

How might a merger expand capacity for mission, innovation, or support of small churches?

## 1. Expanded Mission Capacity

- **Pooling Resources:** Merging presbyteries could allow for pooling of financial and human resources, making it possible to undertake larger or more ambitious mission projects than any single presbytery could manage alone. (March 19 Zoom, March 3 Sioux City)
  - *Example:* "Combining presbyteries could address some financial concerns by pooling resources."
- **Shared Mission Trips and Events:** Mission trips, meetings, and annual gatherings would be planned and available to all, increasing participation and impact. (March 3 Sioux City)
  - *Example:* "Mission trips, meetings, etc. held in one presbytery will be planned and available to all."
- **Broader Ecumenical Efforts:** There is hope that a larger presbytery could foster more ecumenical partnerships and shared mission work across a wider region. (March 3 Sioux City)

## 2. Greater Innovation

- **Technology Investment:** The merger is seen as an opportunity to invest in technology for remote meetings, live streaming, and collaboration, which can help overcome geographic barriers and facilitate new forms of ministry. (March 19 Zoom, Feb 3 Denison)
  - *Example:* "A need was expressed to enhance technology use, especially for meetings, in order to improve remote connections and facilitate collaboration."
- **Learning from Each Other:** By bringing together diverse congregations, the merged presbytery could encourage sharing of innovative ideas and best practices, especially between rural and urban churches. (March 19 Zoom)
  - *Example:* "Interest in learning from the activities and experiences of other presbyteries, seeing opportunities for sharing knowledge, experience, and mission."

## 3. Enhanced Support for Small Churches

- **More Resources Available:** The merger should make more resources available for small churches, including financial support, leadership development, and access to specialized ministries. (March 3 Sioux City)
  - *Example:* "The merger should make more resources available."
- **Access to Pastors and CREs:** A larger presbytery may have greater "weight" in attracting pastors and Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs), and could sponsor scholarships or programs to encourage seminary students to serve in small or rural churches. (April 18 Cherokee)
  - *Example:* "Would a larger presbytery give us more 'weight' in attracting pastors and seminary students?"
- **Equity and Advocacy:** There is an emphasis on ensuring that small churches receive equitable support and that their voices are heard in the new structure. (March 3 Sioux City, Feb 3 Denison)
  - *Example:* "There is a need for equity for small churches. It is possible that new support will be swallowed up by the big churches. However, most churches in all three presbyteries are smaller, and new resources may lead up to new challenges."

## Summary Table of Key Mechanisms

Area	Mechanism/Opportunity	Example from Documents
Mission	Pooled resources, shared events, ecumenical partnerships	Mission trips, meetings, pooling financial resources

Area	Mechanism/Opportunity	Example from Documents
Innovation	Technology investment, cross-learning	Enhanced remote meetings, sharing best practices
Small Church Support	More resources, access to pastors, equity focus	Scholarships, advocacy for small/rural congregations

In summary, the merger is seen as a way to expand mission reach, foster innovation through technology and collaboration, and provide more robust support for small churches—provided that equity and local voices are maintained.