effectiveness falls. This is also however a time ripe for creative opportunity.

### **New Beginnings**

Finally, we take hold of and identify with some new outlook and some new reality as well as new attitudes and a new self-image. When we have done this, we feel that we are finally starting a new chapter in our lives. No matter how impossible it was to imagine a future earlier, life now feels as though it is back on its track again. We have a new sense of ourselves, a new outlook, a new sense of purpose and possibility.

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#### **Question**

**What is your experience of new beginnings? How does it feel to start something new?**

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#### **Perspective**

##### **New Actions**

Francis Dewar suggests that any 'new actions' might also be 'of God' if they are

- A generous giving of who and what we are
- A new departure, fresh initiative or doing the same the but in a different way
- Risky
- Beyond our unaided powers
- A step, however small, to a more just and equitable world

*From 'Live for a Change: Discovering and Using Your Gifts' by Francis Dewar (1999, Darton, Longman and Todd)*

## Perspective

### False Assumptions about Mission

**1. My job is my mission**

Your job may be and ideally should be part of your mission but your mission is always larger than your job  
Career and jobs change. Danger of losing your sense of identity when your job changes.

**2. My role is my mission**

Being a mother, father, husband, wife etc

**3. My To-Do list is my mission**

Can be a list of busyness which is urgent but not important

**4. I am not currently living my mission**

It is highly probable that you are already living your mission at some level. You are standing on holy ground

**5. I am not important enough to have a mission**

Don't underestimate the impact of small actions - butterfly effect

**6. My mission has to be grand one to help a lot of people**

Raise or teach or heal one creature and your life can be considered a success

**7. A mission must be full of suffering**

Common assumption that a mission must be hard - My yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:29-30). Don't take on a mission that fits someone else's needs

**8. My mission has to be the same as that of my peers**

Be prepared to be different and stand out from the crowd

**9. Geography is destiny**

Look beyond the borders or boundaries that geography might seem to impose on you

**10. What I am doing is as close as I can get to my real mission**

Living in the shadow of your real dream. Go for what you want directly. Beware of parallel imitations that look like but are not the 'real thing.'

**11. Life is random**

Don't get too obsessed with planning life - prepare to be surprised

*From 'The Path : Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and Life' by Laurie Beth Jones, (1998, Hyperion)*

## Discussion

**Which of these assumptions about mission might apply to you and how might you avoid the pitfalls of false assumptions?**

### Perspective

#### SMART Steps

When setting goals or deciding on a new course of action, it can be helpful to think about what you might do under 5 broad areas. This is a useful framework to think through to help to clarify where you want to go, how you will know when you have got there and what the next practical steps might be

- S** – specific
- M** - measurable
- A** - attainable
- R** - relevant
- T** - time-bound

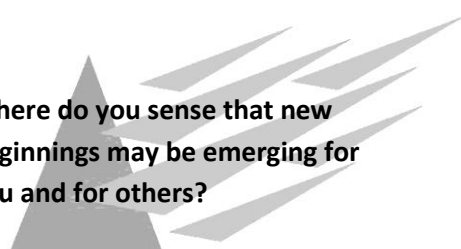


### Activity

Take a look back at the activities in 'Turning Outward' (Topic VOC5). Is there anything in your Four Ps that you could develop a 'SMART' step towards?

<b>S</b>	What <b>specifically</b> might I do now, to respond to God's call?  If you feel comfortable doing so, work collaboratively either with the group or with a partner
<b>M</b>	How would I <b>measure</b> , or know that, progress is being made?
<b>A</b>	What can be realistically <b>attained</b> ?
<b>R</b>	How is this <b>relevant</b> to God, me and others?
<b>T</b>	What is my <b>time</b> frame? When, where, who....

*During the week, you might like to reflect on :*



Where do you sense that new beginnings may be emerging for you and for others?

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**Ponder**

**What did you learn from this session?**

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**Prayer**

God of the guiding star, the bush that blazes.  
Show us your way.  
God of the stormy seas, the bread that nourishes us.  
Teach us your truth.  
God of the still small voice, the wind that blows where it chooses.  
Fill us with life  
God of the elements of our inward and outward journeys  
Set our feet on your road today.  
May God bless us with a safe journey  
May the angels and saints travel with us  
May we live this day in justice and joy.  
Amen

*From 'This is the Day : Readings and meditations from the Iona Community'  
(2002, Wild Goose)*