

## Seven Reasons Churches Should Merge

“I have been involved in 17 church closures where we sold the properties to a secular company.”

Those words grieved me in two ways. First, I grieved that the ministry and mission presence of those 17 churches were no longer realities in their respective communities. Second, I grieved that the properties were no longer being used for local church ministries.

This post is not about a pleasant topic. It's about churches that have declined to the point where their near term future is in doubt. And it's about churches seriously considering allowing another church to takeover their property. It's about churches going down the difficult but noble path of being acquired by another church. Allow me to elaborate with seven reasons why churches should consider this option.

1. **So a church presence in the community will not go away.** We need more churches, not fewer churches. If your church has declined to the point where it looks like it may close, allow another church to acquire your property and re-start as a new church.
2. **Because re-plants have many of the same advantages of typical church plants.** Simply stated, a re-planted church is able to start anew. Past challenges are in the rearview mirror, and new opportunities abound.
3. **Because real estate is becoming scarce and more expensive.** From a stewardship perspective, it makes much more sense to give away the property of a dying church to a relatively healthy church. In some areas, land is scarce. In all areas, new buildings are expensive.
4. **So the work and ministry of your present church may have a legacy of continuation.** Imagine the untold hours of ministry that have gone into the work of an existing church. Imagine the potentially millions of dollars that have been given through the church. If your church is on the precipice of closing, don't let that work and sacrifice end abruptly. Allow another church to honor and continue that legacy.
5. **Because the ministry presence in the community will move from unhealthy to healthy.** If your church will possibly close soon, it's obviously not very healthy. Allow a new church to acquire your facilities to bring a healthy ministry presence to the community.
6. **Because sometimes a new start is needed to overcome negative perceptions in the community.** If your church is on the verge of death, its reputation in the community is either negative or unknown. A re-plant will allow the new ministry presence to have a fresh start in the eyes of those in the community.
7. **Because often the acquiring church increases its ministry impact multifold through an acquisition.** Many acquiring churches report greater health and ministry impact as they gain new campuses. And it's usually not the simple addition of ministry impact with each additional campus. All locations of the acquiring church often become stronger and more effective in their respective communities.

I recently went over my updated will with my three sons. The son with the greatest level of mercy told me he was uncomfortable talking about my death. I get that. But death is a part of God's glorious plan. I would rather plan for it than to leave my family struggling to take care of everything after my eternal departure.

Churches also die. But it's so much better to be prepared for that death than to close the doors without further consideration.

Churches that allow themselves to be acquired are churches looking to a new future, a new hope, and a willingness to sacrifice to get there.

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