

## Entering a New System Resource Section



*If you love to listen, you will gain knowledge, and if you pay attention you will become wise.*

*Sirach 6:33*

### **Purpose**

To help participants understand that congregations are living systems and that how new people enter can have a substantial impact on their ministry; to provide some tools for new leaders and their congregations to get to know each other, and learn about the congregation's history, culture and expectations.

### **Theological Understanding**

The Bible is full of stories of people who journeyed to new lands, adapted to the culture, and became an integral part of the community. Think, for example, of Ruth and of Joseph. God was with these journeyers throughout, and while becoming part of a foreign culture the journeyers stayed true to themselves and their God. As clergy enter new ministries they, too, must find ways to stay true to themselves while becoming part of the culture of their new congregations.

### **Special Instructions**

This session introduces the concepts contained in the booklet, "Fresh Start in Your Congregation: A Resource for Clergy," and its counterpart for lay leaders. Duplicate these for distribution during this session in addition to the handouts in this section. The session opens with a showing of the first episode of The Vicar of Dibley, which is a humorous look at entry into a new system. The video of this BBC series is widely available for rent or purchase at video stores or on line.

### **Related Modules**

Exit and Entrance  
Habits, Norms and Expectations  
History-Sharing and Understanding  
Leading Planned Change  
Role Clarity  
Transition

## **Bibliography**

Mead, Loren B. The Once and Future Church Collection. Herndon, VA, The Alban Institute, 2001 – the evangelism map is described on pp. 163-173, with additional explanation on pp. 186-201; the exercise can be found on pp. 257-262.

Michell, Neal O. How To Hit the Ground Running: A Quick-Start Guide for Congregations with New Leadership. New York, NY, Church Publishing Inc., 2005 -- done in workbook style, this guide is for both clergy and lay leaders and offers step-by-step suggestions for the initial months of a new ministry.

## **Other Resources**

“Arrival,” The Vicar of Dibley; November 10, 1994, BBC. The episode may be found on The Complete Series 1 DVD, BBC – this video is the first in a series that ran on BBC from 1994-2000 and continued with specials. The DVD of the first series is available for sale at [www. Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) and other video outlets or may be rented from Netflix, etc. The episode is 30 minutes long.

## General Outline of Session

1. Opening prayer and meditation (suggested reading, Ruth 1:6-22)
2. Check-in
3. The Vicar of Dibley (DVD – see resources)
4. Introduction (PowerPoint 1-2; Talking Points; general discussion)
5. Congregations as living systems (PowerPoint 3; Talking Points,)
6. Self as instrument of change (PowerPoint 4; Talking Points)
7. Johari Window (PowerPoint 5-6; Talking Points; Handout 1; general discussion)
8. Evangelism map (exercise – see Handout 3 for instructions)
9. Debrief evangelism map (PowerPoint 7; Talking Points; Handout 2; general discussion; Handout 3)
10. Spiritual care of lay leaders (PowerPoint 8; Talking Points; general discussion; optional small group discussion if lay leaders are present)
11. Getting to know you and accountability (PowerPoint 9-10; Talking Points)
12. Summary (PowerPoint 11; Talking Points; “Fresh Start in Your Congregation: A Resource for Clergy” and, if appropriate, “Fresh Start in Your Congregation: A Resource for Lay Leaders”)
13. Wrap up and closing prayer



# Entering a New System Handout 1

## Johari Window: A Model of Interrelationships

	Known to Self	Unknown to Self
Known to Others	<b>1. Open</b>	<b>2. Blind</b>
Unknown to Others	<b>3. Hidden</b>	<b>4. Unknown</b>

**Quadrant 1:** That which is known to you and others either because it is obvious (e.g., the color of your hair, your height) or because you choose to share it (e.g., the fact that you were born in Wyoming).

**Quadrant 2:** That which is known to others about you, but which you do not know (e.g., how someone thinks about you).

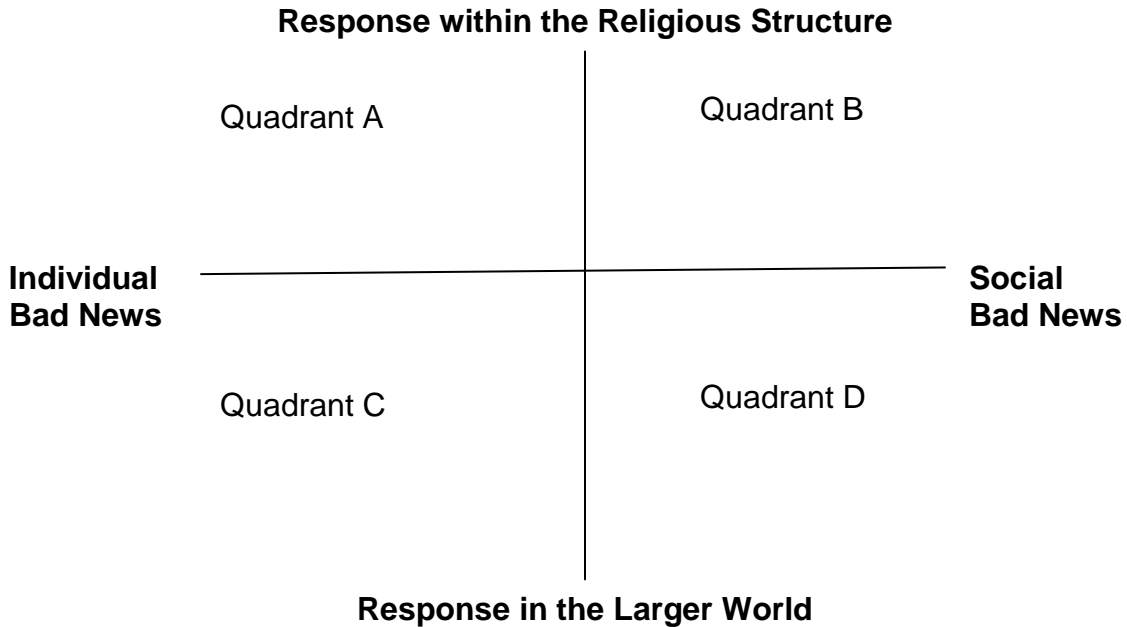
**Quadrant 3:** That which is known to you, but not to others because you choose not to divulge it (e.g., your response to a criticism).

**Quadrant 4:** That which is not known to you OR others, what is unconscious or subconscious.

Building relationships depends upon expansion of the “open” quadrant, minimizing the size of what is hidden or of that to which you are blind. Minimizing quadrant 2 requires asking for feedback and/or divulgence on the part of the other. Minimizing quadrant 3 requires transparency on your part. Minimizing quadrant 4 is the work of therapy.

# Entering a New System Handout 2

## Loren Mead's Quadrilateral of Evangelism



**Quadrant A:** People whose life and faith stories make them particularly sensitive to an individual's needs and who have an internal compass set within religious categories would likely find themselves in quadrant A. Such people, one might speculate, would bring strength to one-on-one teaching and care ministries. They might be at the heart of a congregation's ministry of intercessory prayer, but even more so of contemplative prayer. These people are sensitive to spiritual lostness and yearning and generally unafraid to speak directly from a wellspring of faith-language and faith-experience. Such people would be frustrated and useless in most committees and would flee special projects like the plague. Some might make gifted spiritual directors. ... much of Billy Graham's ministry (is) in this quadrant.

**Quadrant B:** These people are aware of how people need each other. They are tireless in supporting denominational programs and institutions, such as colleges and seminaries, and counseling centers and care programs established by the congregation or denomination. They are generally good members of worship task forces and heavy supporters of study programs – the more biblical the better. Pastors and rabbis in charge of congregations need to “spend some time” in this quadrant, whether or not it is the center of their lives. ...

**Quadrant C:** What (Loren) calls anonymous saints dwell in this quadrant. (He thinks) of people who go through life doing what needs to be done, some of them in quite humble circumstances and some in prominent roles, but who never say much about it. (Loren thinks) Dag Hammarskjold may have belonged here – his life and work as an international statesman undergirded by a remarkable but unspoken spiritual life.... These may be the people who show up at early morning services but never serve on the board. They are known in the community by how they treat people and make a difference, but they are embarrassed to be asked much about their congregation. Most people they work with may not even know they belong to a congregation.

**Quadrant D:** These (Loren) calls the secular saints. They see the primary focus of their lives to be service to the hurts of society. Some are articulate with prophetic power, while others are foot-soldiers in one revolution or another. Such people often get irritated at the slow pace of the congregation in being able to “get on with it,” and they can be severe critics of the values incorporated in a denominational budget. Their center of gravity is not the congregation or the denomination, but their compulsion to respond to social needs. More than a few of them become religious “alumni,” actually leaving religious structures and life to try to change the character of the world without a continuing link to a congregation. (Loren suspects) that many who populate environmental associations would find themselves here. Such people often leave the religious community because of the values they learned in that very community; they are unable to “wait” for the congregation or church leaders to respond to the pressing needs they see in the world.

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## Entering a New System Handout 3

### Mead Quadrilateral of Evangelism Exercise Instructions

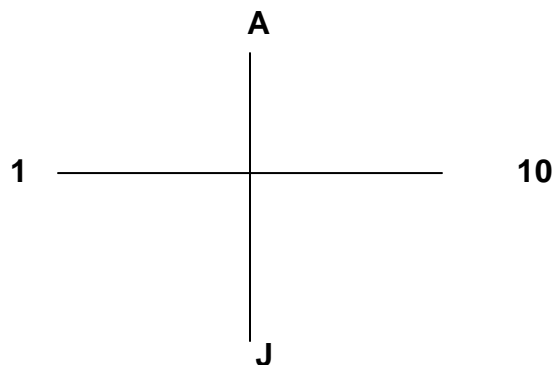
*Have a clean piece of flip chart ready and use the following script to introduce the exercise.*

In our Christian tradition, as in life in general, there are many polarities: faith and works, contemplation and action, individual and community. Each of us responds to God's call in myriad ways, using our differing gifts and often favoring one end of the polarity spectrum over the other. But we always hold the polarities of our faith in some kind of creative tension.

As we proclaim the good news our evangelism is profoundly situational, as was Jesus' own. (Think of the parables – when people were hungry, he fed them; when they were ill, he cured them; when they were possessed by demons, he exorcised them. His response was always appropriate to the “bad news” that was presented.) In our world there is plenty of “bad news,” but some tugs more at our hearts. Both the bad news we notice and how we respond varies from one person to another and within an individual from one time to the next.

We can map the different polarities of “call,” anchoring the axes with some statements of Christian belief and tradition. I want you to locate yourself on this grid by answering the following questions. Think about where you are TODAY (you may be somewhere else tomorrow).

*Draw a chart as shown below.*



**The horizontal axis runs from 1 to 10.** I will describe both polarities (1 and 10) to you – if either describes you exactly, then use that number. Probably you are somewhere in between, so just guess. Make a choice (whole numbers only) that shows which side of the continuum you are on and how close to the ends of the

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horizontal axis. As in any such exercise, your initial “gut” reaction is the best. There are NO right or wrong answers. All are valid.

**Number 1:** The only way to know God is in a one-on-one, direct relationship. That’s the only way to know God.

**Number 10:** The only way to know God is in the midst of God’s people, the church. That’s the only way to know God.

Do you have a number? Remember it.

**The vertical axis ranges from A to J.** I will describe both polarities to you, and as before select the letter that best represents where you are today on the vertical axis. Again, there are NO right or wrong answers. All are valid.

**A:** The end and purpose of life is so to live that I am reunited with God at my death.

**J:** The end and purpose of life is to participate with brothers and sisters in building a human society of shalom, where peace and justice and love reign.

Do you have a letter? Remember it.

Now – sing out your number/letter combination so I can plot it on this grid.

*Turn your back to the group and as each person gives you his/her number/letter combination make an “x” on the appropriate spot on the grid until everyone’s combinations are on the chart.*

**What do you notice about the patterns of where people are on the grid? Are there clumps? Are there holes?**

Let’s talk some more about what the axes mean. Take two sons of the south – one black and one white, both Baptists – Martin Luther King Jr. and Billy Graham. Both founded their actions on the gospel, but they saw the “bad news” differently. For Graham the bad news is in an individual’s turning away from God, following a self-centered life– a profound individualistic separation that begins as one person chooses to turn away from God’s everlasting love. Graham’s good news addresses this condition, offering hope of salvation if only the individual will turn back to God by trusting in Jesus Christ – people who feel lost have had their lives transformed by Graham’s message.

To some extent King preached similar good news in his work with his congregations. But the bad news for him was primarily corporate and political systems that subjugated one group and destroyed the humanity of both the

oppressor and the oppressed. His good news was that of liberation not only of the soul, but of society; that through love non-violence could overcome the fear, hate, and violence in society. For those who were oppressed or discriminated against, this good news transformed their lives.

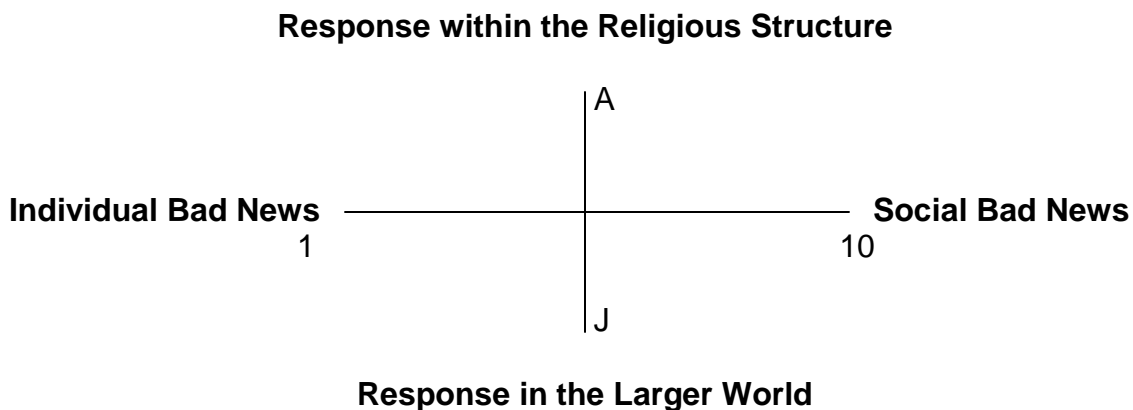
Their varying perceptions of the “bad news” form a continuum. Looking at the horizontal axis, Graham’s good news focuses on the left (*write “Individual Bad News” next to the 1*), the pain of individual separation from God; King’s on the right (*write “Social Bad News” next to the 10*), society’s sins of corporate oppression. Both are valid.

There is another difference between the two. Graham calls people into religious structure and community – he speaks of sin and salvation. King called for action in the social and political arena – the world outside the walls of religious institutions. He talked of oppression and freedom and urged confrontation in the streets, movement in the social structures of society.

The locus of action, then, forms another dimension of evangelism. Looking at the vertical axis, Graham worked within the religious structure (*write “Response within the Religious Structure” above the A*), while King called for action in the outside world (*write “Response in the Larger World” under the J*). Both are valid (and needed).

So we can respond to the bad news in individuals or in society and do so in ways within our religious institutions or in the world beyond their walls, which leads to the model.

*Your final model should look as shown below.*



Let's take a look at the quadrants and what they represent.

**As you discuss each, write the name of the type represented in the appropriate quadrant.**

**Upper left quadrant:** *contemplatives*; people who go deep with God; quiet, seeking God's presence; heart of parish prayer life; can be gifted spiritual directors (Billy Graham, Thomas Merton).

**Lower left quadrant:** *anonymous saints*, simply going about their business day-to-day with a sense of call; operating out of faith, though that may not be visible to people; they are often the 8:00 church goers, they hate groups and won't serve on the Vestry on a bet (Raoul Wallenberg, Dag Hammarskjöld).

**Lower right quadrant:** *secular saints*, aware of injustice and feel people's needs; want to change things; form task forces or committees to redress wrong; often impatient with those who do not sign on or see things the way they do; involved in community action or ecumenical groups (Sister Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu).

**Upper right quadrant:** *builders of the household of God* understand how much people need each other and really care about the structures of religious life; help people find place in community and nurture the life of the parish; work on commissions and worship committees (Rowan Williams).

Look at our chart. What meaning do you give to the patterns you see? What are the possible strengths of this group? What are we likely to care about? What are our blind spots?