



# Olive Grove Church

Deeply Rooted in Christ

Name Change Proposal for Nuevo Community  
Church February, 2010

## INTRODUCTION

Churches are unique organizations because they have their own soul. For this reason, they are often described as a living *organism* rather than an organization. Like any living being there are stages in development that progress an organism toward maturity. Churches have stages of birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. As you can imagine, the same developmental issues in each of these stages we experience on an individual human level are also experienced on the communal, congregational one. Although the church is 85 years old, it is our assessment that Nuevo Community Church is somewhere in the adolescent stage of church development. Characteristics of this stage include: a stable nucleus of spiritually mature, dedicated members, the birth and expansion of specialized ministries, and the potential for reaching a 'critical mass' in church membership. This latter characteristic of church adolescence also poses the most challenge. Critical mass refers to the magical number in membership that provides a foundation for explosive growth. It is a relative number but typically, once a church reaches critical mass, membership increases rapidly with less recruiting effort from the leadership. Visitors to a church that has successfully reached its critical mass have the sense that something dynamic is occurring and are befriended personally by someone who is a member (not necessarily in the leadership). The challenge comes when the ratio of leadership to individual members (or pastor to member ratio) is too high and there are not yet enough members to reach a critical mass. These ratios are relative from church to church but professionals usually concur that a high ratio is 1 pastor per 150 members. Not only is the pastor's ability to minister to member needs diminished, depending on the church's ministry plan for growth, 150 is not the ideal number for critical

mass. Commonly additional leadership is brought on board to help with the work load.

We are at a unique and exciting time in the life of Nuevo Community Church. God has blessed our church with resources to continue fulfilling our purpose statement. The pastor to member ratio was once off the chart. However, in the past two years, additional staff was hired to help with the work load and reach critical mass. We have been good stewards of our church campus, maintaining the facilities and grounds to be as functional as possible while at the same time, keeping an aging complex current (media/technology, carpet and upholstery, etc.). We have a core of competent people who are able to keep the church relevant and active. Our most recent success has been the purchase (with cash) of 18 acres of land in the midst of an economic recession. It is a true statement that *a healthy church is a growing church* and all of the aforementioned items are signs of health. They are physical indications of the internal, spiritual growth of people. Yet, the leadership does recognize that there are certain constraints on the church that are prohibiting growth and reaching critical mass. Among the most significant growth-inhibiting hurdles for our church is connected to what we will be referring to as 'image.' The image of the church refers to its overall appearance, the facilities, advertising, branding, etc. The sanctuary for example, is 54 years-old and is a product of the generation in which it was built. To people who are not familiar with our church, it may give the wrong impression of what occurs inside its walls. Visitors to the church are surprised to find that NCC has a contemporary body of believers with quality ministries. This external imaging problem could be part of the reason that there is a significant absence of young families in the church relative to the other age groups .

The aim of this proposal is to present to the membership a solution that will begin to address our challenges. This involves changing the name of the church to better reflect who we are as an organism and update what is

becoming obsolete among evangelical churches like ours, particularly, usage of the phrase 'Community Church.' The removal of "Nuevo" from our name speaks to those outside our community that may commute to our location if they perceived that we were not exclusive. "Nuevo" in the name is not inviting to those who live in Perris or Sun City/Menifee who might otherwise visit our church. A branding change has the potential for creating a snowball effect where new energy and life is felt in all of the church's programs.

## OLIVE GROVE CHURCH

*"But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever."*

*-Psalm 52:8*

We propose to change the name of Nuevo Community Church to Olive Grove Church. Our approach for drafting a suitable name was driven by the desire for it to be inclusive rather than exclusive. We wanted to select a name that could be identified with by all ages, those who have been at the church for years along with visitors, and also locations beyond Nuevo. To honor this approach and create a great church name, there were two important factors we needed to consider. First and foremost, the name should reflect a biblical/theological connection. Olives and olive trees are used throughout the Old and New Testaments to demonstrate spiritual significance. The land promised to Abraham's descendants (Israel) was said to be a land of blessing, filled with olive trees and honey (Deuteronomy 8:8). Olive oil was used to anoint or cover objects and people as a sign of consecration to the Lord. In Romans 11: 17-24, Paul refers to the church as an olive tree. The Holy Land has the perfect climate for cultivating olive trees. Because of this, there are geographical locations in Israel that bear the name olive. One famous mountain outside of Jerusalem is the Mount of

Olives, recorded as the location of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse.

The second important component of a great church name is that it embodies something that is connected to the community where it is located. Interestingly, Nuevo shares the same climate and topography as the Holy Land. Olive trees grow well in this valley. Many of the streets are lined with rows of olive trees having both an aesthetic appeal but also pragmatically separating the vast open fields that dominated the area in its early days. Olive trees surround the current church facilities as well as the eastern edge of the new property. Additionally, the address for the property where the proposed new campus will be built is Olivas Avenue which in Spanish is translated 'olives' (and is etymologically connected to the word 'olivar' meaning, 'olive grove'). All of these local connections appropriates the selection of 'Olive Grove' in the name. Consequently, 'Olive Grove Church' not only matches what we look for in naming the church, it is also more attractive in advertising.

### **NOW IS THE TIME FOR A NAME CHANGE**

Nuevo Community Church is at a crossroads in its life. It is at an intersection when identity is solidified. If we are truly in the stage of adolescence looking to maturity, now is the time to alter our name, something indicative of our identity. This will frame who we become as we emerge into adulthood as a church, causing us to be true to our historical foundations along with enabling the freedom to create new standards in our church life. Now is the time when we focus our congregation's attention to growth and movement toward God. He has given us our own 'Promised Land' in Nuevo, a land filled with olive trees on Olivas Ave. Important to your consideration of this proposal as a member of our church is how it has the potential to glorify God and be used to grow His church in Nuevo if supported. It is our hope that all feedback, positive or negative will be filtered through this conviction.

## 10 ANSWERS TO WHY WE SHOULD CHANGE OUR NAME

1. A name should reflect the identity of the church both theologically and geographically.
2. Nuevo Community Church has a public relations problem; its aging facilities and branding do not accurately represent who we are.
3. There is a name that would better describe our church in 2010.
4. Placing "Community Church" in the name of a interdenominational, evangelical congregation (like NCC) was a trend that is becoming obsolete.
5. Nuevo is filled with olive trees.
6. The Bible is filled with lessons, symbols, and locations using olive trees.
7. Olive Grove Church fits our identity and is more attractive in advertising and marketing the church to new people.
8. We have purchased land to eventually build new facilities on Olivas Avenue, translated 'Olives' Avenue.
9. A name change will provide motivation that will help the church enter into its next phase.
10. The timing is right for a name change.

## NAME CHANGE SURVEY

Please note that changing the name of the church is a visionary proposal and is in preliminary stages. It is important that church leadership obtain feedback, concerns, and support from the congregation before proceeding with an action at this level. After you have taken the time to prayerfully consider this proposal, complete the following survey to express your thoughts. This information will be used by the elders to assist them in making a decision on the matter.

### **NAME**

(optional): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: how important is the name of a church to you? (1 being '*I don't care about church names*' to 5 being '*it is highly important to me.*')

2. Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: how strong is your attachment to the name Nuevo Community Church? (1 being '*no attachment*' to 5 being '*a very strong attachment.*')

3. Do you think the name 'Olive Grove Church' can effectively be used to minister and reach people in our area? (Circle one) Yes or No

4. Do you have any reservations with the proposed name change to Olive Grove Church? (Circle one) Yes or No, if yes please explain below.

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5. Write any further comments you have about the name 'Olive Grove Church' below.

6. Would you like to have more contact with a church leader regarding the name change?

If so, please be sure to write your name on this survey.