



Effective Organising for Congregational Renewal
Michael Gecan
Metro Industrial Areas Foundation

A study guide prepared by Rob McFarlane, Director of Continuing Education,
Uniting Church - Board of Education (Synod of NSW & the ACT) for the Sydney
Alliance.

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Introduction:

Aim:

This guide contains a series of studies to help congregations put into practice some insights and tools of community organising. The aim is to help congregations be renewed in their inner life while deepening their connections with their communities. While participants will gain useful knowledge and insights individually, the study program is designed to be part of a process of a group engaging in transformational change.

Time investment:

The study program consists of four introductory studies and a later follow-up gathering.

The first four studies are based directly on “the tools” in part one of Michael Gecan’s “Effective Organizing”. These are each 90 minute sessions, but require both short pre-reading and some interpersonal homework exercises. These between-meeting activities should take no more than an hour each time, but some participants may choose to invest more of their time.

The four 90 minute studies should be done on a weekly or fortnightly basis. This allows sufficient time to read and reflect between sessions, while still remaining fresh.

The follow-up session will occur at a time agreed by the group. It will be a time of sharing what participants have discovered through “listening”, as well as planning further action with the congregation and community.

Requirements:

1. Each participant will need a copy of Gecan, M. “Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal” (Skokie, Illinois: ACTA Publications, 2008).
2. It is desirable but not essential that the studies be facilitated by someone who has completed a Sydney Alliance two-day “Alliance Building Institute” (formerly known as “Leadership Institutes”).

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Study 1: Individual Meetings

Before the first meeting:

Ensure that every participant has:

- A copy of Michael Gecan “Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal” (Skokie, Illinois: ACTA Publications, 2008). This is available from the Sydney Alliance.
- A copy of the participants’ study guide

Remind participants that the **first study** is based on participants **having read pages 5-13** of “Effective Organizing”. (The introduction to the **four tools**, and the discussion of tool 1 **Individual Meetings**.)

Welcome & Introductions

[10 minutes]

If the participants are part of an existing group:

- Open the gathering in your usual way, eg prayer.

Whether this is a new or existing group use an “ice-breaker” or community building exercise. One suggestion that suits the aims of the study is:

- Go around the circle inviting people to say:
 - Their name
 - How long they have been a part of the congregation
 - Who was the most influential person for them in becoming a part of the congregation.

Explain that this study series:

- Consists of four studies and a later follow-up gathering.
- There will be a small amount of homework between meetings, such as:
 - a short reading from “Effective Organizing”, and
 - having a conversation with another person.
- While the studies will give each participant some new insights and skills, the overall aim of the study is to renew the congregation’s life, both:
 - Internally – in the quality of its relationships
 - Externally – in the congregation’s engagement with its community.

Step 1: Scripture reading

[5 minutes]

Read this passage out loud in the group using the dramatisation of the NRSV text on the following pages. It involves the whole group. Reading roles are:

- Narrator
- Jesus
- Woman
- Disciples (one half of the rest of the group)
- Samaritans (the other half of the rest of the group)

John 4:5-42

NRSV with verse numbers & some narrator's comments omitted to enhance the narrative flow.

Narrator:

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her:

Jesus:

"Give me a drink."

Narrator:

His disciples had gone to the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him:

Woman:

"How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"

Narrator:

Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.

Jesus:

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

Woman:

"Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?"

Jesus:

"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

Woman:

"Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus:

"Go, call your husband, and come back."

Woman:

"I have no husband."

Jesus:

"You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

Woman:

“Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus:

“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Woman:

“I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”

Jesus:

“I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

Narrator:

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city.

She said to the people:

Woman:

“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”

Narrator:

They left the city and were on their way to him.
Meanwhile the disciples were urging him:

Disciples (one half of rest of study group say together):

“Rabbi, eat something.”

Jesus:

“I have food to eat that you do not know about.”

Narrator:

So the disciples said to one another:

Disciples (one half of rest of study group say together):

“Surely no one has brought him something to eat?”

Jesus:

“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.”

Narrator:

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman,

Samaritans (second half of rest of study group say together):

“It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.”

Step 2: Reflection on Scripture

[10 minutes]

- Spend *one minute* in silence, reflecting on how it **felt** being in that role.
 - Share these feelings with the group as you feel free.
- How were each of the characters in the passage changed through the experience of being in a relational conversation:
 - The woman
 - The disciples
 - The Samaritans
 - Jesus

Step 3: “Fish Bowl” Individual (Relational) Meeting

[20 minutes]

Remember the three assumptions that Gecan offers in his book (pages 8-11):

1. The other person is worth listening to. The very act of ... an individual meeting ... is an act of *recognition*.
2. The person initiating the individual meeting ... understands that the time devoted to individual meetings is more important than time spent in more conventional activities.
3. The corporate identity of the congregation remains in formation; that the newest member ... is invited to join in the ongoing creation of the evolving local community.

The individual or relational meeting is more of an art-form than a rigid process. It depends on:

- Being genuinely curious about the other person.
- Deep listening (not just waiting to have your turn to speak).
- Seeking to find out:
 - What it is that has shaped the other person to be who they are in their public roles. This means:
 - Looking for “why” the person is engaged in what they are, but recognising that “what” questions help the other to open up. “What made you get involved ... ?”
“What happened that made you care about ... ?”
 - Sharing and hearing stories of concrete experiences, not theories or abstractions.
- Honouring the other person as an individual while looking for points of connection between your stories and theirs.

The Fish Bowl:

It is preferable if at least one of the partners in the relational meeting fishbowl has undergone a two-day Alliance Building Institute.

The focus questions could include:

What is it that has made you a part of this congregation?

What things have happened in your life that cause you to be a person of faith?

At this point the group should be half way through its 90 minute session.

Step 4: Individual (Relational) Meetings [20 minutes]

The group divides into pairs. People choose as a partner someone in the group who they know less well than others, and about whom they feel curiosity.

Use the focus questions suggested above, or anything else that leads to a deepening of understanding.

The facilitator will give a signal after 10 minutes to indicate that half of the time has elapsed.

Step 5: Plenary [15 minutes]

The group regathers. The facilitator invites people to reflect on:

- With your partner’s permission, what insights have you gained into the other’s life?
- What have you learned about relational meetings?

Step 6: Commitment to “homework”

[10 minutes]

The facilitator invites people to commit to having one relational meeting during the time before the next study meeting, and to read the set pages of “Effective Organizing”.

Homework:

Before the next group meeting every participant is invited to commit to do two things:

- Arrange and conduct one relational meeting with someone in the community outside the congregation. Try to choose someone who has some sort of leadership role, whether formal or informal. Some examples might be:
 - A teacher
 - A police officer
 - A good natural “networker”
 - A small corner-shop owner
 - Focus questions could include:
 - What in your life made you decide to become a ... ?
 - What brought you to live/work in THIS community?
- Read pages 13-18 of “Effective Organizing for Congregations” – **Power (Relational) Analysis**.

Further reading: Not required, but if you want to find out more:

In order of importance:

- *The Power of Relational Action*, by Ed Chambers (available from the Sydney Alliance and from a US publisher). It overviews the ‘radical’ tactic of the relational meeting
- Chapter 2 “The Relational Meeting” in *Roots for Radicals*, Ed Chambers.
- Chapter 1 “All Real Living is Meeting” in *Going Public: An Organiser’s Guide to Citizens Action*, Micheal Gecan, Anchor Books.
- “Activate: Community Organising training for climate solutions, Introduction to Public Narrative”, Marshall Ganz (available from Sydney Alliance office.)

Study 2: Power (Relational) Analysis

Before the meeting:

Remind participants to pre-read pages 13-18 of “Effective Organizing for Congregations.”

Ensure that there is a generous sized whiteboard in place or expanse of sheets of newsprint taped to a wall. Provide a supply of white-board markers in a range of colours.

Step 1: One-to-one

[15 minutes]

Welcome participants back (5 min)

- Open the gathering in your usual way, eg prayer.
- Invite general comments about the “homework” tasks (reading & relational meeting).

One-to-one sharing (10 min):

- Divide into pairs and share for 5 minutes each way:
 - How did their relational conversation go?
 - What did they learn about the other person?
 - About the practice of relational meetings?
 - If someone hasn't had a relational meeting:
 - What inhibited you from doing this?

Step 2: Scripture reading

[5 minutes]

Have one person read this passage out slowly in the group. While the passage is being read, participants are invited to take notes on the following two questions:

- Who has power in this situation?
- What are the forms and sources of this power?

Matthew 27:1-2, 11-31

¹When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. ²They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

....

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” ¹⁴But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

¹⁵Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” ¹⁸For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him

over. ¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." ²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." ²²Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Step 3: Reflection on Scripture

[25 minutes]

Invite people to share their responses to the two questions:

- Who has power in this situation? (5 min)
- What are the forms and sources of this power? (10 min)

Write these responses spread out widely on a whiteboard as they are shared. Begin with simply naming the people, then add 1-2 word descriptions of forms & sources under each name.

Invite people to come forward to draw lines showing who has power to influence whom concerning the decision about the fate of Jesus. (10 min)

At this point the group should be half way through its 90 minute session.

Step 4: Power analysis in practice

[30 minutes]

"Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal" does not offer a tool for doing a power analysis. However some tips from the reading include the following (5 min):

- This is not wishful thinking about how things *should* function (p14).
- This does need to be done very carefully, taking people's past hurts and present needs into account (p16).
- If doing a power analysis of a congregation, this is not an outsider's critique but an insider's recognition of how things really are, both within the congregation, and as it relates to its wider community (p16).
- Authentic power analysis grows out of a sustained and serious series of individual meetings out of which trust has developed (pp16,17).
- As the aim of power analysis, like all community organising, is both "disorganizing and reorganizing" (p18), the analysis is always fluid.

In another of his books, “Going Public: An organizer’s guide to citizen action”, Michael Gecan describes a session of a group undertaking a power analysis. A group exercise for this session in our series inspired by Gecan’s example is:

- Spend **5 minutes** choosing a **real** and **concrete** change that the congregation members want to see **achieved**. This could be inside the congregation or in the wider community. This change is not to be something vague and unmeasurable, no matter how desirable, like “world peace”! Don’t spend too long deciding what the most important change should be; simply choose one as an example for this exercise. Two examples to stimulate your thinking are:
 - A pedestrian crossing outside a local school, church or hospital. Or flashing lights during school zone operating times at an existing crossing.
 - The conversion of the church’s property to being more environmentally friendly, focussing on lighting, heating & water usage.
- Leaving lots of space in the middle, write a heading on the left of the whiteboard (or newsprint sheet): “**The world as it is**”.
 - Briefly list the things that need changing in your chosen example. **(2-3 min)**
- On the whiteboard (or newsprint sheet) write a heading on the right: “**The world as it should be**”.
 - Briefly describe and write up the real and concrete change that you want to achieve under the heading. **(2-3 min)**
- In the open space between the other columns, write up a list of who has power to **influence** making this happen. Don’t just name the person or group who has the power to make the decision; the aim is to work out how to make the decision happen. Think of all formal and informal means, public structures and personal networks. **(15 min)**

Step 5: Commitment to “homework”

[15 minutes]

The facilitator invites people to commit to working with a small group to undertake a practice power analysis, and to read the set pages of “Effective Organizing”. Spend **10 minutes** of this time naming the concrete steps that participants will take to draw together a small group.

Homework:

Before the next group meeting every participant is invited to commit to do two things:

- Meet with a small group to undertake a power analysis of an issue within the congregation or wider community. The time together need not be much more than 30-45 minutes and need not involve more than 2-3 other people, although participants are encouraged to give as much as they wish to this process.
 - This meeting will involve:
 - Imagining what might have come out of a series of relational meetings (listening campaign) to determine a key real and concrete change.
 - Identifying the network of power relationships of those with power to influence this change happening.

- The small group could be made up in lots of ways. Consider including the person with whom you had your relational meeting after the first session.
 - Other members of this study group.
 - Members of the congregation in groups facilitated by members of the study group.
 - A mix of community and congregational members.
- Read pages 19-22 of “Effective Organizing for Congregations” – **Teaching & Training**.

Further reading: Not required, but if you want to find out more:

- Chapter 2 “The World as It Is” in *Going Public: An Organiser’s Guide to Citizens Action*, Michael Gecan, Anchor Books; especially pages 34-37.

Study 3: Teaching and Training

Before the meeting:

Remind participants to pre-read pages 13-18 of “Effective Organizing for Congregations.”

Ensure that there is a supply of newsprint, tape/bluetack & markers taped to a wall for step 6.

Step 1: Welcome & reflection on power analysis [20 minutes]

Welcome participants back (5 min)

- Open the gathering in your usual way, eg prayer.
- Invite general comments about the “homework” tasks (especially the power analysis exercise). (15 min)

Step 2: Silent reflection [10 minutes]

Participants are invited to spend time in silence recalling individuals or groups with whom they’ve had direct personal experience that have been most influential on them. Please do not include inspiring figures in books, history or wider society, important as they are: Make a list:

Person/group:	How they influenced me:

Of all those individuals and groups, choose one whom you might like to name as the most significant for you in getting you to where you are in life:

.....

Step 3: One-to-one sharing

[12 minutes]

Divide into pairs. Spend 12 minutes (6 minutes each way) sharing what was it about one person you've chosen as most significant in your life. Think about:

- Who they were in themselves.
- What they did.

Step 4: Scripture reading

[3 minutes]

Have one person read this passage out slowly in the group.

Luke 19:1-10

¹He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." ⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." ⁹Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

At this point the group should be half way through its 90 minute session.

Step 5: Reflection on Scripture

[20 minutes]

Invite people to share their responses in the large group to two questions:

- How might Zacchaeus' life have changed as a result of this meeting and his dinner with Jesus? Imagine his life from here on. (10 min)
- What effects might this have had on others? The grumbling by-standers? Zacchaeus' tax-collecting colleagues? Jesus' other disciples? (10 min)

Step 6: Actions for your congregation

[20 minutes]

Content (10 minutes):

A. In the large group make a list on newsprint of what you think should be key elements of what newer or younger members (or yourselves!) need to develop in order to exercise leadership that is both:

- Effective and
- Sustainable.

Refer to the dot points on page 21 of "Effective Organizing" for some reminders, but focus on what is critical for your context. Remember, this is not necessarily about designing a program, but may simply be what we hope people will gain from being alongside an experienced leader.

B. Name which groups in the congregation have most influence to make this leadership development happen.

People (10 minutes):

A. Name the people in your congregation who you want to see grow in leadership. In some contexts this may best be done in silence.

B. Name one person who you are going to seek out and offer an encouraging word in the coming week.

Step 7: Commitment to “homework”

[5 minutes]

The facilitator invites people to commit to two conversations, and to read the set pages of “Effective Organizing”.

Homework:

Before the next group meeting every participant is invited to commit to do three things:

- Contact a younger or newer member of the congregation, or another member of this study group, and offer encouragement in their growth in leadership.
- Contact someone you named who has been most influential in your life and thank them. If someone significant has passed away, make time to remember them prayerfully before God.
- Read pages 22-25 of “Effective Organizing for Congregations” – **Acting & Evaluating**.

Further reading: Not required, but if you want to find out more, especially about practical ways to help people grow within the life of the church:

- *Me ... a Mentor*, Cheryl Lawrie, published by JBCE/Uniting Education (1998). An extraordinarily helpful short book on mentoring young people, but with valuable insights for mentoring people at any age (12 pages).
- *The Ministry of Mentor*, Cheryl Lawrie, published by JBCE/Uniting Education (1998). This is a really useful expansion of the book mentioned above (16 pages).

Study 4: Acting & Evaluating

Before the meeting:

Remind participants to pre-read pages 22-25 of “Effective Organizing for Congregations.”

Step 1: Welcome

[10 minutes]

Welcome participants back (5 min)

- Open the gathering in your usual way, eg prayer.
- Invite general comments about the “homework” tasks. (5 min)

Step 2: Scripture reading

[5 minutes]

Have two people read this passage out slowly in the group. The first person reads the first paragraph (verses 6b-13) then reads the last paragraph (verses 30-32) when the second reader has finished their section. The second reader reads paragraphs 2 & 3 (verses 14-29).

Mark 6:6b-32

Reader 1:

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Reader 2:

¹⁴King Herod heard of it, for Jesus’ name had become known. Some were saying, “John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.” ¹⁵But others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” ¹⁶But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”

¹⁷For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because Herod had married her. ¹⁸For John had been telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” ¹⁹And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²²When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the

king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." ²³And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." ²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." ²⁵Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Reader 1:

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.

Step 3: Reflection on Scripture

[25 minutes]

This passage is a little disjointed, yet is meant to be this way:

- One story (Herod & John the Baptist) is sandwiched inside another (Jesus and the Apostles' mission).
- The story of the death of John the Baptist is a flash-back within the story of Herod's court, told because of its relevance at this point in the story of Jesus, not because it happened at that time.

Divide into two groups and discuss one passage and its questions each (15 min):

- Group A: Re-read verses 6b-13 and 30-32.
 - What does this say about action, evaluation & reflection for groups? For Jesus' followers and your congregation?
- Group B: Re-read verses 14-29.
 - What does this say about what happens when people start to organise? For Jesus' followers and your congregation?

Have the groups rejoin and report back to one another what they discovered.
(10 minutes: 5 min each including additional comments)

At this point the group should be 40 minutes through its 90 minute session.

Step 4: Taking stock

[20 minutes]

Michael Gecan describes the risks and the benefits for a congregation if it begins to reflect on itself and organise itself to unified action ("Effective Organizing" pages 22-25).

Name the risks and possible benefits for YOUR congregation if it were to commence a program of relational meetings, power analysis, leadership development and organisation for change:

Risks	Potential benefits

Step 5: Imagining a future

[20 minutes]

Imagine that your congregation was prepared to embrace (not ignore!) the risks and costs for the sake of potential benefits. What steps might it take in:

- Planning a campaign of relational meetings, especially aimed at building trust and identifying common concerns?
- Seeking partners in the community, denomination, Sydney Alliance, etc to discern points of collective action and to build power?

Relational meetings and listening campaign

Seeking partners

Step 6: Commitment to “homework”

[10 minutes]

The facilitator invites people to commit to read the rest of “Effective Organizing”, reflect deeply on possibilities for your congregation and community, and to share these insights through all the formal and informal networks of which you’re a part in the congregation and community.

The facilitator will also help the group members negotiate when they believe it is time to reconvene to “get started” follow-up group meeting.

Homework:

Before the follow-up meeting every participant is invited to commit to do three things:

- Read the conclusion to Part 1 of “Effective Organizing for Congregations” – **Getting Started** (pages 25-28).
- Read the remainder of “Effective Organizing for Congregations” – Part 2: The Examples (pages 29-54).
- Reflect personally and relationally about the future of your community and congregation in the light of these four study sessions.

Date, time & venue for Follow-up Meeting:

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Follow-up meeting

It's all yours!