



WE ARE NOW HARVEST CITY CHURCH.

by Pastor **Jonathan Clatt**

On September 9, 2018, I had the privilege of delivering a historic announcement at our annual Legacy Service, hosted at Trinity Church, in that we were officially changing our name from Lord of the Harvest Church to **Harvest City Church**. After a three-year process of praying and careful consideration, along with the counsel and guidance from our Board of Elders, we believed the Lord confirmed that it was time to change our name.

It is not uncommon for a church to change its name.

There are many reasons why the leadership of local communities choose to do so ranging from denominational shifts, change of location, new direction or the existing name no longer communicates well. One thing is for sure; names are important. In fact, God changed the name of certain individuals throughout the Bible to better identify their purpose and His promise for their life.

Is it possible that God could also initiate a name change for a church to better identify its mission and direction? We believe so.

FROM FACF TO LHC

In 1991, we experienced our first name change. Our church was established under the name Filipino-American Christian Fellowship. However, God impressed upon Pastors Joe and Rose Dejesa, our founding pastors, and the leadership to expand our reach beyond the Filipino-American community to include all people of different backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities. We changed our name to Lord of the Harvest Church to better position us for expansion. The Lord grew our church from a few families to more than 500 people. The scripture the Lord gave our leadership was Matthew 9:37-38, *“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”* Since then, that has been a hallmark scripture for our church. In this new season of ministry under our new name, Harvest City, there will be a continuation and expansion of that ongoing mission.

WHAT DOES HARVEST CITY MEAN?

The meaning is in our name. Mark 9:35, a few verses preceding our hallmark scripture, tells us that *“Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”* The harvest that Jesus described as *plentiful* was realized as He traveled through all the cities teaching, preaching and healing. In other words, **there is a harvest in every city.** Harvest, of course, represents people. But what is lacking? The workers.

San Antonio was ranked third in the nation among the largest numeric increase in population last year. Projections suggest an additional one million people

will be calling San Antonio home by 2040. We are very much aware that San Antonio and the neighboring cities are rapidly expanding. In fact, our church families are spread throughout multiple cities including San Antonio, Alamo Ranch, Helotes, Leon Valley, Fair Oaks, Boerne, Selma, Schertz, Cibolo, New Braunfels, Seguin, Converse, Universal City, Live Oak, Kirby, Spring Branch, and Elmendorf to name a few.

Our church building might be located on 4906 Stahl Road in San Antonio, but our church presence is literally in every city. How is that so? Because you are there. We are the church! And we are called to reach our city. When we meet together, it is for the purpose of worship, equipping, strengthening and fellowship. Once we conclude our meetings, we are released back into our cities. For every city you enter, it's not just San Antonio, Boerne, Cibolo or New Braunfels: **it's Harvest City.** The harvest is truly great in your city, but are you willing to work it? Our desire is to help others encounter God, experience healing and freedom in Christ, connect with a community of believers, discover their God-given purpose, and make an eternal impact for the Kingdom. That is all possible when workers are equipped, engaged and active in His harvest. Together, we are going to reach our city.

WHY CHANGE?

Changing an established name takes the most delicate change agency even if the change is subtle. For one, the decision to remove “Lord” from our name may confuse some. Why would we remove God from our name? In the context of Scripture, we are not Lord of the Harvest. That title belongs to God. He is Lord of the Harvest. We are the laborers or workers. However, Jesus gave us a name to identify us as His people, His body and His bride: **the Church.** The early Church was simply referred to

as “the Church.” Each congregation was designated by location or city only. For example, when addressing the different congregations, Paul greeted them by saying, *“To the church(es) in Galatia, Corinth, Judea, Galilee, and Samaria,”* to name a few. The Church began designating by denomination and with more descriptive names during modern missions in approximately the 1700s. Evangelistic efforts created competing interests with many groups planting churches in the same city thus the need to adopt a nomenclature process to differentiate the communities was necessary.

The mechanics of implementing a name change can also take some time. One of the first things we did was check with the Texas Secretary of State to ensure that no other church had the name. Today, we are officially and legally the only church in Texas called Harvest City Church. Throughout the coming weeks, all of our documents and accounts will reflect the name change.

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Lord of the Harvest Church is and will forever be a special name to us and the many who have considered it their church, family, and home for all these years. There were many memories made and testimonies of God's faithfulness under that moniker. Harvest City Church is a name that we believe honors our past, legacy, heritage, heart, and those who have labored in love while at the same time, position us for a promising future. With consideration of our outreach efforts, our name is simple, creative, and unique. It is easy to say and remember.

We are told that in heaven, we will all receive *“a white stone with a new name written on it known only to the one who receives it”* (Rev. 2:17). That will be a name worth having! Until then, Harvest City Church is our name. Let's win our city!

- Jonathan Claff