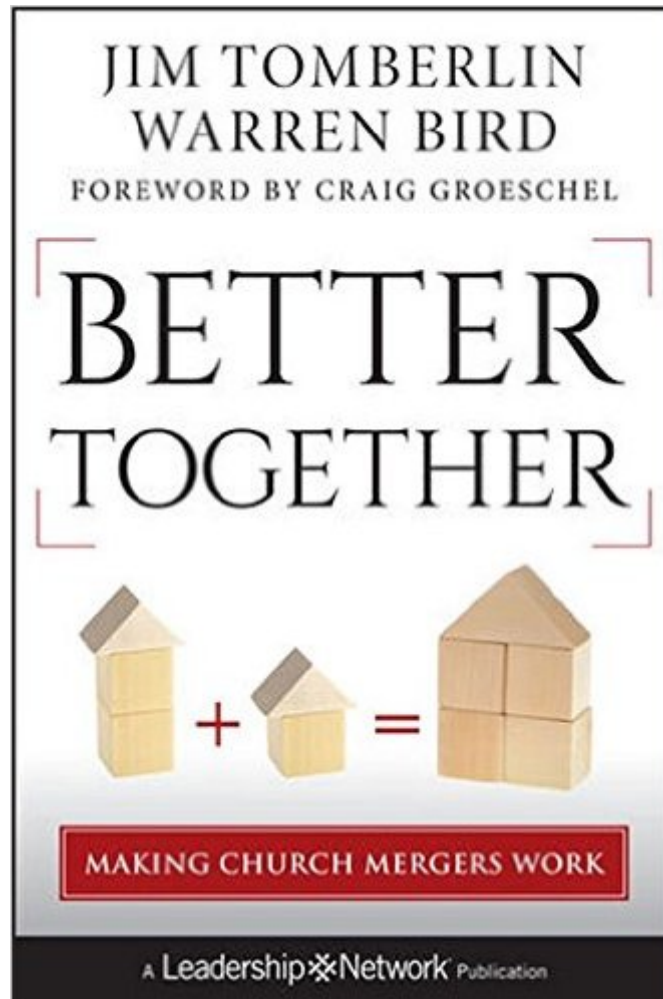


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# Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work



## Synopsis

Thousands of Protestant churches are perplexed by plateaued or declining attendance, while other congregations nearby thrive. Is there a way for them to combine forces, drawing on both their strengths, in ways that also increase their missional impact? Church merger consultant Jim Tomberlin, with co-writer Warren Bird, makes the case that mergers today work best not with two struggling churches but with a vital, momentum-filled lead church partnering with a joining church. In this new book, they provide a complete, practical, hands-on guide for church leaders of both struggling and vibrant churches so that they can understand the issues, develop strategies, and execute a variety of forms of merger for church expansion and renewal to reinvigorate declining churches and give them a "second life."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In past decades, church mergers were often two struggling churches hoping for survival and coming together as equals, often not being very fruitful in partnership and declining to the level of the largest of the two churches. But there is a growing trend for more vibrant partnerships forming between a strong vital church (called the "lead church") and other churches that need fresh life and momentum (called "joining churches"™). Instead of being motivated by survival, they are called together by a vision for mission and for doing more together than they can do apart. 80 percent of 300,000 Protestant American churches are declining or plateaued. 1 percent close each year, often not prepared for the cost of change. But 2 percent of them merge annually and another 5 percent

have been talking about it. But how can they discern whether a merge is an appropriate step and then navigate the process? Jim Tomberlin and Warren Bird explore the models, processes, opportunities and pitfalls of church mergers in their Leadership Network book *Better Together*. Tomberlin pioneered the multisite strategy at Willow Creek and founded MultiSite Solutions that consults to churches exploring multisites or mergers. Bird is the research director of Leadership Network, through which he has been doing extensive research over five years on church mergers, multisite development, revitalization and planting. They argue that church merging is becoming recognized as a viable revitalization strategy for stable but stuck churches, and also strong churches who are dissatisfied with the status quo.

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