

Suggestions
for
organizing well
in
North Carolina

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I welcome gifts to help support my movement-building work in North Carolina — such as this booklet. Please write checks to “Russell Herman” and mail them to the address below. The <organizenorthcarolina.org> website has a “Donate” page with easy instructions for other ways to contribute. Thank you!

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Introduction

Why circulate these suggestions in draft form?

The situation in North Carolina (and in the world) continues to change. The ways we organize will also need to keep changing to fit new situations. Therefore, we will need to continually revise these suggestions for organizing.

Even if the situation did not change, we can hope that our understanding of our situation will continue to grow. As our understanding grows, we may find better ways to organize. These suggestions will need updating to reflect that growing understanding.

Only a tiny fraction of North Carolina's people have had input on these suggestions. I expect improvements in these suggestions as more people think about them, try them out, and give me the benefit of their thinking and experience.

I intend to issue revised drafts of these suggestions from time to time. We can distinguish the drafts by their dates.

Please give me your thoughts on this draft.

As I interview additional people and gather comments from people I have already interviewed, I hope these suggestions will become increasingly useful to those of us organizing in North Carolina.

Please feel free to pass copies of this document to others who would find it helpful or who might have useful comments. Any copy you make must include my contact information so readers can give me feedback. Please use your good judgment about whom to give it to.

Whether I gave you this draft or someone else did, please send me your comments. Please tell me the date of the draft you have based your comments on. The suggestions have numbers to make them easy to refer to and to show their logical structure.

Fortunately, we have many dedicated people organizing on a wide variety of issues in communities throughout North Carolina. As we cooperate in improving these suggestions, we will give ourselves one more tool to help build a better world beginning here at home.

Where does this draft come from?

From 1994 to 1998 I interviewed organizers and other leaders of progressive groups across North Carolina. I asked questions to collect their thoughts about how to organize well here.

I prepared this draft from my own thoughts and from the good thinking I heard in the interviews. I agree with everything here. Though I added thoughts from each of the interviewees, they do not necessarily agree with everything here. I look forward to their feedback.

Some of these interviewees no longer live in North Carolina, no longer work with the organizations with which they worked when I interviewed them, or do not currently organize for social change. Many of them, however, do.

In the interviews, they spoke for themselves, not for organizations. Below I have listed one of their key organizations at the time of the interview solely to give a suggestion of their areas of experience.

These dear people have taken responsibility to help improve our world on specific issues or with specific constituencies. Most have accepted formal leadership roles. They do hard work. Many of them have done it for years. They step outside their comfort zones, not waiting until they feel “ready” to do what they know needs to be done. They deserve your thanks, love, encouragement, and help.

Interviewee	Interview date	Interviewed in
	Sample organization at time of the interview	
James Andrews	25 June 1998 North Carolina State AFL-CIO	Raleigh
Mandy Carter	27, 28 March 1995 Human Rights Campaign Fund	Raleigh
Jimmy Creech	22 September 1994 North Carolina Council of Churches	Raleigh
Steve Derthick	29 August 1995 Jubilee Peace Center of the Raleigh Mennonite Church	Raleigh
Ajamu Dillahunt	15 April 1996 Raleigh Cosmopolitan Local of the American Postal Workers Union	Raleigh
Wells Eddleman	21 July 1994	Durham
David Grant	27 December 1994 Rural Southern Voice for Peace	Celo
Gary Grant	23 November 1994 Concerned Citizens of Tillery	Tillery
Kate Hofmann	14 October 1997 All Souls Welcoming Congregation (Unitarian-Universalist)	Kernersville
Bill Holman	15 March 1996 Conservation Council of North Carolina	Raleigh
Chris Ingle	5 February 1995	Burlington

	Alamance Gay and Lesbian Alliance	
Denise Lee	1 September 1997 Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League	Ansonville
Anne Mackie	2 January 1995 Women's Agenda Program of NC Equity	Raleigh
Patrick O'Neill	11 October 1994 St. Martin de Porre's Catholic Worker House	Wake County
Carrie Oren	30 September 1997 Friends of the Earth	Durham
Gail Phares	19 January 1995 Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America	Raleigh
Chip Roth	6 October 1997 Local 391 of International Brotherhood of Teamsters	Kernersville
Mab Segrest	5 January 1995 Urban Rural Mission of the World Council of Churches	Durham
Sharon Snow	15 October 1997 Alternative Resources of the Triad	Kernersville
Sandy Sweitzer	3 October 1996 Quaker House	Fayetteville
Ann Thompson	2 February 1995 Peace initiatives Network of Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina	Cary
Bill Towe	3 August 1994 North Carolina Peace Action	Cary
Therese Vick	16 March 1995 Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League	Rich Square
Jim Warren	6 December 1996 North Carolina Waste Awareness and Reduction Network	Durham
Jeanne Waters	2 July 1998	Raleigh
Lynice Williams	22 September 1994 North Carolina Fair Share	Raleigh
Morgan Wilson	19 August 1995	Raleigh

Janet Zeller 19 December 1994 Glendale Springs
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

Lou Zeller 22 May 1996 Glendale Springs
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

1. Trust your own thinking.

1.1. The title of this document has “suggestions” as its first word for a reason. Do not follow these ideas or any other ideas unthinkingly. No matter what these suggestions or other theories say, as an organizer you must look at your situation, understand it as well as you can at the moment (talking it over with the people you work with usually helps), choose the course that makes best sense to you, and put it into action. Then look at the results and use them to improve your understanding of your situation. Please consider these suggestions, but trust your own thinking.

1.2. You don’t need to accept these suggestions completely. Use the suggestions that seem useful to you and ignore the rest. Please, however, consider all these suggestions, even the ones that do not seem useful at first.

1.3. Organizing does not require mysterious or highly technical skills. It mostly just requires common sense and love for our fellow humans, combined with a willingness to try things and see what helps. You can do it. You can also think about what you learn by doing it. Try it. Think about it. Trust your thinking.

2. Base your organizing on human nature.

2.1. Human nature supports good organizing.

2.2. Human beings naturally function as activists and organizers. Almost all humans actively work to make their world better. Whether they sweep the floor, care for children, weed the garden, or visit with friends, humans tend to improve the world around them. It takes a severe injury (either physical or emotional) to prevent a human from doing this.

2.3. Besides their activism on the level of individual and household well-being, humans have a strong tendency toward improving the larger society around them. We see this in many forms throughout North Carolina. People involve themselves in the schools of their children, in civic organizations and churches, in volunteer fire and rescue departments, and in barbecues that working people organize to cover medical expenses for neighbors and strangers. When the state or some corporation attempts to site a waste dump or incinerator in a community, people organize themselves to protect their local environment.

2.4. Human beings come into the world with a strong inclination to work together to make our world better. We enjoy doing so.

2.5. People seek engaging work that uses their abilities, challenges them, gives them chances to learn, and puts them in contact with like-minded people. Organizing for a better world tends to do that and that also makes it attractive to most people.

2.6. Human beings have a natural compassion for each other and a sense of outrage when we see wrongdoing. We want everybody to be healthy and happy.

2.7. Most people, most of the time, do not willingly sacrifice other people's lives or make them suffer.

2.8. We should never underestimate the fundamental goodness of all people and their inherent tendency to care deeply for each other. In most cases this aspect of human beings outweighs and outlasts greed.

2.9. When people get a glimpse of the big picture, we tend to understand that if anyone suffers oppression then we all do. Because people who have suffered oppression can more easily get misled to oppress others, oppressive situations can expand and bring more people under their domination. Therefore any oppression threatens everyone. Understanding this fact reinforces our natural solidarity.

2.10. Humans yearn to improve our lives and the lives of the people for whom we care. When we learn effective methods for doing it, we almost always want to keep doing it.

2.11. Human beings seek to make the world better because they (1) have self-respect and (2) care about other people and about the world. These two aspects come from the same underlying human tendency. When we humans value something, we tend to want to take care of it.

2.12. Understanding reality correctly helps humans work effectively. Therefore, organizing works best when we stick to the truth.

2.13. People have a deep need to contribute to making the world better. We will forego many other rewards in order to do that.

2.14. People love being brought together to think rationally about serious issues.

2.15. Deep down, most people believe that they and other people deserve love and respect. They also believe that we should move steadily toward a world of justice. They act differently from these deep beliefs only when they have gotten scared or severely discouraged. (For that reason, supporters of oppressive policies often foster fear of others, scapegoating, and apathy.) Fortunately, we can overcome such feelings with a visibly effective program to improve things.

2.16. Appeal to the good side of people. Everyone wants a better future.

2.17. We will generally have more success when we show a better way of doing things instead of just criticizing the current way.

2.18. We humans evolved on this planet in this universe. The general environment of this planet and the physical laws of this universe suit us well.

2.19. We humans have evolved as cooperative animals. Life goes better for us when we help each other and work together.

2.20. We humans begin life with a high degree of intelligence (except for those very few with malformed or damaged brains, and even they generally have more intelligence than any other beings we know of today). By “intelligence” I mean the ability to flexibly guide our behavior so it creates precisely the effect desired in the current situation (as opposed to operating by instinct, rote learning, or conditioning).

2.21. We begin life with (and generally retain throughout our lives) a strong inclination to regard each other with love and to work together cooperatively. Appearances of certain people to the contrary results from hurts or misinformation we or they have received.

2.22. Our work requires a long-term perspective. Think in terms of centuries. Looking at history on that scale, we humans have made obvious progress.

3. Choose carefully (and help others choose carefully) what to cooperate with.

3.1. We humans each individually have a certain amount of power because of the things we can do with our muscles and the thoughts and decisions we can make with our minds.

3.2. We humans have more power than we usually realize. We have more power than we usually realize both individually and especially collectively.

3.3. Social power happens when humans cooperate. Combining our individual power to do things we could not have done separately creates social power. Social power comes solely from cooperation.

3.4. This cooperation, this combining of individual power, can happen willingly or reluctantly on the part of each individual participant.

3.5. Human progress results from human cooperation. When an individual comes up with an idea, that idea can only have an effect on a large scale when people work together to use it. For example, one person originated the idea that microorganisms caused milk to spoil, but it took widespread cooperation from many humans to use that idea to make our lives healthier.

3.6. Everything humans accomplish on a large scale requires cooperation.

3.7. Each of us can choose what activities to cooperate with. We can choose what to contribute the power of our muscles to. We can make our own decisions and can choose what of our thoughts we communicate to others and what not.

3.8. No one else can make any of us do anything. They can threaten us; they can punish us; they can even kill us. They cannot make us think anything or do anything unless we give them the power to do so by deciding to cooperate with them. We can each choose what to cooperate with and what not. Even if faced with terrible threats, we still have the power to choose.

3.9. The propaganda of oppression does not acknowledge that alternatives exist to cooperating with it. Long-term exposure to such lies has reduced many people's belief in their own (and other people's) ability to choose well for themselves.

3.10. Oppressive messages confront us frequently. They can take such forms as "You're lucky to have a job at all" or "It's the ones with brains who get ahead." Such messages can influence us to feel "not as good as" other people, which can lead to hopelessness and reduced determination. These feelings fostered by oppression do not accurately reflect reality. Almost all of us actually have more intelligence and, in the long run, have more influence than we feel like we do. We also always have a choice about how to use our influence.

3.11. We can choose to cooperate only with policies and activities that we support or we can choose to give in to attempts to get us to cooperate with policies or activities that do not seem useful to us.

3.12. On extremely rare occasions, someone faces a threat of death if they refuse to cooperate with something they don't agree with. Staying alive deserves a high priority, of course, so if something ever actually threatens our survival, many of us may choose to cooperate even if we do not actually agree. Staying alive becomes our first job in such a rare situation. Making the situation temporary becomes our second job. It will help us succeed at those two jobs, if we stay clear in our own minds about what we actually think (even if we decide to pretend to agree with something disagreeable) and to watch for and use all opportunities to make the situation better.

3.13. Most situations that appear to require us to cooperate with disagreeable acts in order to survive don't actually require it. Almost all such threats do not deserve belief. On those rare occasions when someone offers us the choice of "cooperate or die", we almost always have many additional options available to us. Our oppressors may not themselves have any awareness of most of those options; they will often attempt to distract us from any which they have noticed. Before choosing one of the options an oppressor offers, we should think of as many other options as we can.

3.14. Because the propaganda of oppression confuses us, we humans (including humans currently serving in oppressive roles) generally feel like we have less safety, less intelligence, fewer options, and less strength than we actually have. We have more safety, have more options, and can choose more wisely than we generally realize.

3.15. Our attitudes and beliefs rank high among the most important factors in guiding our choices about what to cooperate with and what not. For example, if we believe that human beings inherently act on the basis of greed and competition, we will more likely cooperate (both as oppressors and as the oppressed) with exploitative relations among humans. If, however, we believe that humans naturally love each other and cooperate, we will more likely cooperate with voluntary relations and resist (to the extent that seems possible to us at the moment) cooperating with exploitative relationships.

4. To guide social change, guide changes in attitudes and beliefs.

4.1. Many factors influence change within a society. Shifts in climate, developments in technology, and demographic changes can have important influence. The most important influence, however, comes from the changes in attitudes and beliefs among members of the society. We activists and organizers can significantly affect that factor.

4.2. Those of us who wish to guide changes in our society must consciously and deliberately guide changes of attitudes and beliefs among large numbers of the members of that society.

4.3. Activists or leaders of activists make a mistake if they spend all their time talking with their allies. Instead of “preaching to the choir” we need to get out, meet new people, and listen and talk with them about the issues.

4.4. A person’s current attitudes and beliefs come from many sources: their own thinking, their many experiences throughout their life so far, and the influences and examples of their surroundings.

4.5. While people can change attitudes and beliefs quickly (even instantly), such changes generally happen gradually. Trying to instantly or quickly change someone’s strongly-held attitude or belief generally will fail. We can best achieve such changes through steady, gentle influence.

4.6. The most important influences on an individual’s attitudes and beliefs include the attitudes and beliefs of the people with whom he or she interacts, especially those with whom he or she has the most loving and trusting relationships.

4.7. If you want to change someone’s attitude on a topic, try listening to them about it. Often, people just need a chance to think out loud with someone’s respectful attention in order to sort through the topic and make sense of it for themselves.

5. Make friends with people.

5.1. As our primary task, those of us who wish to organize fundamental social change must develop close friendships with large numbers of people throughout our society, help them shift their attitudes and beliefs toward those which favor the kind of society we want, and help them do the same with many other people.

5.2. No matter what form of organizing we do or what issues we organize around, we must develop this widening network of friendships and help the shifts of attitudes and beliefs ripple through it. As an experienced union organizer put it, “There’s no substitute for personal relationships!” We should measure our progress on these tasks as our primary way of gauging the usefulness of whatever else we do.

5.3. Constantly making new friendships and deepening existing ones creates a continuing source of strength in our organizing. Close, trusting friendships provide the strongest way to resist the attempts our opponents will make to divide us against one another.

5.4. If, for whatever reasons, you can’t develop a close friendship with someone, seek to develop a working relationship of complete respect and mutual support. Value that accomplishment. You can build much good social change work on that foundation.

5.5. Organizers should enjoy the people they meet, hang out with them, tell stories with them, and have fun.

5.6. Accept individuals and organizations in their current conditions and start there. Do not assume you know everything they know. Do not assume they know everything you know. Do not assume you and they share the same analysis of society. Listen well to understand how they see the world. Notice what viewpoints you have in common and begin from those.

5.7. Show respect for the social strengths and healthy customs in the community where you organize. For example, to paraphrase one of the interviewees, “If you disparage how society is to the point that you can’t recognize the strengths in it and you are a nonconformist to the point that you won’t wear a suit or a dress to go to church and meet with a community group, you’re going to have a hard time. We’re going to scare people enough when we start talking about ending racism; we don’t need to also look funny.”

5.8. When you want to build a long-term alliance with someone or some group, start by working together on something small and do-able. People who create successful experiences together will likely to find it even easier to create other successful experiences together later.

5.9. Person-to-person education works better than any other form. People learn fastest and easiest in one-to-one conversations with people whom they love and trust. Especially when they have to overcome fears in order to consider the topics, this method works best.

5.10. We can help people learn. We can offer people information. We can ask people questions that help both them and us understand what they think and what questions they have about their world. When people ask what we think, we can answer their questions honestly using language

and ideas that make sense to them. We can listen respectfully as they sort out conflicting viewpoints and new information to make sense of their world themselves.

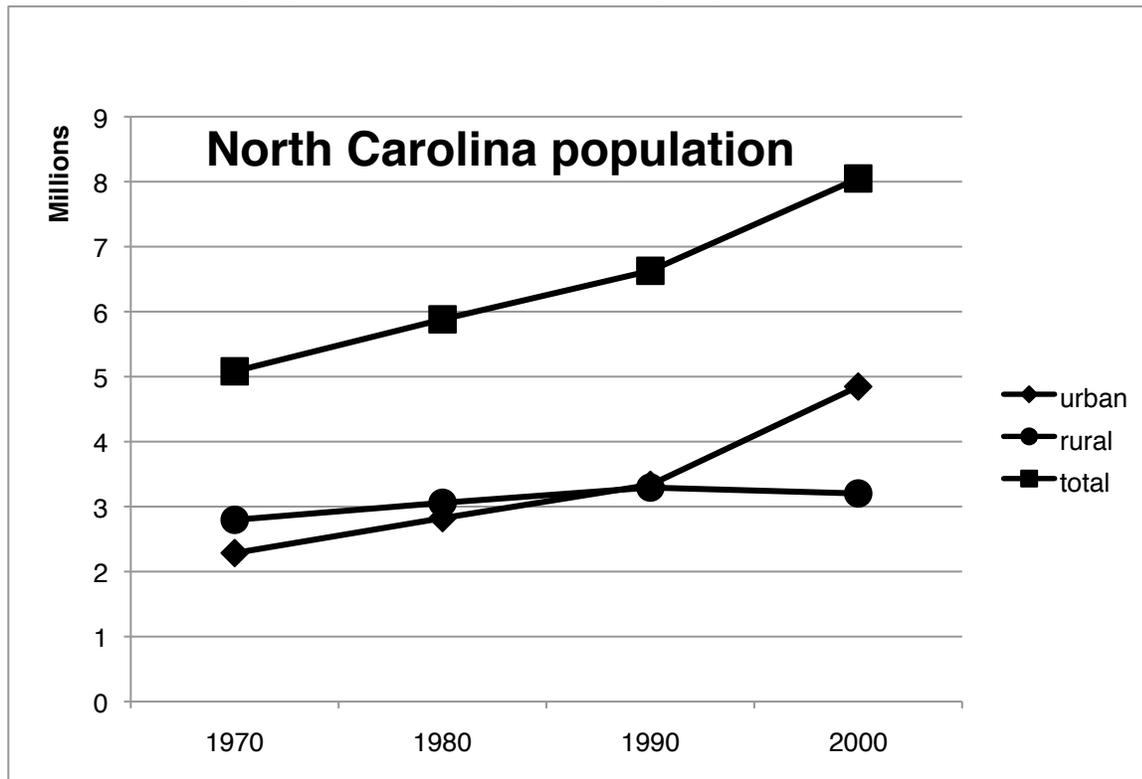
5.11. A key source of our strength comes from solidarity. Just as each of us contributes to the strength of the group, we must use our group strength to protect and strengthen each of us individually. We can never let our opponents single out any one of us for attack without the whole group responding in their defense. We must be “all for one and one for all.”

5.12. Give a high priority to finding effective people. Look for them, make friends with them, and invite them to take part.

6. Consider our overall context in North Carolina.

6.1. North Carolinians have a growing readiness for fundamental changes in our society. In the next years and decades, people want to create major advances. As leaders and organizers, we must focus on getting our groups strong enough to help each other turn those hopes into reality.

6.2. Though many people still think of North Carolina as rural, a majority of our population has lived in urban areas (by the Census Bureau's definition) since the late 1980s. At the 2000 census, that urban majority had continued to grow; the rural population had declined slightly. (See the nearby chart.) As of 2000, we had a little over three million rural people and a bit under five million urban people. We must organize both groups.



6.3. Many of North Carolina's rural people feel oppressed by the urban people. This feeling does not accurately reflect reality¹, but it exists strongly enough to cause serious divisions among our people. To help reduce this urban-rural divide, urban activists should strongly support rural organizing and should organize in their urban areas to stop urban-based exploiters of rural areas.

6.4. North Carolina's boundaries result from accidents of history, not from a natural grouping of people or from geographic logic. For example, our people live in three geographic regions

¹ In reality most rural people *and* most urban people live in oppressed situations. Some of their most prominent shared oppressors operate from urban bases. But most urban people do not oppress rural people. Urban people do depend on rural areas for food, water, and energy. Those resources get extracted in ways that exploit our natural environment and exploit rural people. The urban people as a group, however, do not do the exploiting.

(coastal plain, piedmont, and mountains) which differ from each other and each of which belong to larger regions that extend well beyond North Carolina.

6.5. North Carolina has intimate connections with the whole world. Almost all North Carolinians know people outside North Carolina. These connections grow from many common ties including friendship, family relationship, work, business, worship, school, recreation, and social movements.

7. Eliminate isolation by steadily interacting with people.

7.1. Some activists in North Carolina feel isolated. In rural areas, they often feel like the only person around with their viewpoint and values. In urban areas, they often feel that they share views with only a handful of acquaintances in their small group. In both cases they feel marginal and ineffective, cut off from the rest of society. Such feelings of isolation hinder our work. Fortunately, we can overcome this difficulty with simple, persistent actions.

7.2. To a significant extent, these feelings of isolation come from the widespread propaganda of oppression in our society. That propaganda attempts to portray citizen groups, activists, and organizers as (1) rare, (2) separate from the mainstream of society, and (3) either as having no real significance or as dangers to society (or both; oppressive propaganda does not necessarily rely on logic).

7.2.1. Consider an example of such propaganda from the national level. During one of the marches in Washington against the Vietnam war, the president put out word that he paid no attention to the marchers and watched football on TV during the march. Years later, secret Pentagon papers revealed that the administration considered using nuclear weapons in that war but the size of that march and of other demonstrations convinced them that they couldn't get away with it.

7.3. Activists (and especially organizers and other leaders) have a duty to keep such propaganda from taking root in our own minds. We must also continually help each other to see reality clearly, free from the distortions of lies, so we will understand the importance and value of our work.

7.4. People who feel isolated (including those rare cases of actual isolation) need two things:

7.4.1. First, they need to communicate with other people who share their viewpoints (even if those people live far away) so that they will have an ally with whom to share support and times for thinking out loud. We can do that for each other throughout North Carolina. The more we do it, the better our work will go for all of us.

7.4.2. Second, they need to gain the courage and skills that will enable them to keep taking the initiative to talk with their neighbors, make friends with them, discover the ones who already agree with them, and maintain close friendships with all of them (including those who currently oppose their views). This second step may take some time to result in good nearby allies, but it is the only sure way to achieve that result. Anybody who does that consistently will soon have good connections with allies and may even stop feeling isolated.

7.5. Even those of us who do not feel isolated need to continually do these steps: meet new people, get to know them, find the issues we have in common, work on those common interests, keep getting to know each other better, and keep talking about everything (including the issues we do not yet agree on).

8. Reject victimhood and scapegoating.

8.1. Increasingly today, the propaganda of oppression encourages people to permanently identify themselves as members of a small group which has a large grievance against the rest of society. Because oppression stunts everybody's humanity, such propaganda can offer everybody something to complain about. But instead of helping people understand correctly that their difficulties result from the current exploitative structure of society, the oppressive propaganda targets other oppressed people as scapegoats.

8.2. These artificially stimulated attitudes feed the culture of victimization that grows as society sickens under the pressures of increasing exploitation. People feel increasingly separated from their society at large, from their neighbors, and from their co-workers. Causing society to fragment makes it easier for the agents of oppression to pit groups against each other and to exploit individuals and subgroups even more thoroughly.

8.3. Oppressive societies teach people to think of themselves as helpless victims so they will submit to exploitation.

8.4. We must take care not to do or say things that increase the likelihood of people to see themselves as victims predominantly or permanently. In response to isolation and alienation, we must consistently emphasize solidarity and cooperation. Actually we each have individual strengths and even greater strength when we work together.

8.5. Likewise, we must take care not to do or say things that increase the likelihood of people to blame themselves (or others) for difficulties that actually have systemic causes. While we each have significant individual strength, one person's (or even a family's) strength alone usually will not suffice to overcome oppressive situations. We do not have a responsibility to do the impossible alone, but to organize with others to use our combined strength to set the world right for all of us.

9. Build organizations around good leaders.

- 9.1. Being a leader means taking responsibility for helping people cooperate effectively.
- 9.2. Whenever two or more humans cooperate, at least one of them objectively functions as a leader. All of them or some portion of them might function as leaders. Some leaders have titles or other recognition of their leadership roles; most do not.
- 9.3. All human cooperation requires at least some leadership.
- 9.4. Leaders listen to others, gather their insights and views of the situation, propose goals, invite people to work together for those goals, propose ways to work together, serve as models of effective work, and do many other things to help their fellow humans work well together and move toward their shared goals.
- 9.5. Any organization has many different leadership roles. Every organization has many opportunities for each member to take leadership responsibilities for small or large segments of their work together.
- 9.6. A good leader thinks carefully and continually about the people she or he leads. A good leader does not attempt to think for them. Good leaders think about what others need and help them get it. Good leaders caringly encourage others to use their own best judgment and to continually develop their ability to think well about the work they do. Good leaders do not attempt to get other people to follow the leader's judgment unthinkingly.
- 9.7. Like we learn any other job, we learn how to lead well. We can't become an expert at it before we start. We can only learn it by doing it. We can pay attention to what we do and to the results we get. Doing that, we will learn to get better at it as we do it.
- 9.8. Because we live in an oppressive society, we have repeatedly suffered under people who claimed to serve as leaders but actually functioned as exploiters. These betrayals have left such hurtful memories in our minds that some people today suspect anyone who offers to lead. A few people reject the concept of leadership itself. In spite of real betrayals by pretend leaders, we cannot afford the mistakes of unthinking suspicion of leaders or rejection of the idea of leadership. These mistakes result from confusions caused by hurtful experiences in the past. We can and must distinguish between helpful leaders and exploitative bosses.
- 9.9. Good leaders listen intently and almost constantly. They listen carefully and thoroughly to the many individuals with whom they work. They also constantly monitor the whole group's mood and needs.
- 9.10. Leaders tend to develop best in groups with a structure that helps them develop and function. A group's structure should also support leaders and protect them from exploitation (by the group or by others) and from attacks (from within or from outside the group).
- 9.11. Good leaders often have a strong sense of respectful humor and a relaxed cheerfulness.

9.12. Good leaders think ahead about what might come next in the shared work and help their group prepare for it.

9.13. Good leaders willingly share themselves with those they lead. When asked, they gladly talk about their own dreams for the future and their best thinking and insights on how to get there.

9.14. A good leader often will not become the most visible person in an organization. The messages the organization puts out should focus on the work it does, its goals, its members, and their hopes for the future. They generally should not focus on the organization itself and certainly not on glorification of the leaders.

9.15. Within our organizations, of course, we must constantly express our appreciation of our leaders and of their specific contributions, just as we do of every member who contributes to the group functioning well.

9.16. Good leaders encourage an atmosphere in which people can easily talk to and listen to each other.

9.17. Good leaders function primarily by helping with the obstacles or problems that other people encounter. As a first step, they simply to listen to what people need.

9.18. A good leader does not generally take on tasks that other people can do. But a good leader also does not wait too long for them to do them.

9.19. A good leader of a well-functioning group lets go of task after task so others can take responsibility for them. Ultimately, a good leader may appear to do very little. Actually, she or he constantly listens carefully to many people and helps maintain the overall vision of the group. The good leader keeps rested and ready in reserve in case an unexpected task arises that no one else can handle; then, of course, he or she handles it only long enough for someone else to get ready to take it on.

9.20. Good leaders have a willingness to risk success and failure. They need strong convictions, self-respect, and also strong respect for everyone else.

9.21. Good leaders recognize that not everyone begins at the same place. We each have different contributions to make.

9.22. Good leaders learn what people want to work on and help them do it. This takes time and is a continual process.

9.23. A good leader serves as a visible example of hopefulness. Let people see your little glimmer of hope.

9.24. Our oppressive society tends to immobilize people by fostering negative views of themselves. An effective leader counters that propaganda by constantly drawing people's attention to the good in themselves.

9.25. Good leaders consistently model the commitment and sensible principles that they want everyone to uphold.

9.26. Good leaders model courage. They speak up or intervene as needed, even if doing so feels uncomfortable.

9.27. A good leader constantly asks questions. He or she seeks to know what everybody in the group thinks and feels and what ideas they have for moving forward.

9.28. Good leaders are in it for the long haul; they do not settle for temporary or incomplete fixes. They do not mistake intermediate objectives for the final goal.

9.29. A good leader keeps in close touch not only with his or her own group but also with the larger society in which they exist.

9.30. A good leader inspires people to work together and also proposes ways to do the work. In effect, he or she says, "We can make progress on this. Here's how I see us working on it."

9.31. A good leader helps people find ways to do things they want to do. She or he also helps them enlarge the scope of what they want to do by helping them find possible ways to make progress toward things that seemed impossible.

9.32. Most good leaders find it helpful to have a small group of trusted people with whom they keep in close touch. This group listens as the leader thinks out loud about his or her work. This works best, of course, if the leader and the members of the group know each other well and love and trust each other.

9.33. Good leaders can make decisions. They can choose among options, saying "Yes, thank you" or "No, thank you" or "Here's what I think we should do."

9.34. Good leaders do not constantly rush. Frequently needing to rush generally results from poor planning, usually from needing more clarity about goals and priorities.

9.35. On rare occasions, good leaders have to work hard in the short run (for example, to get a group started and prove their trustworthiness as leaders). Actually needing to work at an unsustainable pace happens only rarely, but many leaders today mistakenly feel like they need to work that way continually.

9.36. Good leaders do not work at an unsustainable pace for long because they have a key task of modeling how to serve as a leader for the long run.

9.37. We need lots of strong, long-term working relationships among leaders in all groups so our opponents can't split us against each other.

9.38. Good leaders will have many of the qualities listed here. Good leaders do not have to have all these qualities perfectly all the time. You don't need perfection to lead well.

9.39. The old saying that “leaders are born, not made” implies leadership comes from our genes rather than from our practice. This saying may accurately reflect reality in the sense that all humans begin life able to serve as good leaders. In most people, that ability to lead gets obscured by early experiences that convince them not to use their leadership ability. Those rare people who get labeled “born leaders” simply did not get intimidated out of practicing their natural leadership abilities. With sufficient support and practice, everybody’s real nature as a good leader can emerge and flourish. Good leaders help that emergence happen for many people.

9.40. Good leaders make sure their organizations have qualified people ready to replace them if they become unavailable to continue leading. Our organizations need to prepare for rapid changes and cannot afford to depend on a single individual. Good leaders prepare their organizations to continue even if current leaders become unavailable without warning. Train and designate alternate leaders for each of the current leaders. While carrying out their current roles, the alternates keep sufficiently well informed to serve if needed. Generally, everyone in the organization should know the alternate for each leader.

9.41. A good leader has a multiplier effect on what other people can accomplish. By helping people work together, he or she enables them to accomplish much more than they could have done working singly. Most people recognize that fact and appreciate it.

10. Develop and sustain lots of good leaders.

10.1. The multiplier effect of leaders can expand exponentially when they help lots of other people become good leaders and spread the skills of leadership onward.

10.2. Every group of human beings already has many people who are capable of serving as excellent leaders. They just need a sufficiently inviting opportunity to step forward and offer their leadership to the group. We need to watch for them, invite them to take responsibility for something specific, keep in touch with them, and listen as they think about how to do it.

10.3. A good leader steadily discovers what talents other people have. We need to identify who brings which skills and interests to our groups.

10.4. People tend to want to help good organizations. Think about each of them and about how they can help. Make sure everybody has something to do. Everybody can do something.

10.5. Wise leaders identify many varied tasks and recruit many people to do them so everybody in the group will have contributed to building its power and winning its victories. This, besides helping them all develop as leaders, contributes to the democratic nature of the group by giving everyone a concrete role in making it successful. We can do that, to a large extent, simply by matching the jobs that the group needs to have done with the skills and wishes of the members of the group.

10.6. Create a large variety of ways for people to become active with your group. Create a large variety of ways for people to start leading in your group.

10.7. Our groups need to expect that each member will accept tasks based on what she or he wants to do and can do. With rare exceptions, groups will not function well if they expect everyone to do the same thing.

10.8. To help develop other good leaders, we must become visible models of good leaders. We must demonstrate that leaders can thrive. We must insist that we and all other leaders receive the same respect that any member of our group deserves. We also have a responsibility to live healthy lives ourselves in order to counteract the myths that turn leaders into martyrs.

10.9. To help good leaders develop, you must actually let them lead. Whenever you offer someone responsibility for something and they accept, get out of their way and let them do it. Remain available to answer questions, ask questions, or offer advice, but let them do it. They will make mistakes. Listen as they think their way through them. They will also do things that look to you like mistakes at first but actually contain no errors. They just do it differently than you would've done it. That shows they have begun thinking for themselves instead of merely repeating what they've seen you do. When that happens, silently congratulate yourself on your success in helping them develop.

10.10. In looking for people to develop as leaders, look for those who already function that way in their local communities. These "natural leaders" will not necessarily have formal educations or prominent roles (such as church leaders). Watch for the people that others turn to when in

trouble. Look for people that everybody knows, not the ones who brag about who they know. These people who have many friends will also likely have some consistent vision guiding their life, have a deep respect for almost everyone, and generally live in hopeful ways. People find them attractive and want to work with them.

10.11. Eagerness to serve as a leader does not necessarily mean that someone will do a good job as a leader. Reluctance to serve as a leader does not necessarily mean that someone will do a poor job as a leader.

10.12. Give priority for leadership development to people who (1) show commitment to the cause, (2) show commitment to their fellow members of the group, and (3) demonstrate their reliability over the long term. No matter how shy they appear, make sure they get good chances (opportunities well suited to their individual needs) to grow in their responsibilities, to lead, and to thrive in the organization.

10.13. Remember that everybody has different needs. The things that most help you lead and work well in an organization will not necessarily most help everybody else. Figure out what each individual needs and help each of them get it. Asking them what would help them lead often will provide you with useful information in figuring that out.

10.14. Recognizing people for the ways they are already leading often provides them with the main thing they need to expand their leadership. That can help them see themselves as leaders and notice the possibility of getting even better at it.

10.15. To help develop good leaders, remind them frequently of their importance. Spend time with them so they see that you value them. Expect them to take leadership responsibilities and thank them when they do.

10.16. When someone offers leadership, back them up. Stand up for them. Don't let anyone attack them verbally or in any other way. Refuse to listen to gossip about them. Make sure they get the cooperation and help they need.

10.17. Keep in communication with people. Keep meeting with them no matter what.

10.18. Don't lock a person into a single responsibility forever. Encourage them when they want to try new things.

10.19. A good leader helps others see that their contributions are necessary in making the progress we need. The message is something like, "This needs to happen and we're all needed to make it happen. I've asked you because I am confident you can do it."

10.20. At every meeting, take a little time for people to talk with each other about how they feel. We need to spend some time on how much we matter to each other, not just on how much the work matters to us.

10.21. Effective people-power organizations do not yet thoroughly cover North Carolina. To build an effective network of organizations, we need to increase our organizing by an order of magnitude or more. We must develop large numbers of good leaders. Every leader should

understand this as a key duty. Each of us should have 10 or so people whom we currently help to become good leaders. As these leaders develop and need help less on their own leadership, we can help them develop other leaders. How many people can you list whom you currently help become better leaders? Whom would you like to add to that list?

11. Build organizations that look like North Carolina.

11.1. People who voluntarily co-operate closely over a long period of time often become friends. Increasingly our organizations provide opportunities for people from different backgrounds to develop those close friendships. Those friendships, in which we know we can trust each other because we have tested that trust, offer one of our movement's greatest sources of strength and of hope for the future. Building and maintaining such friendships can become the foundation of building organizations that look like North Carolina. They also form the basis on which we will eventually build a just and humane society.

11.2. Deliberately choose to interact on a regular basis with people outside your usual circle of acquaintances. Don't let yourself or your organization develop habits of interacting only with certain kinds of people. For instance, an organization consisting mainly of highly educated, upper-middle-class, suburban people might schedule times to attend and chat with people at rodeos, stock car races, county fairs, and agricultural implement shows. The organization might also leaflet or set up information tables at such gatherings.

11.3. If you want to build a diverse organization, as your first step you must develop one-to-one friendships and good working relationships with lots of different people.

11.4. As your second step, encourage the people whom you want in the organization to do the same.

11.5. The two steps above apply whether you are starting a new organization or changing the composition of an existing organization. (Changing a homogenous organization into a multi-cultural organization has the effect of creating a new organization.)

11.6. Diverse, widespread organizations will grow most naturally out of strong issue-oriented and constituency-based organizing.

11.7. Building an organization consists of bringing people together and helping them learn to trust each other and to work well together. We cannot force people to trust one another. We can, however, give them lots of good opportunities to get to know one another and discover each other's trustworthiness.

11.8. Any organization that wants to reflect the demographics of North Carolina has to raise and deal with the issues of race, class, and gender. People need to talk openly about those topics. They need to tell their experiences on those topics and also to hear the same from others.

11.9. Listening does not imply agreement. In settings in which we know we will all get an equal time to tell our experiences and views, we can listen respectfully to others, even when we disagree with important parts of what they say. Times to talk and listen like that enable powerful steps toward understanding each other and working together.

11.10. The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI, <www.ncbi.org>) has developed methods for helping such clarifying and bridge-building discussions happen. North Carolina

organizers and leaders may find it useful to learn the skills offered by NCBI in their Prejudice Reduction Leaders workshops.

11.11. Everyone (and especially our leaders and organizers) will benefit by spending time visiting in communities and cultures different from their own. We can begin doing that in simple ways: by visiting different places of worship, shopping in different stores, attending concerts and other cultural events, etc. Those activists who belong to the dominant culture should especially heed this advice. Members of oppressed groups tend to know much more about the dominant culture simply because they are exposed to it constantly and have to learn about it to survive. It also generally discourages them from publicly expressing their own culture. But we can all benefit from learning about and experiencing other cultures.

11.12. When you get an opportunity to spend a few days visiting a culture other than your own, do so. In such extended settings, you will learn much more than you will in several brief visits.

11.13. Retreats for people who are working together and regional meetings of groups working on similar issues can help us discover our common goals and develop ways to work together.

11.14. Newcomers to an area bring many valuable qualities. They often bring fresh viewpoints. They often have a little more openness to new ways to do things. When they can see and appreciate the strengths and good qualities of the local culture, they can offer fresh strength to organizations that work to improve the local situation.

11.15. In most places in North Carolina, however, newcomers alone will not succeed in accomplishing much. Except in those rare neighborhoods of mostly newcomers, newcomers must seek out, ally themselves with, and learn by following the lead of activists who have lived in the area long enough to know it well.

11.16. Coalitions and other organizations with diverse constituencies function best when each constituency comes to the joint work from a position of strength, self-sufficiency, and confidence. We who want organizations that reflect the people of North Carolina must encourage and support organizations that represent each of the constituency groups in our state.

11.17. As a local group gains strength and confidence it will likely have more interest in and capability of cooperating well with other local groups in regional efforts. Likewise, regional groupings may need to develop strength and confidence before engaging productively in statewide coalitions. We want strong widespread organizations; we will get them best by first building strong local organizations.

11.18. As our local organizations grow in strength, we will discover that we need to operate on a larger scale. We will want to add a statewide organization to our network of organizations. It will help all North Carolinians work together on all our common issues.

11.19. Long before it becomes possible to have a single organization that includes everyone in North Carolina, we will find it useful to have numbers of different organizations which cooperate by forming a consensus on common issues and common methods of addressing those issues. Each organization would work with their own constituency but (by working on a common set of issues using a common set of methods) their work would mutually reinforce each other.

12. Build five types of organizations.

12.1. We can think of our organizations as having three different types: issue organizations, constituency organizations, and infrastructure organizations. These three types may overlap and may not include all organizations. Two kinds of constituency organizations (workplace organizations and neighborhood organizations) deserve special attention.

12.2. Thinking of our groups as each belonging to one of these five different types can help us notice important differences in the roles they play. Understanding those various roles may help us reduce confusion and competition among our organizations and increase their ability to work in mutually reinforcing ways.

12.3. Issue organizations

12.3.1. Most people (especially people who do not think of themselves as activists) think first of the issue organization. These organizations exist to address particular topics on which our society has not yet come to a policy that we can all support. These organizations work to educate the public about their issue and push for adoption of certain positions.

12.3.2. Fortunately in North Carolina we have many issue organizations such as North Carolina League of Conservation Voters, Democracy North Carolina, North Carolina Peace Action, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, and American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina.

12.3.3. Most progressive issue organizations in North Carolina want to include people of all backgrounds in their organization. However, many of the largest and best-known issue organizations (especially those that receive the most media attention) predominantly represent white, middle-class members.

12.3.4. Issue organizations in North Carolina deserve praise for having organized so many white, middle-class people. They form an essential part of a strong movement. Organizing them takes special skill because the oppressive system teaches the middle class to accept oppression as normal; to identify with management, government, and the wealthy; and to not disrupt current power relationships. It strengthens our work to have many white, middle-class people active in issue organizations where they can help build a strong movement, get to know people from other backgrounds, enlarge their understanding of the world, and strengthen their determination to do whatever it takes to set society right.

12.3.5. In the long run, issue organizations will have greatest strength when they include everyone who supports their view of the issue. Given the current dynamics in North Carolina, issue organizations made up predominately of middle-class white folks (either in their members or in their leaders) will find it difficult to make much real progress. They will likely get caught in fighting the same kinds of battles again and again instead of shifting power relationships in order to win lasting victories.

12.3.6. Our issue organizations vary in the progress they have made towards being truly representative of our state, but very few have been as successful yet as they would like. This goal requires continuing attention.

12.3.7. Issue organizations provide excellent ways for many people to enter our movement in North Carolina. Many people can understand the need for change on a particular issue and decide to help make it happen.

12.3.8. Leaders of issue organizations need to help their fellow members understand how their issue connects to other issues and how the underlying dynamic of our society affects their issue.

12.3.9. For many issues, we will not find it possible to win permanent victories until we build a more just and free society. If that applies to your issue, make sure everyone understands it. Do not mislead people into settling for incomplete “victories.”

12.4. Constituency organizations

12.4.1. Constituency organizations seek to unite everyone who has some shared commonality in order to address all social issues affecting people with that common characteristic.

12.4.2. The humanness that we all have in common affects us much more importantly than the ways in which oppressive societies have divided us from each other. Nevertheless, we each have a history of getting oppressed in various ways depending upon our particular mix of the “identities” that the oppressive society assigns us based upon such concepts as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, gender expression, region, religion, and education level. People targeted in similar ways gain much strength in overcoming their common oppression when they work together with others of similar background.

12.4.3. Fortunately, in North Carolina we have a number of constituency organizations such as the North Carolina Conference of State Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, El Pueblo, Equality North Carolina, North Carolina Women United, Black Workers for Justice, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and Teamsters Local 391. They gather people of similar situations to address their common issues together. Our movement has more strength because of their work.

12.4.4. Some constituency organizations include allies who support but do not belong to the constituency. Such expanded membership can work well as long as the constituency guides the organization and does most of its work and the allies take supportive roles.

12.4.5. Like issue organizations, constituency organizations can offer easier ways for people to enter our movement in North Carolina. Many people feel more at ease beginning their work for a better society in a group of people with whom they have a lot in common.

12.4.6. Leaders of constituency organizations need to help their fellow members understand the need for good allies, how to gain good allies, how oppression hits people in other constituencies, how to be good allies for them, how all oppressions reinforce each other, and how we need to reorganize society to eliminate its fundamentally oppressive dynamic.

12.4.7. Two key types of constituency organizations

12.4.7.1. Two types of organizations that belong to the category of constituency organizations deserve special attention: workplace organizations and neighborhood organizations. They get the emphasis of separate mention because they form crucial elements in building a good society and because their development lags behind the development of the other types of organizations in our state. When we have built a strong network of workplace and neighborhood organizations, we will have taken big steps forward in developing a powerful movement and toward founding a new society.

12.4.7.2. Neighborhood organizations

12.4.7.2.1. A neighborhood organization offers a prime example of a constituency organization; it seeks to represent the interests of all the people in a small geographically-defined area. Organizations of neighbors will necessarily take different forms depending upon the circumstances in which they live. For instance, we can assume that neighbors who live within walking distance of each other in a city would use different organizing forms from neighbors who live miles apart in our rural areas. But, whether they live in urban public housing projects, in suburban subdivisions, or in rural houses and trailers, we need to help people gather with their neighbors to decide how they want their neighborhood to function and then to make it so.

12.4.7.2.2. As people work together on those most local of issues, they will inevitably discover that they must solve wider issues to make their own neighborhoods good. A neighborhood's air could get polluted from miles away, for example. With those discoveries, alliances can grow among organizations of many localities and of many types. Regional, statewide, national, and international networks of neighborhood groups could grow.

12.4.7.2.3. First, however, we need to develop lots of multi-issue local neighborhood organizations that win the support of most of the residents in their area.

12.4.7.2.4. Building strong neighborhood organizations brings another advantage to our movement: doing so requires us to organize in a way that welcomes and includes everybody, not just those who already think of themselves as "activists".

12.4.7.3. Workplace organizations

12.4.7.3.1. Workplace organizations also belong to the category of constituency organizations. While a neighborhood organization seeks to include everybody who lives in a certain place, a workplace organization seeks to include everybody who works in a certain place, for a certain employer, or in a certain industry.

12.4.7.3.2. People who work for an employer that has multiple sites will probably wish to have at least two levels of organization, one that includes all the people who work at a specific site and another that includes those who work at all the employer's sites.

12.4.7.3.3. A third level would include everybody who does a certain kind of work (all plumbers, for example) or everybody who works in a certain segment of industry (housing construction and maintenance, for example) no matter what type of work they do in that industry.

12.4.7.3.4. Labor unions provide the prototypical example of workplace organizations. We have many unions in North Carolina. Examples include North Carolina Public Service Workers Union (UE 150), International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, United Auto Workers, Communications Workers of America, Steelworkers, and American Federation of Teachers of North Carolina. North Carolina's unions vary greatly in their sizes, customs, and policies. We need to strengthen and expand unions throughout North Carolina's workplaces.

12.4.7.3.5. According to data from surveys done by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and released by the BLS on 21 January 2011, North Carolina had 117,000 members of "a labor union or an employee association similar to a union" in 2010 (up from 115,000 in 2009). That meant 3.2% (up from 3.1% in 2009) of employed North Carolinians belonged, the lowest state density rate in the country. The next lowest density rates came in Arkansas and Georgia (4.0% each), Louisiana (4.3%), Mississippi (4.5%), South Carolina and Virginia (4.6% each).

12.4.7.3.6. North Carolina's low unionization rate among employees of state and local governments contributes to our abysmal overall union density. North Carolina General Statute 95-98 forms a key reason for that low membership among public workers. Passed in 1959, GS 95-98 prohibits state and local governments from signing collectively bargained contracts. Without the possibility of such contracts, most national unions have refused in past years to invest in supporting organizing efforts among our state and local government workers.

12.4.7.3.7. Since 2001, however, a growing number of worker-rights organizations in North Carolina have collaborated in a coalition called "Hear Our Public Employees" (HOPE, see <www.nchope.org>) to repeal GS 95-98. They have begun to attract support from North Carolinians (both union members and non-members) and from a few national organizations. In 2008, HOPE had eleven core organizations representing over 200,000 North Carolinians in their workplaces. As HOPE gains traction, it has a chance to create a major opening for working people in our state. For those of us who want a real democracy in which everyone has a say over their own lives, repealing GS 95-98 and supporting organizations of public employees should get a high priority.

12.4.7.3.8. As its first task, any union must serve as an effective tool that its members can use to advance their broadest common interests. As the second task, they must organize the unorganized. If they understand their first task correctly, it will include the second task and they will have no other tasks.

12.4.7.3.9. Unions have more strength when their members run them and carry out their activities (mostly as volunteers). The "business union" model, in which members relate to their union primarily by paying dues in return for services from professional staff people, can create an adversarial customer-business relationship between members and officers/staff.

12.4.7.3.10. As a primary task union leaders must constantly develop more good leaders within the members. Doing for members things they could do themselves hinders the development of new leaders.

12.4.7.3.11. Wise leaders and members of non-union organizations will co-operate closely with workers in unions. They will give priority to building co-operative working relationships with the men and women union members select as their leaders.

12.4.7.3.12. Union leaders need to recognize the importance and strengths of non-union organizations in the larger movement, help union members see themselves as part of that larger movement, and build lasting alliances with non-union organizations by seeking opportunities to cooperate on common interests.

12.4.7.3.13. Leaders of non-union organizations need to understand and help their members understand that we will not achieve long-term progress on any of our issues without the active involvement of the working people of North Carolina.

12.4.7.3.14. Unions provide the best tool working people have now for advancing their interests.

12.4.7.3.15. Non-union organizations should support union actions in public and practical ways.

12.4.7.3.16. Non-union organizations should encourage their members to take active roles in their union if they have one where they work and to organize a union if they don't have one.

12.4.7.3.17. Anti-union attitudes and lack of accurate knowledge about unions exist widely in North Carolina. It took generations of anti-union propaganda to create these attitudes. They got reinforced by major (and often bloody) defeats of North Carolina unions in the first half of the twentieth century, by pervasive race-baiting since the late 1800s, and by a century of vicious red-baiting. As a result of that history and our current low unionization, most North Carolinians know almost nothing about unions, but have (usually rather vague) anti-union stereotypes.

12.4.7.3.18. Fortunately, most North Carolinians realize they have little direct knowledge of unions. While they generally operate on the basis of the stereotypes, many of them wonder about unions and welcome a chance to have a respectful, private chat about unions with a union member they know.

12.4.7.3.19. Union members who openly and relaxedly talk about their union membership in as many segments of their lives as possible will serve as living counter-examples to the stereotypes and give their non-union friends, neighbors, fellow worshipers, and relatives chances to ask about unions. North Carolina union members who do this consistently may have the most influence today in building the power of their sector of our movement.

12.4.7.3.20. In addition to unions, we have other avenues available to us in organizing workplaces. We can use many other organizational forms where we work. These forms can either help prepare for later organizing a union or they can complement an existing union. They can also accomplish valuable results in their own right even without connection to a union. These non-union workplace organizations might include health and safety committees, prejudice reduction teams, lunch-time discussion and support groups, and a multitude of other ways for people to gather and work with each other to make life (including their jobs) better.

12.4.7.3.21. Like in neighborhood organizations, people seeking to improve issues specific to their workplace will discover larger issues which need addressing in order for them to succeed

locally. These discoveries can encourage growth of alliances, cooperation among people in many workplaces, and growing cooperation between workplace organizations and other types of people-power organizations.

12.5. Infrastructure organizations

12.5.1. A third category of organizations includes those which do not address a specific issue or represent a specific constituency but instead provide part of the supporting infrastructure for our whole movement.

12.5.2. Examples in this category include newspapers (such as the *Asheville Global Report*, *Triangle Free Press*, and the *Independent Weekly*) and other media groups (such as the video program *Independent Voices*) which cover many issues and seek to serve all our constituencies. Funding agencies such as North Carolina Community Shares, Fund for Southern Communities, and Fund for Democratic Communities belong to this category. The Re-evaluation Counseling Communities (with their networks of co-counselors) function as infrastructure organizations which help our groups and individuals overcome the mental obstacles created by living in an oppressive society. Organizations such as the Institute for Southern Studies and NC PolicyWatch help us understand how society works and propose public policy changes.

12.5.3. North Carolina benefits from having these infrastructure organizations already in place. In the coming years we need to strengthen them and extend their reach throughout North Carolina.

12.5.4. We also will need to develop additional organizations to provide the resources and services which a growing and vibrant movement will require. For example, a growing network of experienced and skilled trainers could help spread effective methods among our organizations.

13. Build wide alliances on specific issues.

13.1. Our work generally will have more strength the more allies we have with whom to share it. Many of the same principles apply whether we build alliances of individuals or of organizations. (Organizations consist of individuals, so we might not find it surprising that similar principles apply.)

13.2. Formal alliances among organizations generally get called “coalitions”. These (often temporary) groupings of independent organizations agree to work together on some common interest.

13.3. Agreement on a specific goal (the more specific the better) offers the best basis for forming a coalition. Optimally, participating organizations will agree on the issue to address, on the desired solution to that issue, and on the way the coalition will work to implement that solution. Of course, coalitions can begin with a vague agreement and work out the details in early meetings.

13.4. We don’t need to agree on everything in order to work together on something. We don’t need to agree on most issues or even on our most important concerns. We don’t even need to have compatible reasons for wanting to achieve the shared goal. For instance, a coalition to prevent clearcutting of a particular mountain might include both an animal-rights group and a hunting club. State your coalition’s goal clearly and welcome all who will work cooperatively toward it.

13.5. Some organizations (especially some with strong religious influences) hold values or beliefs that have at least as much importance to them as their goals. For the practical purposes of these suggestions, such organizations have a goal of adhering to their values and beliefs. Some have the additional goal of constantly speaking out explicitly for those values and beliefs. For many North Carolina activists, values have such a central role in their view of the world that they will not think to mention them in discussions of goals. This can contribute to later confusion within a coalition. In forming a coalition, discussing values (not just goals) early can help reduce such confusion.

13.6. Groups who share many goals and values will often find it easier to work together than those who share only a few, but groups who share only a single goal can work together if they focus their shared work solely on that shared goal.

13.7. Organizations that belong to a coalition must understand that each group will continue to work independently toward their other goals. Setting aside time in coalition meetings to openly and respectfully discuss those independent goals (without attempting to recruit coalition members to support or oppose them) can help avoid surprises and charges of “hidden agendas” within the coalition. Such discussions especially help when forming a coalition and when a new organization joins an existing coalition.

13.8. Broad coalitions will sometimes attract inflammatory or unpopular groups. Some members of the coalition may feel embarrassed by such groups’ appearance at joint events or by their names on the list of members. However, if the coalition has a clear focus, it can handle

attacks for including such members fairly easily. Simply point to the whole list of members and relaxedly say, “Obviously, we don’t all agree on everything. Some of us may not agree on anything except the goal of this coalition, which is to That goal matters enough for us to work together to achieve it. We welcome anybody who will work cooperatively with us on that.”

13.9. Some individuals and groups have a history of failing to cooperate well with others. Such disability to cooperate usually results from past hurts. They did not choose this disability; they do not deserve blame for having not yet recovered from those hurts. But a coalition exists to cooperate; it will function better without individuals or organizations that repeatedly fail to cooperate well. If it becomes necessary to exclude a group or individual, base such a decision on their uncooperative behavior, not on their views or characteristics unrelated to the coalition’s goals.

13.10. If an organization that got left out because of their history of failing to cooperate asks why the coalition does not welcome them, they deserve a respectful and truthful answer. If they disagree with the judgment that they fail to cooperate well, they can form a separate coalition (with whomever they can get to work with them) and demonstrate their cooperative ability there. Demonstrating willingness and ability to cooperate by doing so in similar situations would make more people and groups willing to work with them.

13.11. Not everything that calls itself a coalition actually deserves that name. Not every coalition will suit your organization well. Examine each one carefully before joining. Does it have a clear, specific, achievable goal? Does the coalition’s goal fit your organization’s goals well enough to justify the time and other resources needed to participate? Do its methods have a reasonable chance of achieving the goal? How well do its goals and methods fit with your organization’s values? Does it have a workable method for making decisions? Have the coalition’s members used it to accomplish something useful?

13.12. Sometimes a coalition’s most useful accomplishment consists of giving people who do not ordinarily talk with each other a chance to do so. This can create enormous value. If a coalition provides the best way to get potential allies together, that alone can justify it. Generally, however, we don’t need a coalition to get together to talk. Other organizational forms (roundtable discussions, social gatherings, open houses, support groups, picnics, forums, study groups, etc.) can do that, often better than a coalition will.

14. Plan, evaluate, appreciate, and celebrate progress.

14.1. Our work will have greater strength the more we base our decisions on hope and reason rather than on any negative feelings such as fear or resentment.

14.2. When we work together with other people, it helps us cooperate when we explicitly list and agree on our joint goals. We need to express our joint goals in our own words, hear others express those goals in their own words, and hear each other's agreement that we have described the same goals and will work together toward them.

14.3. Many leaders and organizers make the mistake in planning of focusing on events. Instead of planning event after event, focus on your group's goals and plan a long-range campaign which builds upon itself step by step in order to achieve those goals. You will also need to plan events, but they function as steps toward the goals, not goals themselves.

14.4. Having a carefully-thought-out plan for our work helps us base our work on our best thinking and avoid getting distracted by negative feelings or other sources of confusion such as oppressive propaganda.

14.5. We can do our plans orally or in writing. When working with people comfortable with reading and writing, writing down the agreed-upon plan and giving everybody a copy helps in remembering and using it.

14.6. Do not let the need to respond to immediate issues prevent you from planning for the long range and taking the initiative to implement your plan. With careful thought, we often can respond to immediate issues and proactively plan for the long run.

14.7. Make sure your group does an evaluation after every event and does evaluations from time to time of the group's overall work. Many ways exist to evaluate our work. One good way simply has the members take turns answering two questions: What worked well about X? What would help make X better? Doing this in a meeting where everyone can participate gives everyone practice in this key leadership task. It also provides excellent feedback so the group can continually improve.

14.8. Hold yourself and others accountable for results. When you make a mistake, admit it openly. When something doesn't work as planned, discuss it openly. Ask "why didn't it work?"

14.9. Also take credit for success. Celebrate when things go well. Praise everybody for their parts in that success. Acknowledge your part also and accept credit and praise for it.

14.10. People have more value than what they do. Show them you notice them (not just their work) by telling them specific things about them that you appreciate.

14.11. We must constantly tell the history of our group's accomplishments to new people so they will have a sense that they have joined something that has already accomplished valuable results.

15. Develop agreement on a program and policies for your group.

15.1. We must organize people toward goals, both general and specific goals. Working in a common direction on short-term and long-term goals helps maintain unity and gives direction to activity. It also provides a way for people to judge progress, which can help keep strategy fresh and relevant to the goals.

15.2. As a step toward clear goals, leaders can gather periodically to take turns answering the question “What is the overall situation for you and the people you lead?”. These assessments should include both subjective and objective, positive and negative, and internal and external elements of the situation. It can help to write a general statement periodically (probably at least every five years) which leaders agree describes the situation of their group. It also helps to get together to orally update these assessments far more frequently.

15.3. Once leaders agree on a clear assessment, they can develop a set of mutual goals, both long-term and short-term, to propose to their groups.

15.4. Based on the goals, the organization can write elements of a general program for improving the situation. Such a program will not just re-state the goals, but will give clear general directions for activities needed to help achieve the goals. Such a statement should remain reasonably brief so the group can easily distribute it to many leaders throughout the organization, who will find it useful in developing strategies and action on the local level.

15.5. Use this general program to bring together local leaders periodically to produce more specific programs and policies to achieve the stated goals.

15.6. For an example of the kinds of statements to include, consider a general program for women’s liberation in North Carolina. Specific programs (statements of what needs to actually get done in the next few years) would include topics such as economic development, equal rights, developing good leaders, electoral campaigns and lobbying, sexual violence, relations with men, parenting, reproductive rights, health for women, etc. In each of these program statements, it will help to summarize basic policy positions (some of which might come from *Suggestions for organizing well in North Carolina* or other sources) around specific issues.

15.6.1. In the example women’s program, the program statement about relations with men would probably say that “men are not the enemy, but our natural allies” with a brief explanation that the oppression of men takes different forms from the oppression of women; that men do often benefit economically from the societal oppression of women; but that men would not go along with such oppression had they not first gotten oppressed in a number of ways as children, as potential fodder for war, and in various specific oppressions of their class, race, region, etc. Therefore, “our movement for women’s liberation will grow stronger and will reduce our own oppression by actively supporting other liberation movements.”

15.6.2. The policy statement on electoral campaigns and lobbying in the example women’s program might include such policies as: “We need to participate in political movements or parties, and in campaigns for office, primarily on the basis of our program. Our program and

policy come first, ahead of winning elections. We will not let short-term goals of winning an election or passing a bill distract us from our long-term goal of re-building society on a humane foundation.” or “Women’s organizations should not compete with existing political parties or align ourselves with a single party but instead seek to influence all parties, public officials, and community people to support sensible policies on women’s issues.”

16. Win lasting victories.

16.1. We build a strong movement for a better world in the long run by winning victories and achieving goals along the way. We can't build a healthy movement on losing campaigns. We have to win more than we lose. We need positive results.

16.2. We don't have to win every time; we can survive an occasional loss. So don't limit your efforts to just those that guarantee victory. But you should only take on those efforts that you have a reasonable chance of winning and that you fully intend to win.

16.3. An effort does not need to have a high likelihood of immediate success. But it does need a realistic possibility to achieve your goal at some point in the future, even if it lies far off in the distant future.

16.4. If all your goals can succeed only in the long range, that can discourage people. We have to have big long-range goals. We also have to have intermediate and short-term goals that build toward the long-range goals.

16.4.1. For example, a group might have a long-range goal of eliminating racism from North Carolina. As an intermediate goal, they might work to have the students, teachers, and administrators at all levels of our education system reflect the racial makeup of our state. As a short-term goal, they might work to preserve affirmative action in admissions and hiring against current right-wing attacks. As an immediate task, they might recruit people who have benefited from affirmative action to tell their personal stories to friends and co-workers (and maybe even to legislators) as a way of countering the right-wing propaganda.

16.4.2. To build progress and momentum, have goals that build on each other in many different time scales and make sure everyone in your organization understands that whole context.

16.5. Make sure your group talks about the time scale of your work. People work together best when they have a shared understanding of how long it will likely take them to reach their goals.

16.6. Good intentions and "giving it a good try" do not help as much as an actual success or real progress toward a goal. Do not pretend that they do.

16.7. You will lose occasionally. (If you never have failures or defeats, you probably have let timidity limit what you try to accomplish.)

16.8. When you lose, admit it, have a good cry, thank the people who helped, learn the lessons that you can learn from it, clean up your mistakes as best as you can, and start working toward another goal or start working again toward the same goal using the lessons you just learned.

16.9. When you lose, give highest priority to maintaining the relationships you have developed with people during the attempt. Keep in communication with them. Listen to how they feel about it all, both the good times and the hard parts. When they ask how you feel about it, tell the truth. Let them see your feelings. Doing this will make it much easier to work together in the future.

16.10. When you win, celebrate! Invite your allies and those you'd like to have as allies to celebrate with you. Thank everybody who contributed to the victory. Consolidate that gain by making sure everybody —your group's members, the public at large, and those who currently oppose you— knows what it means. Build on it by strengthening members' dedication and by bringing in new members. Help people carry that momentum into working toward the group's next goal. When you win a big victory, consider starting an annual celebration of it as a tradition of your group. We need to celebrate our strength and our victories. Doing so contradicts the propaganda of oppression and strengthens our organizations by building community.

16.11. After a major victory, those who worked the hardest for it often have a feeling of depression. This forms a crucial point in the history of any organization. Leaders need to give extra attention and keep in close touch with those they lead at this time. They need to help their people deal with all of their different reactions, they need to provide ways to celebrate the victory, and they need to help the group decide together what to do next.

16.12. Whenever you have a victory or a loss, give careful attention to its affect on your organization and on relationships among the people involved. Victories and losses cause people to need lots of attention in order to make sense of it all for themselves. Organizations often slip into turmoil at these times. Assuming you want the organization to continue, give a high priority to keeping it and those relationships healthy.

16.13. We cannot treat our wins as completely secure as long as any oppression remains in the world. Until we have won complete liberation for everybody and established a society that works well for everyone, we will have to stay prepared to defend our victories along the way to that ultimate goal. A solid organizing victory can protect a group from threats for years (because oppressors tend to exploit the weak instead of those who have shown strength), but you have to keep your organizing strong.

16.14. Sometimes organizations which have achieved their goal can disband. Even then, take care to maintain good relationships among the people who participated. Those people will almost certainly have other goals in common; they can build on their relationships to organize toward those other goals also.

17. Work in ways that make long-term sense.

17.1. Activists tend to burn themselves out unless they see how their daily work makes sense in the long run. For some, this comes from seeing the cumulative effectiveness of their efforts. For others, it comes from knowing how their efforts fit into a long-range strategy. For others, it comes from working in ways consistent with some spiritual belief. For others, it comes from seeing improvements in individual lives here in the present.

17.2. We do not have to all draw our sustaining vision from the same source in order to work well together. It helps us work together when we take time to listen respectfully to other people's sustaining visions and to acknowledge them as sustaining for those who hold them, even if they do not sustain us.

17.3. Whatever source it comes from, people need to know how what they do connects with what others do and what point it all has. It weakens our work to focus only on the immediate tasks and not give attention (both in our individual lives and in our group work) to the larger and more long-term meaning of what we do.

17.4. Recognition for the work we do helps us notice its long-term meaning. Recognize and thank your fellow workers. Also welcome and accept their recognition and thanks. Thanks can take many forms, from a simple "Good job!" as you ride home from an event, the awarding of a plaque at your annual meeting, a paid sabbatical, or many other forms. They all help us continue doing this work well.

17.5. In most cases, we will need to do this work for many decades. We must make certain that we work at a pace we can sustain for the decades to come. We must do our work in ways that help us flourish and maintain excellent health. We must make sure that our lives (and the lives of those with whom we work) help us have plenty of vigorous exercise, completely avoid using any mind-numbing substances, eat a healthy diet, maintain loving relationships with our family and friends, and have plenty of time for fun and relaxation. Any choices we make that interfere with living in these healthy ways will not help us organize well in the long run. The choices we make that help us improve our ability to live in these healthy ways will strengthen us as good organizers and leaders.

17.6. People look at leaders and organizers as prime examples of what to expect if they join the organization. Most people have too much good sense and self-respect to join an organization led by unhappy people or by people unhealthily burdened by their roles in the organization.

17.7. Consuming substances which numb our minds (alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and other drugs) makes people more easily oppressed. They make it harder for us to understand the reality in which we live. They make it harder for us to think both imaginatively and realistically of useful ways to make things better in the future. Because alcohol and other drugs reinforce oppression and because sellers can make enormous profits on addictive substances, their use has spread throughout our society. We must free our people and our organizations from their influence. Those of us who organize and lead peoples' movements must not use or defend the use of alcohol or other drugs.

17.8 Sometimes people object to this policy of avoiding mind-numbing substances by saying we should avoid addiction but accept “moderate” use. Addiction and heavy consumption clearly do more harm than one-time experimentation or light consumption. But any use of these substances does harm when we consider its total effects on the whole person and on the community. Any use of these substances makes it harder (at least temporarily) for us to think clearly.

17.9. Another objection sometimes offered to this policy of avoiding mind-numbing substances says that alcohol, caffeine, and other drugs help create relaxed gatherings that encourage discussion and solidarity. Many North Carolinians do indeed consume such drugs in such gatherings at many places every day and every night. We also gather in many places every day and night for discussion and solidarity without drugs. We do not actually need the drugs in order to have the benefit of relaxed gatherings for discussion and solidarity. When with people who consume drugs, we can take part in the discussion and solidarity without partaking of the drugs.

17.10. A small (but significant and probably growing) number of North Carolinians have chosen to completely avoid using one or more of these mind-numbing substances in order to recover from addiction. People who do not have such addictions can make a powerful gesture of solidarity by joining them in not using these substances.

17.11. We should not try to coerce others into stopping their use of alcohol or other mind-numbing substances. We should seek agreement on this issue in the same ways we do on other issues. People must choose for themselves on this and other topics; they have the right to learn from their own experiences.

17.12. People also deserve to have people in their lives who they can see as relaxed models of sensible policy. They deserve to have their organizations not allow such substances at events the organizations sponsor. They especially deserve that their organizations protect good thinking by prohibiting alcohol and other drugs at decision-making times and that their organizations not attempt to exploit them or others by serving alcohol at fundraising events.

17.13. Funding matters a lot in sustainable organizing. Because we operate in an economy based on “property rights”, the funders of an organization sometimes can influence its actions. Our organizations will have more strength the more they fund themselves. This usually means receiving most of their funds from their members. Grants from outside sources at best should only supplement internal support.

17.14. After contributions from members, the next best source of funds comes from a large number of individual supporters. Having a large number of them means that no one (or few) of them can threaten to withhold a large portion of the organization’s funding.

17.15. Any organization that receives most of its funding from only a few sources has gotten into a seriously dangerous situation. It risks losing its independence of judgment or its funding. It must give a high priority to developing new sources of funding.

18. Concentrate on four primary tasks now.

18.1. As our most important task in organizing a more humane society, we must help our fellow humans shift attitudes and beliefs away from those that reinforce the old culture based upon competition, property, and exploitation. We need to strengthen the attitudes and beliefs that would sustain a society based on voluntary cooperation, work, and the freedom of a sharing economy.

18.2. As our second most important task, we must build local organizations which (through voluntary cooperation) steadily gain power sufficient to improve their members' lives in ways that (a) help shift attitudes and beliefs as outlined above, and (b) reduce our dependence on and allegiance to oppressive structures in our society. Besides the issue-focused and constituency-based organizations which we have today, we also need to develop multi-issue and all-constituency organizations that represent the interests of people where we live and where we work. These strong neighborhood and workplace organizations and the good links among them will create major sources of strength when we develop them throughout our areas.

18.3. As our third task, we must build long-term cooperative relations among our many organizations in ways that help us strengthen the above two tasks. We should start locally and extend these relations as rapidly as possible (but not more rapidly) until these cooperative relations reach the whole human population.

18.4. As our fourth task, we must develop a widespread consensus (based on actual practice, not just on words) on an effective strategy to guide our organizing. This draft *Suggestions for organizing well in North Carolina* can serve us as a first approximation of such a strategy.

18.5. If all of us, while we do our current work organizing on current issues and with current constituencies, do so in ways compatible with these suggestions and move these four primary tasks forward, we will all have much more strength in the long run.

19. Understand that electoral politics and lobbying have a secondary role.

19.1. Success in the electoral arena depends upon public opinion and organizations that can mobilize the public to express that opinion at the polls. In other words, it rests on the strength of grassroots education and grassroots organizing.

19.2. The electoral arena can ratify victories that grassroots organizations have won in the arena of public opinion, but electoral work by itself rarely moves society forward.

19.3. Electoral activists and community activists work in different arenas even when they work as allies on the same issue. Failing to recognize this simple fact can contribute to confusion (and even sometimes distrust) between those who work in these two different realms.

19.4. Community activists cannot realistically expect those whom they elect (or those whom they support as lobbyists) to deliver public policies for which the activists have not yet built substantial support in public opinion.

19.5. Likewise, electoral activists should not expect their allies in grassroots organizing to abandon goals that reach beyond what the politicians and lobbyists can support at the moment.

19.6. From an organizing viewpoint, our priorities in North Carolina's electoral arena should focus on the following four points:

19.6.1. To defend (and, whenever possible, expand) legal recognition of freedoms of speech, association, privacy, and other rights that make it easier to organize.

19.6.2. To strengthen government accountability and openness.

19.6.3. To increase the influence of ordinary citizens on elections and public policy (and decrease the influence of corporations and other big-money interests).

19.6.4. To make life easier and healthier for working people in North Carolina and for those who would work if they could get a decent job. This includes (in approximate order of declining priority):

- workplace safety
- anti-discrimination programs
- libraries
- environmental protection
- public health and sanitation
- protection for collective bargaining in workplaces
- a minimum wage at a livable level
- taxes as progressive as possible
- childcare
- universal, single-payer health care (roughly on the Canadian model)
- education (giving priority to voluntary programs —e.g., Head Start, community colleges, and universities— over compulsory ones)

-
- reduce the use of and spending on military and prisons while guaranteeing workers in those industries comparable jobs meeting real community needs
 - steadily discourage consumption of harmful tobacco, alcohol, and drug products while helping farmers and other workers in these industries develop healthy products
 - drastically cut spending on new highways in order to maintain existing roads and to build mass transit where useful

19.7. Electoral activists and community activists need to recognize and appreciate each other's value. We can become valuable allies to each other when we recognize our different roles and appreciate each other's contributions.

20. Miscellaneous suggestions.

20.1. Organizers do their work in many different ways. We can think of these as different models which we might follow. Experienced organizers will find it useful to occasionally try a model with which they don't have as much familiarity as they do with their preferred ways of working. We can switch back and forth between a preferred way and the new way in order to compare and learn from those experiences. If you have just started as an organizer, it makes sense to begin with your best methods. After gaining experience with them, try using your weaker methods in order to build up your strengths in those areas. We all need to expand the set of organizing tools that we can use well. To do that, practice using new tools.

20.2. We need to constantly expand the tactics we use in our work and choose the one that best suits our current goals and situation. For instance, simply holding one public rally after another probably will become less and less successful.

20.3. Phones, fax, and electronic mail are excellent tools for communication but they do not substitute for visiting with someone.

20.4. If you want to bring people into an organization, it often works best to simply ask them to help with some specific task.

20.5. In evaluating an organization's health, listen for whether the members speak as if they owned it. For example, do they say "we" when speaking of the organization? Do they say "our project" or "my group"?

20.6. Volunteers and members of activist groups will come and go during the history of the group. We need to constantly bring in new people to replace those who leave. Continually orient new people and help them gain the skills, knowledge, and relationships that they need to work effectively.

20.7. When a group feels discouraged, ask them to list positive changes they know of in history. Spending a bit of time on that can raise their spirits by helping them pay more attention to the positive aspects of reality that they had temporarily lost sight of.

20.8. We all need people to "listen to me for a little while as I think this problem through." Don't give advice then; just listen.

20.9. Everything has connections with everything else. If you begin working on any issue and pursue it thoroughly, it will connect with all other issues. These connections happen because all forms of oppression reinforce each other. When we work against any of them, we eventually have to work against all of them.

20.10. When oppressed people speak up and explain the injustice of their situation, they make it visible so others can see the need for change. Any liberation effort needs this early step.

20.11. Some social changes happen because people see the consequences of bad policies and speak up to resist further erosion of their quality of life. Much of the environmental movement, for example, springs from this source of change.

20.12. Usually, we cannot determine in advance how long an organizing effort or campaign will take. Delays almost always occur. Plan on them and stay prepared to sustain your work as long as needed.

20.13. In the small victories we make the steps that will lead us to big victories. We need to work simultaneously on local “small” issues and on the big longer-term issues.

20.14. In estimating how long it will take to accomplish some social change, most people tend to think small changes will take less time than they actually do and tend to think large changes will take longer than they actually do.

20.15. Persistence pays. Often the first few times you try something will not work but if you keep trying you will find a way that will.

20.16. We have many ways to accomplish the things we want. You don’t have to choose the first one that you notice. You can try lots of options, compare the results, and pick the ones you like best.

20.17. If you have just arrived in a community, spend your first year just listening to people and participating in the social life and institutions of that community. Get to know people; build friendships.

20.18. We must practice what we preach. Nothing matters more than the ways we treat people (both our allies and our opponents).

20.19. If you have a problem with someone, talk directly with her or him about it. Don’t complain or gossip with someone else.

20.20. Any policy designed primarily to control people won’t work in the long run.

20.21. Secrecy usually harms us, especially at the level of strategy. We constantly battle the secrecy of our opponents; we must not mimic their methods. True democracy requires clear information and open communication. Secret organizations or secret methods within an organization tend to have un-democratic effects. We will have more power and find ourselves more effective if we openly describe our goals and the strategy we use to achieve them.

20.22. Secrecy may on rare occasions help at the tactical level. For instance, if within a group that opposes us we have someone who secretly supplies us with helpful information, it generally will make sense to conceal that fact. Sometimes tactical actions (such as a sit-in) will work better if we do not announce them in advance. To minimize the harm of secrecy, keep it rare, keep the secrets small, and keep the time during which they remain secret short.

20.23. The methods we use to help our society move toward the future we want will likely carry forward into that new society. Therefore, we must use only methods compatible with the ends

we wish to achieve. The organizations we build now and the ways they function now form the beginnings of the new society. While they need to survive and function within the current old society, we want them to maximize compatibility with our best hopes for the future.

20.24. If we consistently, openly, flexibly, cheerfully, and respectfully maintain a correct policy, most people will eventually recognize it as correct and will support it.

Appendix. Organize for complete liberation.

Unlike the main sections of *Suggestions for organizing well in North Carolina*, I based the appendix primarily upon my own thoughts instead of on thoughts from the interviewees. I generally did not ask about the topics in this appendix during the first round of interviews. I look forward to discussing these topics. I hope those discussions will help us cooperate even more systematically than we do now.

At our current stage of human development we need many organizations working for progress on many issues and representing the interests of many different constituencies.

Most of the organizers and leaders who contributed to *Suggestions for organizing well in North Carolina* have experience in such organizations.

None of those constituencies will achieve full freedom as long as any other group faces oppression, nor can we treat policy victories on any issue as secure while the foundation of society remains unjust.

As we work on specific issues and for specific constituencies, our work will have greater effect in the long term if we keep in mind the broader social changes we all need.

This appendix outlines a way of thinking about those fundamental changes. This way of thinking about the foundations on which to organize society has helped me guide my work in all the specific efforts with which I have tested it. I hope it will help others. I look forward to learning from the experiences (positive and negative) of others in applying these thoughts to their specific organizing.

A. How we organize cooperation makes a crucial difference.

A.1. Throughout history, human societies have used a variety of ways to organize cooperation.

A.2. For most of human history, especially in the last few thousand years, a vigorous but largely unrecognized struggle has existed between two ways of organizing cooperation. One way organizes cooperation through oppression. The other way organizes cooperation voluntarily.

A.3. Both voluntarism and oppression have organized cooperation that helped humanity move forward. Both have made concrete improvements in human lives.

A.4. Both have also done harm. While any harm to humans matters and we cannot really compare any two instances of harm, organizing cooperation on a voluntary foundation has hurt many fewer people than has organizing cooperation on an oppressive foundation.

A.5. Both ways of organizing cooperation have reached advanced stages of development.

A.6. Both currently continue to develop.

A.7. These two ways of organizing cooperation cannot exist compatibly. Each of them, simply by existing, hinders the development of the other one.

A.8. Oppression has a fatal flaw, an inherent contradiction. Oppression has to hurt people to coerce them into accepting it and cooperating within its framework. When people hurt, they do not think well. When they do not think well, they have difficulty cooperating.

A.9. Building cooperation on a foundation of oppression, therefore, becomes self-defeating. It will never work well.

A.10. If a society needs good thinking, it has to allow some freedom (at least to a segment of society). The more good thinking the society needs, the more freedom it must allow.

A.11. To the extent that cooperation built on a voluntary foundation has greater freedom from coercion and hurt, people using it can think more productively and cooperate more effectively.

A.12. The voluntary sector of human society has such a large advantage in fresh thinking and efficient cooperation that it may provide the real sustenance of humanity. (See appendix G for examples.) Oppression may exist as a mere parasite upon voluntarism.

A.13. Oppression cannot completely eliminate voluntarism because it depends on it.

A.14. Voluntarism, on the other hand, does not need oppression. In fact, the existence of oppression hinders voluntarism. Voluntarism, therefore, can completely eliminate oppression in all its forms. As organizers, we have that as our grand task.

B. Widespread oppression currently slows progress.

B.1. The dominant way that societies organize cooperation today increasingly hinders effective cooperation because it relies on oppression. To the extent that our social structures oppress people, they make it harder for us to cooperate well.

B.2. Cooperation works best when each of the people cooperating uses his or her intelligence to find ways to work together that work well for themselves, work well for the other people with whom they cooperate, and work well in achieving their common goals. So cooperation works better the more fully we use our intelligences in working together.

B.3. Using our intelligence well means that we will find solutions that suit the particular circumstances. This usually means considering many possibilities and imaginatively creating possibilities that have not existed before.

B.4. But in order for exploitative relations within a society to continue, that society must limit people to only considering options that allow that exploitation to continue. In other words, they must not use their full intelligence.

B.5. Exploitative societies, therefore, tend to mentally wound people so they will not use their full intelligence and the exploitation can continue.

B.6. But exploitation also requires cooperation. Humans do not do any work, even the most highly exploited work, without using their intelligence to solve the problems they encounter in doing that work. Exploiting other people's work, therefore, requires allowing those people to retain and use at least some portion of their intelligence. This flaw in exploitative societies causes their undoing.

B.7. Oppressive societies cannot exploit people's work without giving them enough freedom to do the work and letting them use their intelligence enough to solve problems in doing the work. But, the more freedom people have and the more of their intelligence they recover and use, the less they will continue to cooperate with their exploiters.

B.8. At any particular point in history, some exploiters try to solve this contradiction by severely limiting freedom, stunting intelligence, and trying to make do with relatively inefficient cooperation among the people they exploit. Other exploiters (usually a newer segment of the exploiting class, which competes with older segments) seek more intelligent cooperation from the people they exploit in order to have an advantage over their competitors. This new segment of the exploiting class tends to allow a bit more freedom (and, therefore, use of intelligence) among those whom they exploit. For example, capitalists used this method to overcome feudalists a few centuries ago. Today, we see some capitalist enterprises seeking advantages over their competitors by giving lower-level employees more decision-making authority than employers would have allowed a few decades ago.

B.9. As these two different strategies of exploitation struggle against each other over how to solve the inherent contradiction in exploitation, society continues to move forward but at an uneven pace. From time to time, openings will occur of more freedom with greater ease in

cooperation and the frequently dramatic advances in social conditions that result. The improving physical conditions of humanity can create even more opportunities for new ways to cooperate.

B.10. This general trend toward increasing freedom can slow locally, halt temporarily and (in rare cases) reverse briefly. This tends to happen when a segment of the exploiting class within a region has achieved such a dominant position over other segments that they (usually unthinkingly) adopt a strategy of drastically restricting freedom in order to preserve their position. Fortunately, such interruptions in progress rarely last long before the exploited people withdraw their cooperation and require changes, or before other segments of the exploiting class gain enough strength (from the slightly more efficient cooperation they exploit by allowing their workers slightly more freedom) to break through the stagnation.

B.11. No human society ever really becomes static. All human societies constantly change.

B.12. Human history, in general, shows increasing freedom and therefore increasingly effective cooperation.

B.13. Today, however, oppression still limits human freedom in order to preserve exploitative relations within society.

B.14. For at least a few thousand years, human societies have organized large-scale cooperation through oppressive and exploitative social systems based on dividing humans into two classes: people who own and people who work. These systems exploit people: the “owners” use their property “rights” to justify taking substantial portions of the value the workers produce. These systems oppress people; they coerce people into cooperating with them.

B.15. For example, among the ancient Romans (and at other times and places) society organized its basic work on a foundation of slavery. Some people held others captive and coerced them to cooperate with the orders of those who “owned” them. Later in European history (and at other times and places), the fundamental cooperation necessary for the society’s basic work rested upon feudalism. Society designated large numbers of people as serfs and coerced them to live on a certain piece of land and to work at the direction of the people who “owned” that land. A few hundred years ago in Europe feudalism gave way to a newer way of organizing cooperation which we today call “capitalism”.

B.16. In capitalism, society requires people to pay for goods and services. It limits most people to a single way of getting the necessary money: they must sell their cooperation to an employer in return for money. The society depends on the work these employees do. But, instead of serving the people who do the work, the employers serve the people who “own” the capital (land, factories, patents, copyrights, and other forms of wealth) used to do the work. In order for these rich people to keep getting richer, the system exploits the working people and the environment. Though the details vary from place to place, capitalism forms the basic organizing structure for widespread cooperation today.

B.17. When a human custom becomes widespread, becomes fundamental to the structure of society, and persists for a few generations, it can appear to result from human nature. The participants in such a custom will often portray it as a necessary (and even desirable or moral) result of some unchangeable cause. Slaveowners tended to see the slaves on whose cooperation

they depended as lesser beings without a full moral standing. The feudal nobility believed kings had a divinely ordained right to rule. Those who believe in capitalism today tend to think of humans as necessarily greedy and selfish in their basic nature.

B.18. None of these oppressive belief systems accurately represented reality; they simply resulted from and reinforced the fundamental organizing structure of their societies. They reinforced the oppression by serving as one of the main ways of limiting people's thinking so they would not withdraw their cooperation from the oppressive system.

B.19. When such a form of organization becomes widespread throughout a society, it can become difficult for the members of that society to notice contradictions to the assumptions on which it rests. This happens most strongly for those people whom the system teaches that they benefit from those assumptions.

C. Oppressive societies coerce some people into the role of oppressors.

C.1. As organizers we have as one of our tasks explaining why society works the ways it does. We need to help people see that injustices exist simply because some people act as if they want it that way. They act to maintain coercive power in order to keep themselves in positions of privilege. They do this mostly out of fear, in an (ultimately vain) attempt to create security for themselves and for their loved ones.

C.2. Nobody, of course, really benefits from oppression in the long run. Even those who get short-run advantages from oppressive systems receive them at great cost to their emotional (and often physical) health.

C.3. No one comes into the world wanting to live as an oppressor. Oppressive societies systematically hurt, misinform, and confuse certain groups of people in order to prepare them for roles as oppressors.

C.4. Most people who currently function in the role of oppressors do so out of fear. They fear that if the oppression does not continue they and the people whom they love will either get destroyed outright or get abandoned without the support they need to survive.

C.5. Among oppressor groups children generally grow up without much affection or unconditional love. Those sections of society tend to withhold affection and support from children unless they obey without question and continually show acceptance of the oppressive system.

C.6. People who had childhoods like this find it hard to realize that most people do not have the same emotional injuries they and their parents do. They often find it a profound and liberating revelation to discover that when they stop their oppressive behaviors and learn to contribute productively to the world, most people will welcome them, appreciate them, and value them as uniquely precious individuals.

C.7. Humans who have served for a long time in the role of oppressors find it extremely difficult to make such a breakthrough. Our strategies should not assume that any specific individual in an oppressor role will succeed in making such a change.

C.8. However, it appears completely possible and certainly desirable for humans who have served in the role of oppressors to make such breakthroughs. Our strategy must maximize the opportunities that will help people currently trapped in roles as oppressors to shake off their roles and emerge into full humanity.

C.9. As a major strategic necessity, we must always clearly distinguish between individual human beings and the oppressive roles that those human beings play at the moment.

C.10. Our policy towards people who currently play oppressive roles will emphasize that we want to cherish the people while ending their oppressive roles. We intend to take away the power we have given them that they currently misuse. (In other words, we must withdraw all

our cooperation with the oppression.) We want the people who currently serve in oppressive roles to flourish and to enjoy the same power and rights to life and health that all humans deserve. Punishment will not help them or anyone else. Threats of punishment will simply increase their fear and harden their resistance.

C.11. Of course, to some of them, taking away their unjust power may feel (at least at first) like punishing them. In fact, it does not. Removing someone from office or taking away their excess wealth does not actually harm them. It reduces the harm in which they participate.

C.12. This assumes, of course, that they still can meet their real needs. As we rearrange society so everyone can meet their real needs, we must make sure it works well both for people who currently live in oppressed roles and for people who currently function in oppressor roles.

D. Oppressive societies coerce most people into the role of getting oppressed.

D.1. All human societies today oppress people. They coerce people into cooperating instead of gaining cooperation through rational discussion and voluntary agreement.

D.2. When we repeatedly receive the message (by words or by actions) that we don't matter, we may slowly adopt the mistaken habit of acting as if we don't matter.

D.3. If this (usually unintended) conditioning by being treated as if we don't matter begins early in life and if we get it in part from people we love and depend on, that experience can result in a mental habit of acting as the oppressed.

D.4. These unthinking habits also gain strength if most of the people around us act in similar habitual oppressed roles.

D.5. Oppressive societies systematically hurt, misinform, and confuse most people in ways that make them habitually accustomed to serving in the role of the oppressed. These emotional habits of the victims of oppression tend to include chronic doubts about themselves and about other people.

D.6. We usually can recognize these mental habits of victimization most clearly in people other than ourselves (often especially so in people we notice as different from us). Because we (often unawaresly) despise the extent to which we have given in to oppression, we often find it especially irritating when we see those signs in other people. The oppression we have experienced tends to condition us to assist in oppressing those other people.

D.7. This bizarre dynamic in which the society installs oppressive attitudes internally in oppressed people themselves makes it difficult for us to cooperate with people we should welcome as our natural allies in ending oppression. This shows one more way in which oppression continues because it has hurt us and prevented us from thinking clearly.

D.8. The internalized effects of oppression also divide us in another way. The oppressive society does not set up anybody to function purely as an oppressor or purely as oppressed. Present societies hurt and condition us all to function in both roles. Most people generally feel emotional pulls to behave like oppressed people but also have feelings installed in them that pull them to participate in oppressing other people. This flip-flop mentality makes everybody appear untrustworthy and makes it harder for us to exercise the loyal solidarity we need.

D.9. We must recognize that internalized oppression exists, that these feelings do not result from human nature, and therefore we should not consider them permanent. Recognizing these facts and reminding ourselves of them frequently can help reduce the effect of internalized oppression on us.

D.10. Other techniques also help us overcome and remove internalized oppression. Regaining and celebrating a full, relaxed pride in ourselves and in the groups to which we belong helps us overcome it to a good extent.

D.10.1. Additional powerful techniques for overcoming internalized oppression have been developed by the International Re-evaluation Counseling Communities. Fortunately, Re-evaluation Counseling (also known as “co-counseling” and as “RC”) has organized groups in a few communities and several excellent teachers in North Carolina. See the website at <www.rc.org>.

D.10.2. The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI, <www.ncbi.org>) teaches techniques in its prejudice reduction workshops that apply less broadly than Re-evaluation Counseling but that many people find quicker to learn.

D.11. Steady work against the oppressions that we and our allies face gives us one of the most effective ways through which we can heal ourselves of those internalized hurts of oppression. To do that work effectively requires us to abandon the mental habits of victims and steadily regain the strength, integrity, and courage with which we began life.

D.12. Our strategies must help people rapidly and completely free themselves from the mental habits of victimhood. As a key part of that, we must always clearly distinguish between individual human beings and the roles those human beings temporarily play as oppressed people.

D.13. In the coming years, our job will get bigger. As exploitation increasingly polarizes our society into a tiny minority of the very wealthy and an increasing majority whom the society impoverishes in order to accumulate that wealth, this top-heavy social structure will become more unstable. These changes bring both dangers and opportunities.

D.13.1. We face the danger of increased violence as oppressors become more scared of losing power, their attempts to enforce oppression become more blatant, and they (both deliberately and unintentionally) degrade healthy social structures.

D.13.2. We also face an opportunity for fundamental social change as fewer people find it possible to believe that they benefit from the present way of doing things.

E. As our long-range goal, we seek completely voluntary cooperation.

E.1. Voluntary cooperation work best for humans. If we had never encountered oppression, we would easily cooperate voluntarily.

E.2. When we function well, humans readily achieve voluntary cooperation based upon rational discussions leading to agreement, even when we begin the discussions by disagreeing.

E.3. Competition, exploitation, and coercion interfere with humans' abilities to cooperate voluntarily and rationally.

E.4. As organizers we must foster those aspects of society which help us move toward completely voluntary cooperation.

E.5. We can think of the grand conflict between oppression and voluntarism as having two parts. First, we find a conflict between property and work for control of production. Second, we find a conflict between whether we distribute goods and services by exchange or by sharing. Property and exchange require oppression. Work and sharing fit compatibly with voluntary cooperation.

E.6. Discussions of economics, politics, and social relations today tend to acknowledge only one side of these fundamental conflicts. When we think of the ways that humans produce and distribute goods and services, we tend to talk only of those portions of human cooperation which society organizes on a foundation of oppression, in other words, the portion that rests on the concepts of property and of exchange. These dominant economic concepts tend to ignore the existence of work and sharing.

F. In the conflict between property and work, we take the side of work.

F.1. By “property” I mean socially-supported exclusive control over the use of something.

F.2. For example, I live in an apartment. I do not “own” it. My landlord “owns” it. Society says my landlord, not me, has the “right” to control the use of my apartment. He didn’t build it and does little to maintain it, but my home became his “property” because he paid the previous “owner” for that “right”. (The problem does not lie in my landlord’s character. He seems to me a good and decent man. I enjoy chatting with him when I see him. He treats me better than any other landlord I’ve had in decades as a renter. The problem lies in the nature of property.) Society says I need his permission to live in this apartment. To get his permission, I must pay him money in exchange. If I don’t pay (or if he decides he no longer wants to rent to me), he can call upon armed agents of the government to forcibly remove me. If I resisted sufficiently, those armed agents would seek to kill me in order to remove me. Most people in this society would support (or at least acquiesce to) that enforcement of my landlord’s control over the use of my home. “Property” means that.

F.3. Property “rights” rest upon social enforcement in many ways including violence and death.

F.4. Property divides society into haves and have-nots. Because of the instability of such unjust arrangements, any society that includes that division can only maintain itself by oppression.

F.5. Enforcement of property creates a costly burden to society. It consumes resources and people’s work that could have served useful purposes.

F.6. All current large-scale societies enforce the idea of property. Even those few societies which officially portray themselves as “socialist” enforce property in practice (at least in segments of their society).

F.7. The idea of property has had such a widespread presence for so long in human history that most people (when they notice it at all) think of it as something close to a permanent fact of nature, like gravity.

F.8. The ferocity with which some people attack any questioning of property “rights” shows the fragility of this custom. An actual fact of nature (gravity, for example) needs no such defense.

F.9. Actually, property merely persists as a long-established custom. For long times many societies had the custom of slavery. For long times, many European and European-derived societies had the custom of dueling. For long times, some Asian societies had the custom of foot-binding for females. Many societies have had a long-established custom of the divine right of kings. Customs change. Human societies can end the custom of property whenever we agree to do so.

F.10. If you “own” property, you can often require other people to pay you for permission to use it, even if you don’t use it and even if they would use it productively. Such income from

property results from parasitic exploitation: the “owner” produces nothing, but (because society enforces his or her property “rights”) claims part of what someone else produces.

F.11. The tiny set of people whose income comes mostly from what they “own” (instead of from the work they do) belong to the “owning class.” Examples of such income include interest on savings and other investments, gains in the stock market, royalties on patents and copyrights, rents, and increases in land prices as a result of nearby public infrastructure development.

F.12. Most people, however, have to work for most of their income. They (especially those who sell their labor to others as employees) belong to the “working class.” Such income generally includes wages, tips, salaries, and fringe benefits.

F.13. Many North Carolinians (indeed, many people in the United States) have income both from their work and from property. Very few people, however, have income that comes evenly divided between these two types of sources. Most people get their income primarily from one type of source and get only a small fraction from the other type.

F.14. The language with which society labels people does not always match their actual class. For many “owners” of small businesses with no employees and no significant assets, their income largely results from their work. Such people belong to the working class but generally do not think of themselves that way. For such an example, consider a retailer who rents a storefront, has no employees, and owns little beyond the goods he or she buys and then sells. On the other hand, some small businesspeople (landlords, for example) get most of their income from property instead of from their own work; they belong to the owning class.

F.15. The details of property “rights” differ from place to place, but current customs (especially those enforced by laws) generally favor owners over workers.

F.16. Only work creates useful goods and services.

F.17. Because work creates the necessities of survival, when a sufficient portion of the working class decides to it can require owners to give up property “rights” or other unjust privileges.

F.18. Workers (whenever they agree in sufficient numbers) determine how a society operates. For example, the cooperation with property “rights” by sufficient numbers of those specialized workers whom we call police, judges, jailors, etc. creates pressure on tenants to pay rent to the owners we call “landlords.” That system continues solely because most people support it (at least passively). When we stop enforcing property, it will cease to exist.

F.19. Because a sufficient portion of North Carolina’s workers currently cooperate with the custom of property, the benefits resulting from social cooperation go disproportionately to “owners” instead of to workers. Workers also allow those “owners” to direct the work they do.

F.20. We can do things differently. Whenever a sufficient portion of us (especially the workers on whom society depends) start behaving in a new way, society changes.

G. In the conflict between exchange and gift, we take the side of gift.

G.1. Exchange is a trade of property “rights”. I give you “ownership” of X; you give me “ownership” of Y.

G.2. In 1993, wealthy publisher Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr. (the name he used before he ran for the Republican presidential nomination as “Steve Forbes”) described capitalism as “the only truly *moral* system of exchange” [his emphasis]. That sounds somewhat like describing cancer of the right leg as the best kind of cancer to have. We don’t want any kind of exchange, even the best kind.

G.3. Exchange has coordinated a substantial portion of human cooperation and the distribution of enormous amounts of goods and services.

G.4. As freedom increases and cooperation becomes more voluntary, humans can think more freely and work together more effectively. The system of exchange which we call “capitalism” allowed more freedom (and therefore more effective cooperation) than did its predecessors (feudalism and slavery). This resulted in increased productivity and better standards of living.

G.5. But exchange (whether via capitalism or other methods) now limits effective cooperation because it does not operate voluntarily. It depends on the enforcement of property.

G.6. For example, we can cure tuberculosis with ordinary antibiotics taken over a span of months, but most countries (and individuals) with this disease don’t have funds for drugs and for health care staff to educate and assist patients in completing their course of treatment. Therefore many people don’t get treatment or stop buying and taking the medicine too soon to cure them completely. This encourages the development and spread of drug-resistant strains of the disease. With a relatively small allocation of resources and work, humanity could cooperate in eliminating tuberculosis, but current customs of property and exchange hinder that cooperation and make the situation worse.

G.7. Exchange dominates the distribution of goods, services, and use of resources in today’s economy. It shows up as buying, selling, bartering, renting, hiring, and the like.

G.8. While exchange dominates today, it does not govern all the ways we currently distribute desirable things and services. We already have the beginnings of a better way.

G.9. We currently distribute many goods and services as gifts, in other words, through freely giving them without expecting a compensating return.

G.10. Examples of production and distribution that operate within the realms of work and gift rather than within the dominant economy of property and exchange include much of the housekeeping and child rearing that happens today. Voluntary fire departments, much religious work, most social clubs and civic groups, and much art and sport activity rely upon gifts of time from volunteers. Civic action groups, social movements, most of the grassroots foundations of electoral politics, and much of the work involved in protecting and cleaning up our environment

happen as a result of people giving their work freely because of the pleasures in doing the work and the desire that it get done. Much residential yard work and household maintenance, automobile repair, gardening, interior decorating, education of young children, and care for the sick happen as gifts. The gift economy also includes highly technical work. Much emergency medical care, public health education, historic preservation, scientific and social research, computer networking, and software development comes from people who give their work freely as gifts to their fellow humans.

G.11. These examples show we distribute enormous amounts of goods and services via gift instead of via exchange.

G.12. Most families operate on the basis of gift in their relations within the family. Given that these gift relationships maintain most of our population including the working class (the productive element of society), we can see that the exchange economy depends upon the gift economy.

G.13. The difficulties gift-based distribution encounters result primarily from the oppressive relations caused by exchange and property. When we end those oppressive customs, gift can flourish as our sole method of distribution.

H. What will a society based on work and gift look like?

H.1. Humans have no logical need for property or exchange. We can stop enforcing property and exchange, free ourselves from those limitations, and re-build human society on the basis of work and gift. We have that long-range goal.

H.2. In that future society based on work and gift, we will each freely choose what work to do (generally after discussion with others and agreement on what work needs doing). We will each contribute freely the goods we produce and the services we provide. When we want something, we will accept it as a gift. We will decide questions of coordination by voluntary agreement instead of by coercion.

H.3. Given the current restrictions on our thinking that result from generations of living in oppressive societies, many people today find it difficult to realistically imagine the concrete details of a free work-gift society.

H.4. Fortunately, we do not need to decide those details now. We can better decide them closer to when we will need them so they will suit the situation then. We will best decide those details after a substantial portion of the human population has joined in bringing them about.

H.5. While we cannot now describe a detailed blueprint for the new society, we can have confidence about several general aspects of that future society:

H.5.1. The new society will not remain static; it will keep changing. All human societies so far have constantly changed and that seems likely to apply to any society composed of humans.

H.5.2. The new society will rely on voluntary cooperation.

H.5.3. The cooperation will result from rational communication and discussion among people.

H.5.4. All humans will fully respect (though not always agree with) all other humans.

H.5.5. We will have much communication among humans, both locally and throughout the population.

H.5.6. We will value leadership highly and will practice it widely. Almost everybody will lead at least one group of people on some common interest.

H.5.7. Watching humans who grow up in that free society will give us a clearer (and drastically more positive) view of human nature.

H.5.8. The future society will see our current hopes and ideas of possibilities as underestimates.

H.5.9. Humans living in that future society (possibly including people alive now) will appreciate the work we do now to help make that society possible.