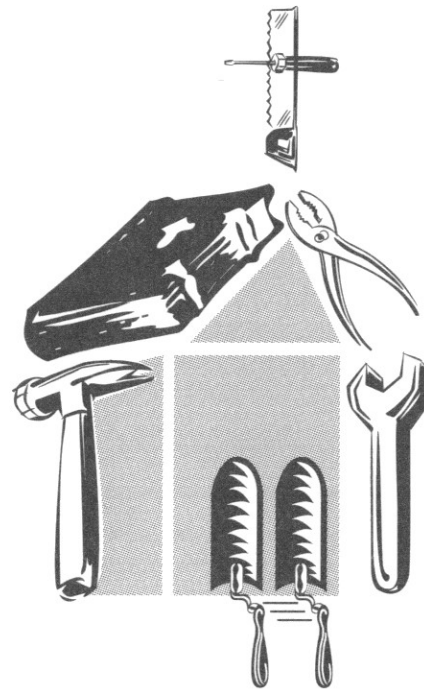


Building Church and Community Ministries



study guide

Carl Geores • Joicy Becker-Richards

Building Church and Community Ministries study guide

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Get Ready: **Where to Start**

You already know that America's mainline denominations are in trouble. Membership is declining, but even worse, the church has become marginal to many of its remaining members, and peripheral to the life of the community. The question is, can something be done about it?

We believe the answer is an emphatic "yes," and in this study package are tools designed to help. Whether you are an individual who cares about the future of your small church, or part of a larger group looking for an effective way to organize your cooperative efforts, you will find encouragement, structure and biblical grounding through a model that may significantly change your understanding of ministry.

The starting place is a biblical study of key mission themes combined with a study of the community. At the heart of these studies are two simple questions: What does God want us to do? And how are God's people to be faithful? The goal of this series is to find answers to these and other important questions.

Who should attend the study series?

If you are part of a **ministerium** or **church governing body** (such as a Presbytery), invite the members of the churches and/or agencies who are likely to be directly involved in the cooperative ministry and its future work. The sooner potential participants are involved, the stronger their commitment will be to the programs that emerge from the study.

If you are the **pastor** or **member** of a small church which is not in a cooperative relationship, start with the members of your own congregation. By the time you finish the series, you probably will have identified churches and/or agencies that you will want to work with cooperatively. At that point, you may want to go through the study series again – this time with the expanded group – in order to provide a common starting place in your work together.

Where will the leadership come from?

Pastors may be needed to provide the initial leadership, but planning, decision-making, and implementation must be a partnership between clergy and lay people. Ultimately, cooperative ministry must be controlled by the laity if it is to succeed.

Anything else?

Publicize the study series at least a month or more in advance, and schedule sessions so that participants will not feel pressured by time constraints. Use sermons, newsletters, bulletin announcements, "minutes for mission," posters, etc., to generate excitement and to invite folks to join in taking a "new look" at the mission and purpose of the church. Don't be shy about promoting this series; personally invite individuals who you believe should be there.





Get Set: **How to Use** **This Study Series**

Study Options:

This series consists of six parts broken into two sessions each, but has been designed for flexibility with 3 possible options:

- ◆ **Option 1** features six 2-3 hour sessions, which include Bible study, community study, and organizational meeting;
- ◆ **Option 2** features twelve 90-minute sessions, with Bible studies (Sessions A) alternating with community study/organizational meetings (Sessions B);
- ◆ **Option 3** features six 2-hour sessions, which focus on Bible and community studies, and postpone organizational work.

Times are approximate, as the size, needs and style of each group will differ. Feel free to adapt the guide to best serve your group. However, we suggest that you do not rush the process, and that participants use the studies provided for advance preparation.

Leader preparation:

As facilitator of the group, it's important to remember that you don't need to be the "expert," but you will want to be well prepared by doing the following:

1. Before scheduling the study series

- ☐ Review the *Study Guide* and decide which Study Option you will be following.

2. Prior to the first session

- ☐ Read through the entire *Study Guide*. This will give you a sense of how the study sessions are put together, and will allow you to customize the model.

- ☐ If possible, read the book, *Building Church and Community Ministries*.

3. Before each session

- ☐ Check instructions in the "Leader's Guide" section on p. 9-11, and review the appropriate session.
- ☐ View the video segment you will be showing so that you know in advance what your group will be seeing. Jot down any impressions or questions of your own that come to mind.
- ☐ Keep in mind that watching video is a passive activity, and that it is through the discussion that the learning and brainstorming will take place. Be prepared to move quickly into the discussion once the video is over.



Using the Video:

This video is based on the model of small church ministry developed by the Reverend Carl Geores and consists of six parts:

Part 1 "Introduction: A New Model for Ministry"

A "conversation with Carl," which outlines the basics of his model for ministry (25 minutes).

Part 2 "Evangelism: The Great Commission"

We are called to go into the world (12 minutes).

Part 3 "Social Witness: Connecting the Gospel to the World"

We are called to reach out to the needy (12 minutes).

Part 4 "Service: On Being a Servant Church"

To be "great" in the kingdom is to serve others (14 minutes).

Part 5 "Cooperation: Connecting to One Another"

We are part of one body with many gifts (12 minutes).

Part 6 "Empowerment: Equipping Members for Ministry"

God's people are to be prepared for works of service (15 minutes).

Equipment setup: Well before the meeting, check to make sure the television and VCR are set up and working.

☐ You will need a nineteen-inch screen for up to six people to view comfortably, and a twenty-five inch screen for up to twelve people. A larger group will need a larger screen or more than one monitor hooked up to the VCR.

☐ Just before the group gathers, make sure the TV and VCR are turned on and the tape cued to the right spot so that the tape can be rolled with just a flick of a button. You may want to ask a group member to be responsible for playing the tape, so that you can concentrate on leading the discussion.

Room setup: While a circle is the best way to seat a group for discussion, it may not be best for viewing the video, depending upon the size of the group.

☐ Consider some kind of flexible seating for the group that will allow a good view of the video and circle seating for the discussion that follows.

☐ If the group is larger than twelve, consider breaking into smaller groups of four to eight members for the discussion, to allow everyone an opportunity to participate.

Teaching aids: You will want to have the following ready for use.

☐ Newsprint flipchart to write down key points brought up in discussion.

☐ Pencils and paper. (Sections of this guide may be photocopied for ease of use by the group, or additional copies may be purchased.)

Leader's Guide



Each part of this study is divided into a series of activities:

Prepare (Features questions and additional readings for personal Bible study and reflection. Optional: this study can also be discussed by the group during the "Examine" Bible study session.)


Warm-up (Helps the group focus and transition into the study.)

Examine (Provides opportunity for seeking God's purpose through group Bible study.)

Watch the Video (Part 1 is introductory; Parts 2-6 link Bible and community studies.)

Investigate (Encourages and guides group discovery of needs and resources in the community.)

Organize (Focuses on structuring the group and its mission.)

It is recommended that you use a newsprint flip chart to collect and record responses and ideas from the group. To save time, write headings on blank sheets before the sessions, one per sheet unless otherwise noted. (Questions where use of newsprint is suggested will be marked with this symbol: )

Periodically you will want to review as a group the entries made during previous sessions. This can be useful to keep the group focused on its goals, to add new information, and to evaluate progress.

Part 1 – Session A

The purpose of this session is to introduce the group to each other and to Carl Geores' concept of cooperative ministry. Before the session, title sheets of newsprint with the following, one title to a page: **Concerns**, **Hopes**, **Goals**, and **Rules**. Fill in the first three sheets during the warm-up; the last sheet during discussion (question #4). Copy p. 11-12, and 14-17 to pass out to participants at beginning of Session B, copy p. 18 to pass out at the end.

Session B

The purpose of this session is to begin identifying resources and needs. Before the session, title sheets of newsprint with the following, one title to a page: **Current Mission**, **Community Needs**, **Ways to Discover Needs**, **Others w/Same Interests**.

Part 2 – Session A

The purpose of this session is to consider Jesus' instructions to "go into the world," and what that means for the church. Copy p. 19 to pass out during

warm-up, p. 20-21 to pass out at the beginning of Session B, and p. 22 to pass out at the end.

Session B

The purpose of this session is to define Christian discipleship and begin determining ground rules for a cooperative mission effort. Before the session, title sheets of newsprint with the following: **Why People Join Church, Common Beliefs, Focus On:, Steps to Organize.**

Part 3 – Session A

The purpose of this session is to consider who God wants us to reach out to, and whether the sharing the “Good News” involves action. Before the session, title sheets of newsprint with the following: **Today’s “Poor, Captives, Blind & Oppressed,” and What Can Be Done—Ecum. Coalition.** Copy p. 23 to pass out at during warm-up; p. 24-25 to pass out at the beginning of Session B, and p. 26 to pass out at the end.

Session B

The purpose of this session is to consider who are the needy in our community, and what is our purpose as a group. Before the session, title sheets of newsprint with the following: **Deserving/Not Deserving, and Statement of Purpose, Draft 1.**

Part 4 – Session A

The purpose of this session is to consider what it means to be servants of Christ, and part of a “servant congregation.” Before the session, title a sheet of newsprint with the following: **Servant as Employee/Servant of Christ.** Copy p. 27 to pass out at during warm-up; p. 28-29 to pass out at the beginning of Session B, and p. 30 & 38 to pass out at the end.

Session B

The purpose of this session is to consider the Christian calling to serve others, and to brainstorm how we can serve together in the community. Before the session, title a sheet of newsprint with the following: **Mission We Can Do/Want to Do.**

Part 5 – Session A

The purpose of this session is to consider what it means to be parts of one body, each with different gifts. Copy p. 31 to pass out at during warm-up; p. 32-33 to pass out at the beginning of Session B, and p. 34 to pass out at the end.

Session B

The purpose of this session is to consider how the analogy “of one body,

many parts” applies to a larger cooperative effort, and to think through some specific organizational issues. Before the session, title sheets of newsprint with the following: **Resources Available, Resources Needed, Ways to Recruit Volunteers, Ways to Fundraise.**

Part 6 – Session A

The purpose of this session is to consider how to prepare “the saints for ministry.” Copy p. 35 to pass out at during warm-up, and p. 36, 37, 39 & 40 to pass out at the beginning of Session B.

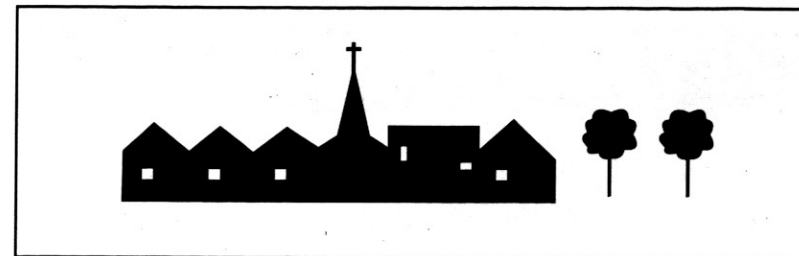
Session B

The purpose of this session is to consider our “human resources,” and to decide where to go from here. Before closing, depending upon where you are in the organizational process, set dates and agendas for future meetings. Using newsprint titled **What’s Next**, create an approximate timeline with such items as: when you expect to have the organizational structure in place; what needs you hope to serve; ways you might serve them; and what has to happen before you can proceed.

Leader Notes:

Go! A Map of the Process

The chart below lays out the process of building a church and community ministry. The community study is propelled by the Bible study, and the organizational development is propelled by the community study. Space has been provided for you to add your own ideas to each category.



I. Bible Study

II. Community Study

III. Organizational Development

Notes

Part 1 – Introduction

What does God want of us? What is this model and how does it work?

What are we already doing?
Are there other needs out there?
How do we find out?

Why are we here? What do we want to do?
How will we find out? How will we organize?

Part 2 – Evangelism

Are we coming or going?

Who are “we?”

What are the “rules” or limits on our participation together? What channels must we go through? What do we believe?

Part 3 – Social Witness

Is it enough to simply talk about “good news” without some kind of action?

Who are those in need in our communities?

Who will find out who is in need in our community? How will we decide who to help? What is our purpose?

Part 4 – Service

Are we a club, or a “servant congregation?”

What kinds of ministry are needed?

Who will develop plans for ministry to meet the identified needs? What kinds of ministry can we do? Want to do?

Part 5 – Cooperation

What does it mean to be “parts of the body?”

Who will be part of the ministry?
What agencies, churches, corporations, etc. will participate?

How will we divide the labor? What are our resources, and how will we use them?

Part 6 – Empowerment

What are our gifts and how are they to be developed and used?

Who has what skills and resources?
How are they best utilized?

How will we train and utilize our volunteers? How will we sustain long-term efforts? Where do we go from here?

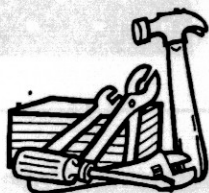
Part 1 – Session A

INTRODUCTION

A New Model for Ministry

Scripture: John 10:10b, James 2:14-35

“...faith by itself, if it is
not accompanied by action, is dead”



When times are hard, it is not unusual for congregations to withdraw, focus on the past, and resist change – usually with poor results. A better strategy is one that moves the church from a survival mode to a mission mode where it can connect cooperatively to other churches and the community. This shift does not happen quickly, but is the result of a teaching ministry that is exercised through preaching, adult Bible study, and community study. Invariably, as congregations reach out to meet the needs of others, they discover that their own needs are met as well.



Warm up

10-20 minutes

Take time for introductions, and then respond to the following:

- ✎ • What is your greatest concern about the church in today's world? Your greatest hope?
- ✎ • What drew you to this study? What do you hope will come out of it?



Watch the Video

25 minutes

As you watch, make notes of points that catch your attention.

Notes



Examine

30 minutes

1. Carl says that many churches say “come,” but that the operative word is “go.” What does he mean? How does this difference in perspective impact the way we do ministry?
2. Why is it important to do a community study at the same time as the Bible Study?
3. Many people assume that public agencies will resist collaboration with the church, but Carl's experience has shown otherwise. What does this mean for our ministry to the community? What other false assumptions might we have that may be limiting our ministry, and how can we avoid them?
- ✎ 4. Carl says that as we work cooperatively with other churches and organizations, it is important to “know the rules.” What kind of “rules” do you think he is talking about? What rules will affect our (or our organization's) participation in a cooperative ministry? (For example, will decisions have to be approved by a church board or committee? Are there specific activities our organization will not approve?)
5. According to Carl, who holds the key to ministry? Do you agree or disagree, and why?



Break

10 minutes

Part 1 – Session B



Investigate

30 minutes

1. What is our current mission to the community?
2. What needs do we see in the community?
3. Do you think there are other needs not yet identified? How can we find out what they are?
4. What can we do in cooperation with others that we cannot do alone? Why should we work together?
5. What are the persons, agencies, churches, and groups in our community that have similar interests?



Organize

25 minutes

1. Why are we here and what do we hope to do?
2. How will we proceed with our community study?
3. What do we want to accomplish before the next session?

Close

5 minutes

For next meeting: read "Organizational Development of a Cluster Group" and prepare for Bible study.

*Close in prayer, asking God to reveal
God's will for this group.*

Organizational Development of a Cluster Group*

Goal: To create a charter or constitution that has:

- A. A clear statement of purpose
- B. Organizational design
 1. Criteria for membership
 2. Description of governing body
 - a. Its authority and mission
 - b. Board members
 - *number
 - *term
 - *method of election
 - c. Officers
 - *term
 - *job description
 - d. Standing committees
 - *responsibilities
 - *authority
 - e. Committee definitions
 - *finance
 - *personnel
 - *special
 - f. Ad hoc committees
 - *special projects
- C. Activities of governing body
 1. Preparing of budget
 2. Secure funding
 3. Receive reports and requests from churches, parishes or standing committees
 4. Make recommendations
 5. Assignments for implementation of projects
 6. Develop style of operation
 7. Determine lines of accountability
 8. Facilitate communication with supporting churches, organizations and persons
 9. Develop and implement evaluation process
 10. Fulfill legal requirements

*From *Building your Own Model for Cooperative Ministry: A Bible Study Process*, by Carl Geores.

Part 2 – Session A

EVANGELISM: The Great Commission

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..."



The Great Commission reflects the church's understanding of the global mission assignment that Jesus gave to his disciples at his last resurrection appearance. This passage continues to inspire individuals, congregations, and the church at large to become involved in mission efforts.



Prepare

Before the Session

1. WORSHIP: How does "worship" describe the new understanding that the disciples had of the identity of Jesus Christ and their relationship to him?
2. PRAYER: How important is prayer in the life of the congregation? family life? personal life?
2. BAPTISM: Explain the meaning of baptism and its importance in the life of the congregation and its families.
3. TEACHING: The command to teach is very important. Describe the Christian Education program in your church. What is the connection between the teaching ministry and baptism?
4. DOUBT: What place does doubt have in the life of faith?
5. AUTHORITY: How much authority does Jesus Christ have in the life of the church, and how is this authority demonstrated?
6. DISCIPLESHIP: Scripture says, "Make disciples of all nations." How? How can different faith groups work together for the common good in a community?

*Other passages for study: Acts 1:1-8:3; Luke 10:1-12,17-22 ;
Mark 6:7-13; Mark 8:27-38; John 4:1-38*



Warm up 10-15 minutes

Have a volunteer read Matthew 28:16-20, and then respond to the following:

- How did you become a Christian?
- How do life experiences help us or hinder us in our faith development? How are worship, fellowship, and service part of the faith journey?



Examine 25-35 minutes

1. What was the source of Jesus' authority? How much does he have and how does he exercise it? What does this say about Jesus' relationship to his disciples? To us?
2. Do Jesus' teachings deal with laws, relationships, or both? How do these teachings help us in our daily life?
3. Where does strength and power for fulfilling the Great Commission come from? How is it sustained?
4. How does your faith impact your decision-making process regarding your family? church? community? politics? stewardship? life style?
5. Does your faith impact some areas of decision-making differently than others? How?
6. Why has this passage of Scripture had such a powerful impact upon the "mission of the church?" How can it become a guide for a congregation that is struggling to adapt to the change in its neighborhood?



Break 10 minutes

Part 2 – Session B



Watch the Video

12 minutes

As you watch, make notes of points that catch your attention.



Notes



Investigate

25 minutes

1. Why do people join your church?
2. Carl emphasizes that it is not enough to bring new members into the church; they must be fully integrated into the life of

the congregation. How does your congregation help new people get involved? Is there a specific process, or are newcomers essentially “on their own?”

3. What kind of commitment are we making to individuals when we baptize them? How does your church currently show that commitment? What might you do differently?

4. What does it mean to “disciple” someone? How do you currently disciple people in your congregation? How did Jesus disciple his followers?

5. How does your church respond to new ideas? Is negativity ever a problem, and if so, how is it handled?

6. According to Carl, how do we get people excited about ministry?



Organize

20-40 minutes

1. What beliefs do we hold in common?
2. Where do we want to focus our energies?
3. Look at the “Organizational Development of a Cluster Group” outline (p. 17). What steps do we want to take at this time to organize ourselves? If not now, when? Who will moderate this group, and how will decisions be made?



Close

5 minutes

Before next meeting:
Prepare for Bible study; respond to organizational issues.

*Close in prayer, asking God
to provide wisdom and guidance.*

Part 3 – Session A

SOCIAL WITNESS: Connecting the Gospel to the World

Scripture: Luke 4:10-20

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has
annointed me to preach good news to the poor."*



This passage of Scripture provides a theological understanding of the nature of our ministry. It is not enough to just believe; it is not enough to worship regularly; it is not enough to simply talk about one's faith. As Christians, we are also called to "do;" to demonstrate the "good news" of the Gospel by meeting the tangible needs of God's people, locally as well as globally.



Prepare

Before the Session

1. Read Luke 3:21-23. What is the importance of Jesus' baptism?
2. In Luke 4:1-13, why were the temptations in the wilderness important to Jesus?
3. From Luke 4:14-15, how would you define preaching? How does it differ from teaching? What is the point of preaching?
4. Look at Luke 4:15-29. When Jesus came back to his home town of Nazareth for the first time after his baptism, how had he changed? How had the people of Nazareth changed?
5. When Jesus went to the synagogue to worship, he asked to read from Scripture, as was his custom. He chose a passage from Isaiah 61. Why was this choice important?
6. After reading the Scripture, Jesus said it had been fulfilled on that day. What did he mean?

Other passages for study:

Matthew 25:31-45, Luke 10:25-37, 11:5-13, James 2: 14-26

Warm up
10-15 minutes



Have a volunteer read Luke 4:10-20, and then respond to the following:

- Who do you think are today's poor? today's captives? the blind and the oppressed?
- How can the rich be poor?



Examine
25-35 minutes

1. A person who is poor can be spiritually rich. How can that be true?
2. What responsibility does the church have regarding the needs of the poor, such as housing, food, jobs, education, human violence, child abuse, racism, homelessness, justice? How should the church be involved in meeting those needs?
3. How do you set the captives free from substance abuse? oppression? prisons? from poverty?
4. What is the difference between doing ministries *with* people and *for* people?
5. Why is a cooperative effort essential in doing an effective church and community ministry?
6. Name ways in which your congregation shares in a community-centered ministry with other congregations. How did these ministries begin?
7. What can be done as part of an ecumenical coalition?



Break
10 minutes

Part 3 – Session B



Watch the Video

12 minutes

As you watch, make notes of points that catch your attention.



Notes



Investigate

25 minutes

1. According to Carl, what does this Scripture passage mean for the church?
2. What is the difference between “giving handouts” and “sharing out of our abundance?” What kind of abundance is

Carl talking about, and how does it differ from the secular idea of wealth?

3. What have we discovered so far about our community and its needs, and how does this passage apply?
4. Who is deserving of help and why? Are there those who are *not* deserving? Explain.
5. Think back to a time in your own life when you were in need and received help. How did it make you feel?
6. How do we determine the boundaries of our assistance to those in need? Should there be limits? Why or why not?



Organize

20-40 minutes

1. How will we go about finding those in need in our community? (Be sure to include the human service agencies.)
2. Who will do the “looking?”
3. How will we decide who to help and how?
4. Who will develop our statement of purpose, and what do we know we want to include?
5. Other organizational issues?



Close

5 minutes

Before next meeting:
Prepare Bible study; complete community study assignments.

*Close in prayer, asking God to
open our eyes to the needs in our community*

Part 4 – Session A

SERVICE: On Being a Servant Church

Scripture: Mark 10:35-45, John 13:1-7
"Whoever wants to be great among you must become a servant"



Scripture tells us that our lives are to be modeled after Jesus' life, and that we are to follow his example in our relationships with others. Jesus called his disciples—all the men and women who were part of that early company of believers—to be "servants." In today's church, we too are called to be servants. A servant congregation helps its members to follow Jesus' example by providing opportunities for them to utilize their talents and resources in service to others.



Prepare *Before the Session*

1. In the passage in Mark:
 - a. Where are Jesus and his disciples? Where are they going?
 - b. Why did James and John come to Jesus? What did they want him to do?
 - c. What was the baptism that Jesus promised James and John?
2. In the passage in John:
 - a. On what occasion did Jesus wash the feet of his disciples?
 - b. What was Peter's reaction to having his feet washed by Jesus?
 - c. What was Jesus teaching?

Other passages for study:
Luke 6:12-49, Luke 9:1-11, Luke 17:1-10, Luke 18:9-14,
John: 10:1-11, John 15:12-17, Acts 2:42-47, 1 Cor. 13:1-13



Warm up *10-15 minutes*

Have volunteers read Mark: 35-45 and John 13:1-7. Then respond to the following:

- What does the term "servant" mean in today's world?
- What is the difference between being employed as a servant, and being a servant of Jesus Christ?



Examine *25-35 minutes*

1. How did the other disciples react to James and John seeking special favors? How did Jesus react to the dispute?
2. Do you see power struggles in your congregation? In the larger church? What do you think is the nature of the struggles? How do you think they could be resolved?
3. How did Jesus define greatness?
4. How did Jesus model servanthood?
5. What is the connection between Passover, the invitation to the Lord's Supper and the foot washing?
6. What do these passages teach about the Christian life style in the church? How do your members serve others in your community?
7. Do evangelism and social witness go together? Explain.



Break *10 minutes*

Part 4 – Session B



Watch the Video

14 minutes

As you watch, make notes of points that catch your attention.



Notes



Investigate

25 minutes

1. How would you describe the difference between a church that is a club, and one that is a servant congregation?
2. Why are these two passages significant as we consider a cooperative ministry? What does this passage say about the

kind of relationships we should have? What potential pitfalls does it suggest, and how can we avoid them?

3. How can congregations become more open and inclusive? How can they welcome minorities and the poor into the life of the church?

4. How can a congregation attack the larger issues (i.e., housing, medical care, education, the elderly, single parents, family violence, substance abuse, AIDS, inter-church cooperation) in a way that significantly impacts the community?

5. How can we help church members to identify with hurting people in the community? How can we expedite the process?

6. What is your congregation doing now? What would you like to do? How can you organize for a larger mission?



Organize

20-40 minutes

1. What community needs have we identified? Do we need to keep looking?
2. What kinds of mission do these needs suggest? Which ones do we think we could do? Which ones do we want to do?
3. Is anyone else trying to meet these needs?
4. Who will begin developing possible mission plans?



Close

5 minutes

Before next meeting:

Prepare for Bible study; give thought to possible missions.

Close in prayer, asking God to make clear to us where we are to minister.

Part 5 – Session A

COOPERATION: Connecting to One Another

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:14-27
*"Now you are the body of Christ,
and each one of you is part of it."*



Just as the members of a congregation are connected to each other as part of a larger body, so small congregations need to be connected to each other through parishes and coalitions. Cooperation between churches can help fuel mission efforts through the sharing of ideas, experience, and emotional support, as well as human and material resources. Together, as part of the body of Christ, congregations can tackle ministries that they would never have attempted alone.



Prepare *Before the Session*

1. Does the analogy of "one body, many parts" fit the church? How?
2. To whom might Paul be referring when he mentions the "unpresentable" parts? What does he mean when he says that God has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it?
3. Does the whole church suffer if any part is suffering? How?
4. What gifts does Paul mention that are found in the church? Are there other gifts not listed? What gifts are found in your church today? Is there a correspondence?
5. What are some gifts that people may possess that tend to be overlooked?

Other passages for study:
John 15:1-11; Acts 1:12-14, 21-26; Acts 2:1-4,
Hebrews 12:1,2; 1 Peter 2:1-10



Warm up *10-15 minutes*

Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27, and then respond to the following:

- Who in the church might be the feet? the hands? the eyes? other parts? Which part are you?
- How does a person discover what "part" they are?



Examine *25-35 minutes*

1. What does Paul mean when he says the church is the body of Christ, and that each member is individually part of it?
2. In his description of the different parts of the body and how the body needs each one, Paul illustrates the importance of diversity. Does this passage apply to individual church members, congregations, or both? What about the family of Christian churches?
3. How does your congregation relate to other churches in your community? How do you establish communication and relationship? How do you share in mission with other congregations?
4. What areas of mission can be done better in partnership than alone? Explain.
5. How can you build a model for ministry that is open to all? Give examples of churches that work together successfully.
6. Would you be willing to be a part of a coalition of churches and agencies that would work to address identified needs in the community?



Break *10 minutes*

Part 5 –Session B



Watch the Video

12 minutes

As you watch, make notes of points that catch your attention.



Notes



Investigate

25 minutes

1. Why do you think some people have difficulty cooperating with others?
2. How can groups effectively get beyond their differences?
3. Carl says one problem in developing cooperative ministries is that church hierarchies utilize a “top-down” approach,

whereas community ministries function best with a “bottom-up” leadership approach. What do you think he means by that? What would have to happen for our community ministry to be “bottom-up?”

4. In this group, what are the things that we agree are important? What are things that we would have difficulty on working together?

5. As we begin to organize our ministry together, what will we want to include in our statement of purpose? [see p. 17]



Organize

20-40 minutes

1. As we consider possible ministries, what resources are needed (funds, staffing, location, etc.)? already available? How can we identify them?
2. How will we recruit others to work with us? Who will do what, and how will it be decided?
3. How will we raise funds? How will this ministry be supported?
4. Is this a short-term effort, or long-term effort?
5. How will we make ourselves known and available to those who will need our services?
6. If we have not yet done so, when will we finalize the organizational structure of this group?



Close

5 minutes

Before next meeting:

Prepare for Bible study; complete organizational assignments.

Close in prayer, ask God to bring together all the right resources at the right time.

Part 6 – Session A

EMPOWERMENT: Equipping Members for Ministry

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16

"...so that the body of Christ may be built up"



As in other areas of life, effective ministry requires the development of particular skills. Therefore, it is vital that each church take seriously its responsibility to prepare the congregation to be full participants in its mission. Members need to be told the purpose of each ministry and how they can contribute. They need to be appropriately trained so that they can perform tasks with confidence. They also need a variety of opportunities to discover the unique joy that Christ gives to those who serve others.



Prepare

Before the Session

1. How does the apostle Paul describe both the unity and diversity of the church? How does the passage connect with I Corinthians 12:12-31?
2. How do "lowliness, meekness (RSV), patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit, in the land of peace" describe the personal cost of living with one another in the church?
3. As the church grew, its discord increased. That is true today. Why is it so hard for Christians to give up their differences and focus on their unity? Should they?
4. In Ephesians 4:11-16, what gifts did Jesus give, and for what purpose?

Other passages for study:

Luke 5:1-11, Luke 6:12-26, Acts 9:12-26,

Romans 12:1-21, 2 Timothy 1:3-8



Warm up

10-15 minutes

Have a volunteer read Ephesians 4: 11-16, and then respond to the following:

- For what was Jesus preparing God's people?
- In what ways have you been prepared? In what area(s) could you use additional preparation?



Examine

20-40 minutes

1. Paul believed God called people to specific tasks in the church. Name these tasks and describe their functions.
2. To whom does the ministry of the church belong, the clergy, the laity, or both as partners? Why?
3. Who are the saints, according to Paul, and what is their role in the church? Are they to serve primarily in the church, in the community, in the world, or in all three?
4. Is the church clergy oriented? Why? Should it be? How can it change?
5. How does your church equip members for ministry in the world? Do you have a plan to ask newcomers to become equipped for ministry in the world? Explain. Give examples of churches that equip their members for ministry.
6. Do people want to become involved in ministry today? Is it enough to sit and listen without being involved?



Break

10 minutes

Part 6 – Session B



Watch the Video

15 minutes

As you watch, make notes of points that catch your attention.



Notes



Investigate

25 minutes

1. According to Carl, what does “empowerment” mean?
2. Do you think people function best under a supervisor that “calls the shots,” or as part of the decision-making process? What are the pros and cons of each? Which style do you think would work best in a cooperative ministry, and why?

3. How does your church discover and utilize the gifts and talents of its members? What improvements could be made?
4. How does your church develop the gifts of its volunteers? What are you doing well? What might be done differently?
5. How would you describe the role of the pastor in Carl’s model of ministry?
6. According to Carl, ministry is not about tasks, but about faithfulness. What is the difference?



Organize

20-40 minutes

1. Have we identified any additional resources? If so, what are they?
2. How will we recruit, train, and utilize volunteers?
3. How will we sustain our long-term efforts?
4. Look at Appendix B and C (p. 39-40), and discuss how these guidelines may be helpful.
5. Where do we go from here?



Close

5 minutes

Close in prayer, thanking God and asking God to sustain these efforts and to keep us faithful.

APPENDIX A*

Exploring Local Mission Needs

1. What are we now doing in mission?
2. What are the needs in our community? How can we find out?
3. What would we like to do in mission?
4. What can we do in cooperation with others that we cannot do alone? Why should we work together?
5. Where are the persons, agencies, churches, groups with similar interests?
6. What human and material resources do we have to share with others?
7. What are we willing to share? Who will decide what we can share?
8. What goals do we have in common with other members of the coalition?
9. What are our common priorities? Can they be translated into mission goals?
10. How will we raise the awareness of our churches about needs of the community, and how cooperating congregations can connect the mission of the church to these needs?
11. What kind of process will be developed to provide information and develop motivation for engaging in mission together?
12. How will we encourage each congregation to develop ownership?
13. What kind of a time line is needed to organize the model?
14. Are there other persons or governing bodies who will be involved in making decisions concerning our participation? List these persons/groups.
15. How will members be elected and charged?

*From *Building Your Own Model for Cooperative Ministry: A Bible Study Process*, by Carl Geores.

APPENDIX B*

Guideline for Recruiting Volunteers

(What we have learned about developing leadership in volunteers)

1. There has to be a challenging environment in which each volunteer can come and work in an organized way to achieve personal goals.
2. Adequate housing that is satisfying to the volunteer has to be provided.
3. Financial arrangements for travel need to be made.
4. A clear job description that defines how the person relates to the project and to the people who are in the project must be agreed upon.
5. An orientation process is essential -- one that introduces the volunteer, not only to the position, but also to how that position fits into the goals of the project.
6. The volunteer needs to feel a sense of ownership in his or her own work. The person needs to feel that suggestions that will improve the project are welcomed.
7. Some kind of a reward system has to be built into the job description and into the every day life.
8. The person needs to be welcomed by the people into the church and community. The person needs to be recognized publicly as a valued member of the team with whom they are working.
9. A support system for the person has to be built into the project. The support system needs to be broader than the supervisor working with the person. Regularly scheduled meetings with the supervisor and other members of the project are important.
10. An evaluation process needs to be followed. For a short-term project, it should occur frequently. For a longer-term project, (e.g., a year) it should occur periodically.
11. When a person is finished with a project, adequate recognition needs to be given.
12. Part of the separation process is a written evaluation from the volunteer and from the supervisor. This is shared and becomes part of the record of operation.

*From *Building Your Own Model for Cooperative Ministry: A Bible Study Process*, by Carl Geores.

APPENDIX C*

Recruiting and Training Leaders in the Congregation

1. Take the time to visit with members in their homes, businesses and in church fellowship activities to become acquainted with their lives, talents and gifts.
2. Be thoroughly acquainted with the mission design of the congregations and cooperative work. Know what is needed. Develop and share a theology for lay ministry.
3. Work with your nominating committees. Be prepared to make suggestions of people for positions in the church when appropriate.
4. Provide adequate training for youth leaders, church officers, church school teachers and other tasks.
5. Provide a support system that will enable leaders to find support .
6. Show how each position fits into the life of the congregation and cooperative work and enriches its mission.
7. Publicly recognize volunteer leaders and have the congregation show support for their work. Use church bulletins, newsletters and recognition from the pulpit.
8. Visit with each person periodically to monitor their progress.
9. Establish a talent bank.
10. Provide a spiritual enrichment study program for all who will participate.

Steps to Develop a Cluster of Churches or Cooperative Parish

1. Identify the churches interested in participating in the process.
2. Decide which congregations are willing to share in the study program and begin. Take your time. Study has to be at the people's pace.
3. Meet with representatives of the congregations who desire to become participants in the cluster or cooperative parish.
4. Lead representatives of the congregations through a process to determine types of ministry they would like to develop.

**From Building Your Own Model for Cooperative Ministry: A Bible Study Process, by Carl Geores.*