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# Notes from *Better Together* by Tomberlin and Bird

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*Better Together* is a book about Church Mergers. It is helpful for church leaders who are thinking about a potential merger. The notes below provide questions and other information to consider as you think about a merger.

In FEB Central we have seen several church mergers in recent years, which have been positive steps forward for the churches involved.

Please do not hesitate to contact FEB Central if you would like further help to determine if a merger might be right for your church, and how it might work.

This document contains notes on the following topics:

- **Initial Questions to Consider**
- **General Process for Coming Together**
- **Twenty-Five Issues to Consider**

## **Initial Questions to Consider** (page 129)

1. Could we accomplish more together than separate?
2. Would our community be better served together?
3. Could the kingdom of God be further extended by our merger?

## **General Process for Coming Together** (pages 69-72)

1. Exploration and Dating (1-2 months)
2. Negotiation and Courtship (1-2 months)
3. Implementation and Engagement (1-3 months)
4. Consolidation and Wedding (2-4 weeks)
5. Integration and Marriage (3-6 months)

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## Twenty-Five Issues to Consider (pages 171-174)

There are many issues to consider in coming together. Each situation is unique and some of these issues will be more relevant to your situation than others.

### Doctrine

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| 1. Theological Beliefs | <i>How do the churches compare theologically?</i>                  |
| 2. Governance          | <i>How similar are the churches' governance structures?</i>        |
| 3. Affiliations        | <i>Are the two congregations members of the same denomination?</i> |

### Mission

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|------------------|---|
| 1. Mission       | <i>How does each church answer the question, "Why do we exist?"</i> |
| 2. Vision        | <i>How similar are the churches' visions?</i>                       |
| 3. Values        | <i>How similar are the churches' values?</i>                        |
| 4. Strategy      | <i>Are you attracted to the way the other church does ministry?</i> |
| 5. Worship Style | <i>How similar are the churches' worship styles?</i>                |
| 6. Preaching     | <i>Who will be bringing the weekend messages?</i>                   |
| 7. Membership    | <i>How will membership be handled?</i>                              |
| 8. Programs      | <i>What will happen with existing ministries? New ministries?</i>   |
| 9. Budget        | <i>What do the churches' budgets suggest are their priorities?</i>  |

### Personnel

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|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Expectations          | <i>How will each church understand the merger relationship?</i>               |
| 2. Senior Pastors        | <i>Who will be the Senior Pastor?</i>   |
| 3. Staff                 | <i>What are the staff needs? What staff will remain in current positions?</i> |
| 4. Boards and Committees | <i>What will change with boards and committees?</i>                           |
| 5. Missionaries          | <i>Will support continue for existing missionaries?</i>                       |

### Legal

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|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Legal Counsel          | <i>Do the churches have (or need) legal counsel for the process?</i>     |
| 2. Church Name            | <i>Will there be a name change required? How will it be decided?</i>     |
| 3. Voting                 | <i>How will the decision to merge be decided? Check church bylaws.</i>   |
| 4. Dissolution            | <i>Is dissolution of the joining church required? Another process?</i>   |
| 5. Property or Facility   | <i>What will happen with the church facilities?</i>                      |
| 6. Assets and Liabilities | <i>What are each churches' assets and liabilities?</i>                   |
| 7. Debt Management        | <i>Does either church have outstanding debt?</i>                         |
| 8. Timeline               | <i>What is the earliest possible merger date? What steps are needed?</i> |