

HOW DO WE NAME OUR CHURCHES?

From our Jurisdiction to the King's Reign

By Neil Cole

"What's in a name? A rose is a rose by any other name."
—William Shakespeare

My friend and mentor, Bob Logan has an unusual collection. He collects church names he has come across in his travels over the years. Here are some actual names of churches he has encountered in his journey (with some commentary from yours truly):

- *Accident Baptist Church* is obviously not Calvinist.
- *First Church of the Last Chance World on Fire Revival and Military Academy* (in Dade City FL). These folks have the first and last word on just about any subject. I don't even want to ask what sort of military they are training.
- *Greater Second Baptist Church* in Chattanooga, TN, stands in contrast, I guess, to the not so great second Baptist church around the corner?
- For those who do not want to commit all the way, you can go to the *Halfway Baptist Church*. On the other hand, *Hell Hole Swamp Baptist Church* in South Carolina is not a seeker sensitive church by any stretch of the imagination. You have to be really committed to attend this church; none of those "Halfway Baptists" will be found here. Of course everyone is welcome at *Faith Free Lutheran*. Like "sugar free" this is a church that contains no calories, convictions...or miracles.
- *Little Hope Baptist Church* sounds a tad better than another church called *No Hope United Methodist Church*. Kind of makes you sad just saying it.
- My personal favorite church name: *Original Church of God, Number 2*. I really can't think of anything to add that could possibly be funnier than the name itself...except for perhaps number 3.
- *Boring Seventh Day Adventist Church* is another one of those "truth in advertising" names, but this church goes the extra mile because the name of their pastor is Elder Dull. Perhaps there are more exciting ways to spend your Saturday?
- *Harmony Baptist Church* in East Texas is a name that doesn't sound so bad. The funny thing is that it is only a half-mile away from *Harmony Baptist Church #2*. I guess they are not so harmonious after all.
- *Battle Ground Baptist Church*...aren't they all?
- *Waterproof Baptist Church* in Louisiana begs the question: does the baptism count if you're water repellent?
- *Country Club Christian Church* is in Kansas City, but you're actually likely to find some of these in every city. This may be the fastest growing model of church in America.
- *James Bond United Community Church* in Toronto, is of course "shaken, not stirred." *St. Martini Lutheran Church* in Milwaukee, WI, is also shaken, and not stirred and comes with an olive or a twist of lemon if you prefer. Of course the Lutherans can actually drink a Martini so I guess it isn't such a stretch to name your church after one, or is it.
- When Paul spoke of being all things to all people I doubt that he had this in mind: *First United Separated Baptist Church*. This church in Indiana needs to decide which it is, united or separated?
- *Hell For Certain* is a church in Kentucky but for some reason they do not have too many visitors, no one wants to go there. Does their advertisement in the yellow pages read: Go to Hell For Certain, Sunday at 10 AM? There is also *Hell Seventh*

- Day Adventist Church*, which is in Hell, MI. You could say: people are dying to go there!
- *Lover's Lane Episcopal Church* is a very open church, but watch out if someone wants to show you the submarine races in the baptismal pool...their Episcopal, they sprinkle.

Truth in advertising aside, one has to wonder what people were thinking when they decided upon names like these. We do not often think about names unless we hear of one that is strange or comical. I can't tell you how many times someone has introduced him/herself to me and the name simply went in one ear and flew right out the other leaving me embarrassed to have to ask a second time what their name is. To my shame there have even been times I have had to ask a third time. If only there was something between the two ears to catch the names as they passed through.

When we are expecting a child we give much thought to a name, but once they have the name it is simply who they are to us. We stop thinking about the name and only think of the person.

Because we name things so often, and names often get lost in the yellow pages, you may be inclined to think that a whole chapter about naming churches is a little too much. I would like to invite you to consider a church's name and it's naming as more important than you would first think. Taxonomy actually plays a significant role in the Bible. In the Scripture a name is an important thing and it should be to us as well. There are well over a thousand verses in the Bible that have the word "name" mentioned and in many of those verses the word is mentioned more than once. Perhaps because we have lost the true impact of a name in the Madison Avenue world of branding and market placement we are tempted to think that a chapter on naming a church is a waste of paper...but that would be wrong. I firmly believe that we have lost something in the naming of church.

Coming up with a name is serious business in more ways than one. There is a sense of permanence that comes with naming something, so you want to think about the long-term implications. A poor name can wreak havoc in a person's life.

When my wife and I were awaiting the birth of our first child we gave considerable time to thinking about what the name would be. We bought a book of names and read through it weighing each one. We settled on two possibilities, one for a boy and one for a girl. For the girl's name we chose *Brittany* (along with 33% of the other couples that year—she has had at least two Brittany's in every class while growing up). When our daughter was born and her mother and I looked at her we instantly knew she was a Heather, not a Brittany. She's been Heather ever since (usually there is only one other Heather in each class).

Naming my son was a much more challenging ordeal. Why? Because of my own name and the names of my father, his father before him and the one before him. While most know me as Neil, my real name is Cornelius. I am Cornelius Cole *the fourth!*

My grandfather Cornelius Cole II goes by the name Neil. My own father goes by the name Corny. I am called Neil, and now with the pattern set, you can see why we chose the name Zachary for my son rather than attach the name "Corny" to him as well. After 150 years of passing down this name we broke with tradition. While it works for my dad, who is a cartoonist and animator, I just couldn't see my son growing up being called Corny. Zachary, on the other hand, means *the lord remembered*. Both Dana and I felt that it is best that my son have his own name, rather than carry on the name of a

man long dead and buried.

For all of my youth I hated my name and tried to keep it secret. Everyone knew me as Neil, not Cornelius. Unfortunately, at the beginning of every school year the teacher would read aloud the roll call of the official names of each student in class and inevitably I'd have to begrudgingly raise my hand when Cornelius was read aloud and endure ridicule for several weeks thereafter. I have come to appreciate my real name now and believe it is special to me. Cornelius, popular in protestant Dutch circles, is originally a Latin name which means *Battlehorn*. In many ways, I am a simple tool in the hands of the Lord. When His breath blows through my life the troops are called to battle. A name can, and should be something powerful and meaningful.

We tend to name ministries in the West based upon criteria such as likeability, creativity, or personal identity and positioning in the community. In my first pastorate, I actually worked hard to change the name of our church from Grace Brethren Church to Grace Fellowship. My reasons were that it was more friendly to the community we were trying to reach and less offensive to those who are gender sensitive. I mistakenly thought that simply changing our name would equate with church growth, and I was wrong. People do not choose a church home based on a name; there are many more important things to consider. That said, I do think that the way we name our churches in fact has great significance.

So how do we tend to name our churches or movements? Below I will list five common ways names are derived and give examples for both churches and denominations.

Where Church Names are Derived

Named after a Geographical Location.

This is, of course, the only source of name in the New Testament. The church that is in Philippi. The churches of the Galatian region. The church of Antioch or Jerusalem. This is still a common source for a name. Saddleback Valley Community Church, later shortened to simply Saddleback, is a region named after a prominent mountain resembling a saddle overlooking the area where the church is found. Brooklyn Tabernacle is obviously named by its geographical location. Even movements that become denominations can start this way, such as the Moravians. Though they sent people all over the world, they are identified by their starting place, which is found today in the current Czech Republic. Even the Roman Catholic Church has its roots in geography, even though it has come to mean so much more than simply its location.

Named After a Founder or to Someone in High Regard

This is actually one of the most common derivatives of names in church history. The Montanists were named after Montanus of Phrygia. The Waldenses were named after Peter Waldo. The Franciscans were of course named after St. Francis. There are many denominations today that are still named after their original founding father: the Lutherans and the Mennonites are two examples. There are also many churches named after saints. St Cornelius is around the corner from my house and is a particular favorite of mine.

A Name that is Appealing.

While the previous two derivatives are most dominant in church history and the Bible,

this category is quickly becoming the most common today. Choosing a name that is attractive to the world and unique in the community and even thinking about logos and promotional pieces has become normative. Willow Creek Community Church was selected without a willow tree or a creek, but simply because it was appealing. The Friends, often referred to as the Quakers, is an appealing name for a group that holds to pacifism and abolitionism as a core belief.

A Name that is Simply Pragmatic or Descriptive.

Sometimes names are chosen because they identify a unique quality about the church or movement. First Baptist would be an example of simply naming a church for pragmatic reasons. The Pietists, were called such because they valued living a holy and zealous life for God. Charismatics are named such because the word for gift is Charisma. Pentecostals are named such because they are seeking the same experience found in the original birth of the church on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

My own organization is called Church Multiplication Associates because it describes what we are about, and certainly not because the name so easily rolls off the tongue. We mostly go by the acronym CMA which tends to get us confused with the Christian Missionary Alliance (another descriptive name). I often joke that we did such intentionally to increase mistaken donations, but that is just a bad joke because there isn't that much money in the other movement either.

Named by the Opposition.

One of my favorite means of deriving a name is not selected by the founders at all, but by those in opposition. Followers were first called "Christians" in Antioch by those opposed to the movement. The label "Methodist" was slapped on a burgeoning movement by those who wanted to identify a movement that was propelled in large part by simple and reproducible methods. The Quakers were called such because of their ecstatic response to the inner presence of the Holy Spirit.

I personally like this means of deriving a name the best because it means that others are noticing your movement and that you yourselves were too busy doing the work to worry about coming up with a name. Usually these are titles meant to be derisive but they actually become endearing. That being said, I am not so keen on being known as the "pancake churches" just because one denomination felt inclined to call us that (see chapter two).

From a pragmatic point of view these concepts are not bad, but they bypass something significant that the Bible can teach us about giving names?

What's in a name?

I remember when I was starting a church in the Barrio of East LA I came across a young woman who had two small children from two fathers, both of whom were in prison. The youngest of the two had a father in prison for life for multiple murders as a leader in the Mexican mafia. I asked the girl what her boy's name is and was shocked when she told me he had not been given a name. He was an older toddler at the time. What a shame. To grow up not having a name is sad on so many fronts. Imagine knowing that you are not important enough to even have a name. Imagine how your own sense of identity is left unclear without a name. She simply called him Pudgy, but that was not his name just something they called him. This girl, who was the drug dealer for much of the

neighborhood, eventually gave her life to Christ.¹ I told her that she now has an opportunity to give her son a name that is special and can identify him for an important purpose for the rest of his life. I challenged her to pray and think about a special name for her son and hopefully turn this tragedy into something special. After she turned her life around she took her small family out of the hostile neighborhood and I was not able to keep contact with her. I have entrusted her and her boys to the Lord who has a name for all of us.

A name is an important thing. The Bible says that a good name is better than great wealth (Proverbs 22:1). A name can even be a commodity itself. Some banks will give credit to you simply because of your name, if you have the right one. Likewise, you could get run out of certain towns simply because of a name. A single person can ruin a name for the rest of history. I seriously doubt anyone reading this book is named Judas. You probably have never met anyone who has the misfortune of having the name Hitler.

Zacheus, smudged with sap and perhaps a splinter or two, was hanging over the path longing to see the famous Rabbi as he approached town. His precarious position was not one of dignity and probably revealed more than any below would care to see. But you see, Zacheus was not one concerned with his reputation, he had passed that concerned many years ago. He was a tax collector. In fact, he was the head of the tax collectors, which meant that his own people already disowned him and considered him a traitor. He was hated by all, so he was less concerned about what people would think about his climbing a tree in mid day to see Jesus.

Suddenly, and without warning, Jesus stopped. He looked up and called Zacheus by name! Wow, imagine the shock of that moment. It probably took everything he had to keep from falling off the branch, which is about the only thing less dignified than being up in the first place. The power of a personal name can be incredible given the right context and spoke by the right person. Imagine if President Obama greeted you and knew your name personally! That would mean he knows something of you and had given thought to you prior to your meeting, and that alone is something.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus makes such a big deal out of his name? Look at how much effort it took to make sure He was given the right name by Joseph and Mary (Matt. 1:21-25). If you do a search of the usage of "My name" in reference to Jesus in the Gospels you will find it 20 times. People come in his name, go in His name and are received in his name. His followers will be hated in his name, give water in his name, and pray in his name just to "name" a few (pardon the pun). If we ask the Father for anything in His name it will be granted to us. Wow, that does sound powerful doesn't it? Perhaps a name is a powerful thing. When addressing a thousand demons at once he asked to know their name. Why? It is not as though a name is a secret password to spiritual power like saying "open Sesame" is in fairy tales. A name is important because it says something about the person. That is why Jesus' name is so important, it says something about him and we are to value that...and use it for His purpose, not ours.

His name alone is powerful. It is so potent that the enemy wants to dilute it by making it a curse word. Have you ever heard someone hit the wrong nail with a hammer and shout out "Oh Buddha!" Of course not. Why? Because Buddha's name is not as powerful, nor as much a threat as the name of Jesus. Not to pick on anyone in particular, Mohamed's name is not elevated to the curse word status either. Jesus' name is powerful because He is powerful. His name is part of who He is and represents His being, just like yours does for you (except in his case his person is a whole lot more powerful than you are). His reputation stands apart and His name is therefore powerful.

The church is the bride of Christ. We are a people who carry His name. We should realize that this is more significant than simply branding a ministry in the eyes of potential parishioners. Selecting a name for the church is in fact a holy and dangerous thing. We should approach the whole idea with much reverence and fear. I don't think I am being overly spiritual here; I am letting you in on a learning I have been on myself. Culturally speaking, in the West, naming something is pragmatic; but in God's economy a name means so much more than positioning in a free market.

Why is a name such a big deal?

A Name identifies a person, place or thing.

The obvious advantage of a name is to designate any person, place or thing that we are communicating about or with. This makes communication possible and grants meaning to our lives. When you are in a crowded room full of people all seemingly talking at the same time and suddenly someone across the room mentions your own name it gets your attention. It is your personal designation, so when someone uses it in conversation they are talking about you, and of course this is of interest to you.

A Name gives identity to a person, place or thing.

Beyond simply being useful in communication, a name does even more for us. It not only identifies us, but it becomes our identity. It becomes almost impossible to separate a person from their name in our minds. We put all our memories and feelings about a person in a file in our minds under a label with this person's name on it. It becomes virtually impossible to separate the person from their name. A name becomes virtually synonymous with the person, place or thing.

Many couples have pet names for one another. This is actually a form of great intimacy. When you are identified in a special manner by only one other person on the planet it makes your relationship unique and intimate. It is just wrong when any other would use the pet name. In this manner, Jesus will have a special name for us that only He knows (Revelation 2:17). Can you imagine hearing him call you by your new name and it will be the first time you've heard it; and you will know that it is you and only you that Jesus has in mind? Wow, that is a special thing. It is a powerful and intimate thing that is special to you and Jesus and no one else. How disappointing it would be if that name was simply a random series of numbers. That would take all the power, joy and intimacy from it, but such is not the case. Just think, even now at this very moment, in Jesus' mind is a special name chosen just for you and no one else is to have it or even hear it...just you! When he calls out that name you and only you will be the one he wants to communicate with.

A Name carries a reputation.

Because of the previous idea, a name carries with it a reputation. When people hear your name do they think of good things, bad things or are they indifferent? A single movie star's name at the front of the credits can mean instant millions of revenue for an entire industry.

A brand name can mean success or failure for any product. Some brand names are so well accepted that they become synonymous for the entire industry. A person may ask for *Kleenex* when what they really want is a tissue. When the boss sends you out to *Xerox*

something she is actually sending you out for photocopying. When you ride a *Jet Ski* you are actually on a specific brand of personal watercrafts made only by Kawasaki. In these cases, the name of a specific brand has become as big as the entire industry.

I believe it is this third reason that Jesus' name is so important in our lives. Actually, the word denomination carries with it the idea of a name. When we choose a name for ourselves and that name gains a reputation we become identified by that name. Could it be that it is really just a name that separates us all? Baptist, Brethren, Methodist, Presbyterian, Foursquare, Assemblies of God, Christian Church, Adventist, Mennonite, Friends, Vineyard, Reformed Church of America, Christian Reformed Church, and so on, could it be that we are all just different names for the same thing?

Is it right to choose a name for the church?

A few years ago I was speaking at a conference on Simple Church. We had many networks of churches represented there. My friend Wolfgang Simson was also speaking. Some of the networks represented from CMA were: Awakening Chapels, Big Fish Chapels, The Fountain, Apex, The Quest, Houses of Refuge, ValleyLife, Cross Roads and so on. When Wolf heard all of these names he became a little agitated, and felt that naming churches was egotistical and not right.

I resisted his assumption for a couple years. As with many things, however, I eventually came to see some truth in what he was saying. I began to bring the question under the scrutiny of the Scriptures and discovered that giving someone or something a name is not an idle exercise.

The Naming of things Belongs to the One who is in Authority

Naming things, however, is indeed something the Bible does have much to say about. You do not have to go very far in the Bible to find the concept of naming things. Right from the start God names Adam and Eve, but not all of the rest of creation. He tells Adam to name all the creatures of the earth. The creator placed the man as responsible over the created world. In such a role he is given the responsibility of naming all the creatures. And God is the one in authority over mankind, so he named them. Later Adam and Eve are able to name their own sons and daughters, and parents have been doing so ever since.

Giving a name in the Bible is a weighty responsibility. Names were not given randomly but chosen based upon the person's unique personality or even destiny. It was a sober affair and often took some time to reflect upon. Usually, in the West, we choose a name that sounds nice or we do so in honor of someone we love or respect.

But naming something also has another important element to it. According to the Scriptures, the one who selects the name is one who has a God-given authority and corresponding responsibility over the one being named. Hence the reason why you may not want to buy a name for a star any time soon...that is a huge responsibility! There was a struggle about John the Baptist's name because the crowd felt that normal routines were important, but the child born was anything but normal. God Himself was to name this special prophet and a mute man was healed just to declare it so. Even in vitro this person was a special servant of the Lord.

While choosing a name is a normal right of parents, there is a time when it was not their right. John the Baptist was an example. Jesus was also an example. It was made clear by

the visitation of angels more than once that Joseph and Mary were not the ones who would select Jesus' name.

A New Name for a life surrendered

Often, when a person had reached a life-changing moment where he or she were now under the strict leadership of God and God alone, the Lord would change their name. Abram became Abraham. Sarai became Sarah. Jacob became Israel, Simon became Peter and Saul became Paul. God selected names for them that indicated something special to them and also demonstrated that He was now the authority over their lives, rather than their own original parents. These were renamed by God to reflect a change in their life; most notably that God now was the authority over their life. They have become a new person under the Headship of the Lord God.

We have lost the significance behind naming things. In fact, if you pay \$19.99 you can give a name to a star. Wow, imagine that, you can name a star all to yourself. Now, that is a creative money-making venture isn't it? There is no overhead. No one had to buy the stars and then sell them to us. This creates revenue out of nothing. But is it right for us to name stars? No one ever really asked that question.

While we are given the authority to name the animals in the Bible, the naming of stars is well beyond the scope of our authority. Only God has a name for the stars (Ps 147:4), we can't even count the stars, let alone name them.

Now I fully understand the need to identify stars, so giving them a name is functional. The same can be said of naming churches. But I first think it is important to ask if we should name a church. It is dangerous to assume the authority over something that is God's not ours. We have been granted authority to name animals, insects, fish and birds, but not stars and certainly not the kingdom of heaven. Our jurisdiction has limitations. So we should, at the very least, tread carefully when selecting a name.

When we set out to start churches in Long Beach CA we came to the time when we were to select our name. We brainstormed a long list of potential names. Then in a meeting of the leaders (about 12 of us) we kicked those names around, eliminated almost all and came down to two choices: Real Life Church or Awakening Church. We were split even on these two names. A name is a lasting thing that is not easy to change later on. Given the weight of such a task I instructed the leaders to each go home and sleep on the two names...but God had other plans.

That night at 4:00 in the morning I woke up. My wife will tell you, one of the things she has always envied about me is my ability to fall right to sleep and sleep soundly though the night, but this night I was wide awake and unable to fall back to sleep. What was really strange is that a Bible verse was in my head and I couldn't shake it: Awake Sleeper and Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you. I suddenly realized that God had cast his vote and all other votes are discounted. Our church would be named Awakening. God chose our name.

Having a name is not an issue, but selecting your own name, as if you have the authority to do so is probably the more significant issue. Without names to identify us we would have a hard time even functioning. Names are practical and can be meaningful. But do we have the right to make such decisions ourselves when it comes to God's family?

In Ephesians 3:14 -15 Paul writes, "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father,

from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.”

I think that one of our problems is that we want our ministry to make a name for ourselves. We strive to create a brand name for our ministries. It doesn't take much for a spiritual leader to have his or her identity wrapped up in the success of the organization that he or she leads. Eventually, the brand name of the ministry becomes almost synonymous with the leader. This is not a bad thing in the business world, but it is not what God's kingdom is supposed to be like. In his Kingdom, the King is what is important, and frankly you and I are not Him. Our names are all subordinate to His; in fact, every name in heaven, earth and under earth will bow at His name (Phil 2:9-11).

In the New Testament there are not churches with unique names. They are simply the church in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus or Corinth. In some cases they are the churches (plural) in Galatia (which is an entire region of Asia rather than a city). In other times they are the church that meets in “your/their house.”

I am not suggesting that we all drop our individual names and join together, although as I write that it does have its appeal. Several years ago a number of pastors in the city I was at would get together monthly and pray for the health of our churches, and city. We talked about creating a generic church banner. On a given Sunday we would all cover our individual church signs with this generic brand that simply said “church” and we would also each show up and speak at a different church that Sunday. It was a grand idea and I wish we pursued it more.

Pragmatically, we are way past being able to simply call all churches the church in (fill in the blank city). Too much history has passed and created a world in which we have divisions that cannot be ignored. We can have unity; I do believe that. But we now have designated names that we cannot abandon or we would be unable to communicate.

So What should We do?

I am not advocating that having a name is a bad thing. I would simply suggest that we approach the naming of God's work with a little more humility and reverence and less with promotion and marketing in mind. Ask Him what He would want the work to be called, and have the courage to accept whatever He says. We must recognize that we are not the ones who sit in a place of authority over the church and thereby are to give her a name. He is the Head of the church.

Perhaps one thing we could give thought to is how we can exalt Christ's name over our own ministries name. Can we make it less about our organization and more about our King? We are way too quick to slap our brand on everything and the results are that the brand is what is known rather than the qualities that Jesus intended for His church. We need to stop putting our brand on God's work; it is not our place and puts us in a place where we should never be.

If you find that the name of your church does not carry a positive weight in the community then perhaps it is time to consider changing your name. But wait, what I mean by that is not simply changing your signage and stationary...I mean you work hard to establish a new and better reputation in your community, one worthy of Jesus' name. In reality, what does the name help with? Most in a church do not use the name unless they are describing it to someone who is not part of it. When a family member speaks about church they just say “church” and everyone seems to know what is being said. Besides advertising a name is really not all that significant.

For those just starting out, I strongly advise that you pray and seek the Lord regarding what the name is to be for your ministry. At least give the Head of the church the right and the opportunity to select a name for your church. Most church planters not only have a name before they have a church, they even have a logo. I fear when we so easily and quickly assume that privilege we trample a bit on holy ground. When we start a church with such an ignorant yet arrogant maneuver we set in place a culture where we ourselves are the ones responsible for the church, and unfortunately the church rarely escapes this trap. I for one, would much rather be part of a church where Christ is the one calling the shots, wouldn't you? Why is that not the case in so many examples? Perhaps we have lost the ability to believe that Jesus does in fact care about these things. A name is important to Jesus. Or, perhaps we have lost faith that Jesus is capable of deciding things for His church.

The Moravian Church is a great example to us of how the church is meant to be a movement. After a revival of sorts broke out in Herrnhutt, called the "Moravian Pentecost" in August of 1727, they began to have people go out and spread the message of simple devotion to Christ all over Europe and abroad. They were not starting Moravian churches but encouraging people of any denomination to start living communities of faith in any tradition. This enterprise was phenomenally successful before there were any mission agencies or church planting divisions of existing denominations. By 1748 there were 540 faith communities outside of the Baltic provinces and 45,000 people attached to groups within the Baltic region. They had groups founded in Britain, Ireland, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, and even Russia. Nevertheless, they continued to resist having any official affiliation with their own "denomination."

For many years, they did not even have a name for this movement. It started without a plan, a name, a budget, or any kind of organized objective more complicated than spreading the love and message of Jesus. No advertising campaign, no branding, no ten year strategic plan, they simply obeyed Jesus and let Him build His church as they went out to share with others the profound experience they had. Many years later they referred to the groups meeting all over the world as the "diaspora" or "scattered ones" which is really just a description more than a title. They didn't need a name. Do we? I have to wonder if the need for a name is a clear indication that you are not a healthy movement. In my opinion, if it takes a brand to sell your "product" than your church is less than it should be. If people are not wanting to tell others about what we have and we need to sell ourselves with ads then we have lost the plot.

Awakening Chapels started with a name. But as we multiplied we found that the name didn't stick with future generations, and we are fine with that. Even now, no one really says, "I'm going to Awakening." They say, "I'm going to hang out with my church." When they refer to a specific gather they will say, "The church that meets at Milton's house," or "the El Camino College Campus church that gathers on Thursdays." This actually sounds very New Testament to me. Sort of like "the church that meets in their house (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19)." It is not about a brand, it is about a Kingdom. Can we be content with that? Can we let the name of Jesus be more prominent than our brand?

ⁱ Her story is recounted in my book *Organic Church*, pp 78-79