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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2008

Church Mergers

I have been researching and talking about church mergers with a host of people over the past few months. This is a concept that I see taking place in many churches around the globe. The idea of two becoming one in order to increase the potential of reaching out and fulfilling the Great Commission together. Here is an article and a blog post about this idea of church mergers:

Should Your Church Merge?

Craig Groeschel has started a really interesting conversation over at the Swerve blog about merging two churches. As senior pastor at LifeChurch.tv, Craig has been involved over the years in mergers with five different churches.

I believe as Craig does that we will see more and more church mergers in the future. Let's face it -- many churches are dying, seeing lower and lower numbers of attendees every week. These same churches are also "facility blessed." They have facilities that are kingdom owned (bought and paid for) that should be put back into circulation. I think many of these dying churches will, in one way or another, partner with healthy churches in their areas to bring viability and life to their dying facilities.

In other cases, like-minded churches will merge, not out of desperation or certain death, but because of common goals and mission. These churches will find that they can multiply their impact by working together. Working together, they will reach many more people than they are currently able to reach individually.

Craig gives some great insight into church mergers. With apologies to Craig, here are some of his thoughts:

1) Two struggling churches that combine don't make a strong church. If both churches are unhealthy, trying to combine them will just make two unhealthy churches into one really unhealthy church.

2) "Merging" is a polite term, but probably not accurate. Craig prefers the term "adoption" because that's really what it is. One church needs to willingly submit to the leadership of the other.

3) A drawn-out investigation process rarely works. Craig's thought: If both leaders feel that God is in this, do it sooner rather than later. He suggests 30 days. Longer processes cause both churches to struggle with distractions, and the chance of disagreements increases.

Craig shares a few more merger tips here.

Has your church ever considered a merger? I'd love to hear your story. Email me at trhoades@mondaymorninginsight.com.

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Headed to a breakfast meeting with one of the Elders. Still have lots to do before we leave in the morning [about 13 hours ago](#)

Need rest but my mind is still going 90 to nothing over all that has to be accomplished~ sweet part is I can sleep on the bus to Mexico [about 22 hours ago](#)

Back home after a long day. still have lots to take care of before leaving for Mexico on Saturday morning [about 22 hours ago](#)

<http://twitpic.com/rx51> - here is our State Championship trophy [1 day ago](#)

also, have to coach basketball games this evening. It will be a long day [1 day ago](#)

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About Me

TRENT BROWN

I am a father of two, a lover and husband of one wife. I am a coach, a teacher and a pastor. My wife, Natalie is truly a gift from the Lord. He has crafted her into everything that I need. My two children, Meaghan and Cade are gifts given to Natalie and I during two divine appointments ordained by God. I am the Lead Pastor of [Gateway Fellowship](#) in Royse City, Texas. I am also on the Coaching Staff at Greenville Christian School in Greenville, Texas. I am also the Executive Director of [BeTheTree Ministries](#) which provides speakers and

Here is the blog, which was written by a friend of mine, Aaron Ott

Church mergers from Aaron Ott by Monk321

Church mergers are a delicate business. It holds similarities with the blended families we find dotting the American landscape. Two "families" comprised of families must come together and live in harmony, becoming one "family." Eventually the "step" must be dropped so that the teen girl speaks of her "Dad" or "Mom" without the prefix. Brothers and sisters learn to share toys, rooms and TV watching. The two become one.

However, the analogy breaks down in that the blended family often followed the divorce of one or both spouses. For churches, no such negative catalyst is necessary. On the contrary, merging two like "families" can be quite strategically positive. If the cultures are similar enough, and the missions of both sufficiently agree, partnering for the success of the Great Commission can bring surprising glory to God.

One of the key sticking points can come down to a question of identity. Seldom can two "families" combine to create a third identity. In truth, it is far less problematic for one entity to take on the identity of the other, enhancing its culture and effectiveness. We also see this in marriage. Two adults do not both change their name following the wedding ceremony. Instead a name is taken by both that was previous owned by only one of them. I will use the analogy of my own marriage.

Prior to August 7th, 1993 Aaron Ott and Naomi Helm had dated off and on before finally becoming engaged to be married in October of 1992 (please don't think that speaking of myself in the third person is creepy). Between October and August they spent that time making preparations to "merge" their lives. Aaron was preparing to not only commemorate this "merger" with a ceremony, but was also preparing to integrate Naomi into every aspect of his life. Naomi was making similar preparations, but the difference was that she was losing something. Her previous identity as a "Helm" would be left behind by means of her adopting the new identity of an "Ott." Was she completely abandoning her character as a "Helm" when becoming an "Ott?" Not at all. On the contrary, she brought along her "Helm-ness" to enhance what it means to be an "Ott." While Naomi would indeed become an "Ott," Aaron would never again be an "Ott" as he once was due to how his "Ott-ness" would be enhanced by Naomi's integration into his life.

While Naomi took on Aaron's name, and followed his leadership, she nonetheless changed Aaron's life experience as well. It truly was a "merger" in that two became one, and it has worked well. This is my preferred analogy for churches that have a right view of merging. One may dissolve and be assimilated into the experience of the other, but the incoming one will doubtless affect the receiving one in many significant ways. Anymore than Naomi could expect to be a passive addition to my world, so also should a merging church expect to enhance the one receiving it. They both choose the name of one, but each is affected by the other.

This would seem the right mindset regarding church mergers. Marriage and churches have difference motives though. The couple is motivated by covenantal love, while the church is motivated by the Great Commission. Nevertheless, both are sufficiently motivated to make it work no matter what. For the couple, the covenant is THAT important. For the church, the mission is THAT important. But both are beautiful

worship leaders for church events.

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Posted by pastor trent at [10:57 PM](#)

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