

Possible Steps in a Merger: 17 points for discussion

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Notes on steps to consider during a merger process. We have done work on some of these steps within our CCDS leadership bodies, and with Liberation Road representatives, but only on a minority of these steps. What can the 2020 Convention accomplish? For merger advocates, pass a resolution for an intent to merge, and get agreement on some key steps in the merger process - including setting and achieving benchmarks, or at least agreement on a general outline and process to guide this work?

If an intent to merge resolution is passed at our convention, some work can be done then to set forth a process to go forward, but most of the details will have to be done after the August 2020 Convention, and final approval after the August 2020 Convention. The steps here are offered to facilitate discussion, and help shape decision-making, and as a general guide. They are offered as suggestions, open to change or modification. I believe some steps should be agreed upon.

1. We've conducted introductory meetings with Liberation Road to get to know each other with the aim of determining if there is interest in moving forward to serious discussions of a merger. We are currently working together on several joint projects. More research is desirable.
2. Assess pros and cons of a merger.
3. Brief (written) agreement between both parties confirming an interest to embark on serious discussions with the intent to merge, based on the appropriate approval by each organization. This can be modified as the process unfolds.
4. Identify strengths/contributions of each organization.
5. Identify and agree on principles of unity.
6. Identify top priority issues.
7. List areas of existing agreement, based on review of Programs, by-laws, and other relevant documents and practice of both organizations.
8. Identify questions to be asked of each organization.
9. Develop an outline of the key elements desired in a new merged organization: paint a picture of what we would like the new organization to look like.
10. Identify differences and possible obstacles.
11. Discuss areas of disagreement and develop proposals to reach agreement.
12. Recognize that some areas of disagreement are not "deal breakers," and agree to disagree.
13. Develop benchmarks that should be met to continue the merger process.
14. Review financial and legal issues.
15. Discuss structure and composition of new leadership body. (Do we merge existing Boards, or create a new Board; merge internal committees and other structures, or create new ones, or both; how to determine and elect top officers, descriptions of officer's duties and responsibilities, etc.)
16. We should give regular reports to the CCDS NCC and members, and invite member input.
17. If "must have" benchmarks are met, produce a final merger agreement that spells out the details of the proposed merger and present it to our NCC for approval, and then to the membership for a vote, with a description of how the vote will be conducted and what the threshold is for passage.