



Episode 1 Transcript

Robert Chao Romero Welcomes You to the Brown Church

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

book, latino, church, robert, people, jesus, ministry, grandfather, authors, brown, publishing, christian, chinese, faith, years, academic, voice, china, tenure, podcast

SPEAKERS

Ed Gilbreath, Robert Chao Romero, Maila Kim, David McNutt

Maila 00:06

Welcome to the Every Voice Now podcast where we bring voices of color into the spotlight. I'm Maila Kim,

Ed 00:13

And I'm Ed Gilbreath. In every episode, you'll hear from authors of color as they share about the inspiring stories that led to the making of their books, as well as the challenges they had to endure and overcome along the way.

Hello, Maila Kim!

Maila 00:47

What's up, Ed?

Ed 00:49

Hey, what do you think, this is our first episode of the Every Voice Now podcast!

Maila 00:53

I know. I'm so excited for this podcast, and I'm super excited for even today's episode.

Ed 00:59

Yes, there's no better way to start a podcast series than with our guest today. Robert Chao Romero.

Maila 01:05



Yes, I appreciated the stories that he shared even his journey up until him publishing Brown Church. A lot of good stuff in this episode.

Ed 01:15

So let's get to it right away here.

Maila 01:25

Well, we're excited today to welcome Robert Chao Romero, author of Brown Church to the Every Voice Now podcast today. So welcome, Robert.

Robert 01:33

Thanks, Maila. It's great to be here.

Maila 01:36

Thanks for being with us. So this podcast is all about interviewing and amplifying our authors of color. And so what we'd love to hear about just right off the bat is, can you tell us your ethnic background, your family background and where you currently live?

Robert 01:51

I'm a multiracial child of God. My dad is from Chihuahua, Mexico. My mom is from who Bay and central China. And they met in LA through ministry stuff, and then I came along not too long after that. It was born in Boyle Heights, which is on the east side of LA and raised in Hacienda Heights. Right now. I live in the San Gabriel Valley and I've been a professor at UCLA for 15 years.

Maila 02:13

Wow, that's cool. Are you bilingual trilingual? What does that look like?

Robert 02:18

I wish I was trilingual. But sadly, like my parents came of age at the time we're speaking anything other than English word tragically was like was penalized in their era. It was like like, say, if you spoke Spanish in schools, they would like make you run laps. That was that kind of thing. So wow. And my parents as a survival mechanism. were like, okay, we're going to speak English in the house. I grew up around Spanish and Chinese different dialects of Chinese quite a bit in family gathering. So that's part of my heart. I learned Spanish through many different ways over the years, and Mandarin, and who they were sort of like close to my heart, because it's like my family sort of dialects. But I wish that I could also speak that.



Ed 02:59

Robert, you said there are so many stories. I'm just curious, growing up as a Mexican Chinese kid, could you share a little bit of what that experience was like?

Robert 03:09

Very interesting, from a racial dynamics base. Because by the time I was old enough to remember my folks were middle class, even though they were working class when I was born. But I grew up in a suburb called Hacienda Heights, that when I was growing up as a first grader and stuff, it was not that long after schools were desegregated, right? Because most schools did not desegregate in the US until 1970. So I'm just this young kid in the 70s. And it was still very much those racial attitudes lingering. And so when I was growing up in sort of like a middle class kind of school, I remember the first day going into first grade and someone did this thing where they said, "Okay, here's a refrigerator, open it up, here's a Coke, take it, drink it." And then they said, "Me Chinese me play joke, me do pee pee in your Coke." And I remember, that was like my first day of school or something. And I remember being like, Oh my gosh, I don't want to be Chinese. Right? I want to be like the other kids. I want to be like this kids with yellow hair, hair, who are playing with each other. And ironically, during the 70s and 80s, it was my Mexican identity that gave me closer access to whiteness. It's sort of different today. It's a totally different scenario. But back then that's how it was. So I had this this journey. There's definitely this mixed race journey that has fueled by God's redemption, my passion for understanding race, and its relationship to Jesus and Scripture.

Mails 04:30

Well, thanks for sharing that story. that resonates. I've heard that rhyme before growing up and going to elementary school as an Asian American. But that's interesting hearing it from you being multiracial. How you navigated that. For me, I was Asian American, I couldn't escape being called Chinese, even though I'm Hmong American, but that's really interesting how you even noted that, then you decided to resonate with your Latino identity to be closer to whiteness. That's really interesting. You mentioned that you work at UCLA. So I'm interested in just even learning what it means for you to be a Christian scholar of color, now working at a secular university.

Robert 05:13

So I think like the blessing of it is that as a professor of Chicano Studies, Central American Studies in Asian American Studies, justice, and racial justice is like, that is what our departments are about. So in that sense, I love it right? Like I don't have to fight. The hard part is that historically, ethnic studies is largely hostile to faith. That's just the reality of it. Right? And it's because of the misrepresentations, the grave misrepresentations of Christianity, right? And



the history of colonialism and the politics of the present moment. So I totally get that. And I'm very sympathetic, but at the same time, it can be hard sometimes to negotiate that. But thankfully, I have colleagues who are largely very sympathetic, and they support my academic project now of trying to reclaim you know, the spiritual capital of Latino culture as part of an understanding of our field. So I have a pretty good situation.

Maila 06:05

And so in terms of just even writing, you talked about how your colleagues are supportive of you. But what role did your family play and you wanting to write? Did you always know you wanted to be an author? or What did that journey look like?

Robert 06:17

Part of it goes to like my testimony. So when I went to undergrad and law school, I was like a baby Christian. I had been a Christian for many years, I grew up in the Chinese church and the Latino church. My Chinese parents were actually famous pastors in China and in the United States. Speaking of Christianity, today, my grandfather, Calvin Chao was called the Billy Graham of China, actually, wow, like in the 50s, or something. So I grew up in that context, but it was still remained a baby Christian for a lot of different reasons. And then when I went to law school at Berkeley, that's where Jesus radically got a hold of my life changed everything. And so I went from just wanting to be rich and famous and making lots of money and all that kind of stuff, to like, okay, God, what do you want to do with my life, right? And then that led me on a discernment process, where I felt God eventually telling me, you know, I want you to become a professor, and to use that platform, to speak and write about issues of race and Christianity. And that calling was way back in 1997, though, that was when that first came. And it's taken all these years. But I'm definitely inspired by my grandfather, Calvin Chao, who was a noted Chinese theologian

Ed 07:26

That Billy Graham of China, can you expound on that just a little bit?

Robert 07:29

Sure. So my grandfather, Calvin Chao, he contracted tuberculosis when he was in college, and his life was saved by a missionary family, actually, the graham family, I believe, not Billy Graham, but a different different gram Presbyterian missionaries who literally brought my grandfather into their living room, when he had tuberculosis and saved his life for a while. And actually, the doctor that attended my grandfather at the time was Ruth Bell parents. So my grandfather, then through that experience, came to know Christ became a Christian. And then he felt here my grandmother and my Chinese grandmother was a fiery Baptist preacher. Two,



were both like really powerful preachers. But they felt a calling eventually to share Jesus with Chinese university students. Right now we're talking like the 1920s 1930s. Right? It's like so long, a long time ago. And they planted many works of ministry, one of which was in Traverse City in China as well, like they were kind of founders of InterVarsity in China back down a long time ago. But that was just one of the ministries. And there was a revival that took place. And my grandfather would preach in terms of the Billy Graham part preached to university students during World War Two as they were fleeing the Japanese and he preached and they had these revivals. And one of my uncle's said he remembers as a kid, during these revivals, people would hold hands, and there would be literally afterwards like a ring of tears in the dirt from all. So that's sort of the Billy Graham of China.

Maila 08:59

That's incredible. I realized halfway as you're sharing the story, that this is a podcast, but my facial expression the whole time, like, Whoa, that's crazy. And for them to even start intervarsity in China. How cool is that legacy that even years later, you would publish with intervarsity Press, even Brown Church, like that's incredible, helpful, full circle...

Robert 09:19

I have a crazy story to really keep going. Even crazier. The way that Brown Church came about was like maybe five years ago or something, there was a Latino consultation, Latina consultation that IVP sponsored, right. So there's, like 20 of us, Latino leaders from throughout the country. We came for a few days to discuss the publishing needs in the Latino Christian community. And as we're going around in a circle, and we're saying, you know, what's something unique about yourself? And so I said, Oh, my grandfather started in InterVarsity in China. At the break. Dan Reid, the former IVP academic editor for many years, senior editor for many years. He came up to me and he said, Oh, was your grandfather Calvin Chao. Wow. But then again, it gets even crazier. It's just get crazier, watch. Wait for it. He was the grandson of those missionaries that saved my grandfather's life No way! Crazy, right? That's exactly how I felt. I mean, for like a long time I'm like, okay, Lord. Oh, I'm gonna publish with IVP because it's just too crazy.

Maila 10:31

How cool is that?

Robert 10:33

It's not like I was at like an Asian American gathering either, it was a Latino gathering.

Maila 10:38



Wow. You know, God will do that. That is crazy. Amazing. Yeah. Well, you know, I want to go on and on with stories. But I think this is a good place for us to just take a quick break. When we return. We'll talk more with Robert about his journey to getting published and so stay tuned and thank you for listening to the Every Voice Now podcast.

Ed 11:56

Welcome back to the Every Voice Now podcast. I'm Ed Gilbreath. And with us today is our guest Robert Chao Romero, author of *Brown Church*, which released this past spring. Robert, let's talk a little bit about your journey to reach this point of publishing a book. When did you first start thinking I could do this? I could write a book. And where did the genesis of book idea come from?

Robert 12:19

I've had to kind of writing trajectories. One, of course is sort of the academic one to kind of get tenure at UCLA. And the other one was sort of sort of to think to myself, okay, how can I write a book that fuses my ministry experience with just the experience of the Latino church. And so when I started a UCLA, of course, as a professor, I had to write academic books. My first project was a history of the Chinese in Mexico. So that was like, What got me tenure did a book on that. I loved it. But at the same time that I was writing that and getting tenure there, my wife, Erica, and I were doing ministry with activist students for many years. And as a professor from right from the get go, I met so many students who would like lose their faith, because they would grow up in church, no Jesus on a personal level, but then they come to the University, and they learn about structural, systemic racial injustice with their churches, and the campus ministries wouldn't know how to respond to that people would tell them like, you know, that's not the gospel. That's just politics, blah, blah, blah, you know, but then those same students would go to activist circles and say, Well, I'm a Christian, and the activists would say, you can't be a Christian and be an activist, right? That's Christianity is simply a racist, classist and sexist religion. So our ministry of Jesus for revolutionaries over the years has just involved creating different types of spaces for students to come together and to process those hard issues about race in Christianity, to receive training in urban ministry, mentorship, I've married students and baptize students, many things. But after I got tenure, I was like, I've got tenure. But I've been sort of had these two parallel tracks, right? If it's been like ministry on the one hand, and then it's been sort of academic work on the other, and I was listening to a Lauryn Hill CD, it's the her MTV album where she kind of came out with their faith, right. And in interlude five, she says, I'm tired of leaving two thirds of myself outside of the door. Wow. And I said, you know, I'm tired of leaving two thirds of myself outside of the door. And I'm like, I'm going to bring together my faith and my scholarship, and UCLA and pillar helped me write that sort of is what led to the, the formal path of sort of beginning *Brown Church*. And it wasn't too long after that, that that Latino



consultation happen. But I should say, that wasn't just a smooth path to that place, though, from a Christian publishing world. I remember after getting tenure, backtrack, maybe seven years from right now, I was like, feeling I'm writing high, right. I'm like, I'm tenured at UCLA, my academic book when the Latino Studies Book Award for the whole country, right for the year. And I'm like, I'm going to write a book called Jesus for revolutionaries. And so like I did like a blog series for a year. That was sort of testing out the book. But when it came time to find publishers, nobody would publish it. I'm a tenured professor at UCLA, I have a doctorate, it's a best selling national award winning book, How can I not get published? Right. And that was when, and now this is the kind of a hard part, right? That's been kind of nice story. So for her, but the harsh realities of being a person of color in the Christian publishing world, one story that I'll share, and I've worked through processes of forgiveness, and have even received apologies from people about this experience. And I'm grateful but but it's think it's important to share some of these stories, because this is what I know so many thousands of Christian authors of color are going through the same experience. But I remember there was a Christian organization kind of use me as like a poster child for their fundraising. Because Os Guinness played an important role kind of in part of my discernment process and asked him This was tied to a particular ministry. So this ministry put me in their newsletter, right? And put my testimony and all this kind of stuff. And then I wrote Jesus for Revolutionaries. And I said, Hey, remember me? poster child? Would you consider publishing my book? They said, No, that was like, a very painful moment to me, where I realized, Oh, my gosh, you value this testimony of God calling me to academia as a person of color, and you're willing to even raise money with that. But when it comes time to share the ideas that God has shown me through that process of becoming a Christian professor, it's not okay, you're free to offend someone or you don't think it's important or whatever, I never got a straight answer. In terms of Every Voice. Now, I'm sure there's lots of amazing voices out there now that have had similar experiences.

Ed 16:31

One of the things we want to do on this podcast is to help our listeners understand the challenges and the hurdles that authors of color have to overcome. Thank you for sharing that. Could you talk a little bit about Brown Church specifically? And what is the problem this book is trying to solve? And what are the solutions that you're offering?

Robert 16:53

At its core, Brown Church is saying Latino, Latina Christians, we're God's children to for many hundreds of years. Now, when it comes to Christianity and the Latino community, we've often been viewed as culturally deficit. But people have said, we want to bring Christianity to this people, these Mexicans, these Latinos, right, we're going to, we're going to bring them to know Jesus. And as part of that, we're also going to try to make them assimilate into us culture. And



that was actually the experience of Latinos in the 20s 30s 40s 50s. In the United States, where you had the southernization of California, where many people from the south certain denominational backgrounds, they came to California and they said, California is this wilderness with a gospel is not here. And we need to share the gospel and create different institutions and churches and denominations and seminaries that can speak into this void. And look at all these Latinos, these Mexicans, we're going to share Jesus with them too, right. But those, the sharing of the gospel with those with the Latino community with the Asian American community and others was came from a deficit model where they said, not only are we going to share Jesus with them, we're going to Americanize them. There was a whole Americanization project, actually, it was an official thing sponsored by you, the US government, and many of these Southern denominations. So they would bring women and children and teach them about Jesus, presumably, but also say, this is how you become an American right? brown shirt says, whoa, wait a minute. We have as Latino Latina followers of Jesus. We have 500 years of our own God given community cultural wealth, we've been journeying with Jesus for 500 years, even before the Catholic Protestant divide the brown church define it simply and then to go into some of the layers of it. The way I'm defining it in the book is the Christian Social Justice tradition of the Latino Latino and Latin American communities. And that began actually in 1511, even before six years before Luther nailed his famous theses. There was a priest by the name of Montesinos, who lived in the Caribbean right now, what is now you know, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic. And as a little background history lesson for listeners, right. When Columbus got lost and landed in the Americas, he got lost in the Caribbean. So 1492 he crashes into these islands that were inhabited by hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples. By the early 1500s. Most of that community had died from being enslaved from colonization from disease. And in 1511, this Dominican priest by the name of Montesinos, he went to this church service in a straw hut, he preached to the Spanish elites of the island, and he said this, listen very carefully. The words you're about to hear will be the strangest you've ever heard. I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, and he said, You Spaniards who have exploited these natives, God gave you the opportunity to share about Jesus with love. Instead, you've exploited it as an opportunity for greed. And if you don't repent, God's gonna send you to hell. First social justice sermon in the history of the Americas was so much trouble. He came back the next Sunday and preached the same thing, right. And from that moment in 1511, to the present, there's been this continuous history of Latin American and Latino Christian social justice, where we, as followers of Jesus have challenged colonization, and patriarchy and Jim Crow segregation and the extermination of farmworkers and immigrants, and so on and so forth. Right. And my central premise of the book is for all those Latino young adults who feel like they don't belong in the either in the world of the church or the world of activism, right, like we talked about, in the beginning of the segment, I want to say you do belong, you belong to the brown church belong to this 500 year history. And one of the most meaningful, meaningful things that I've heard from people, in response to the book has been get these emails that say, I read



Brown Church, I stayed up all night, I couldn't stop crying, and I finally have a home. Wow, finally belong? That's the main point of Brown Church.

Ed 21:01

That's good. So it's been a positive response. What about critiques? Have you heard any criticisms? Or is there a wide range of responses, and how's it affecting the church as you're seeing it?

Robert 21:11

Now, by and large, mostly just very positive, right? I'm so thankful, like positive from the young people positive from the older generation of Latinos, and people really seeing the book as an opportunity to bridge the generations because within the Latino church, there's a lot we have a lot of fissures, right, a lot of pain, just like other ethnic groups, and the book has been embraced as a way of bringing the generations together. So Praise Jesus, that's amazing. It's been embraced by many wonderful brothers and sisters of the white church as well who are saying like, Oh, my gosh, we had no idea. You know, we hope that the brown church can help lead us in this community cultural wealth in this all this experience. So that's been great the critiques. It's a stupid critique like, oh, Robert's Marxist, right, or CRT or that kind of stuff. That's dumb stuff. And in terms of the Marxist critique, it's so crazy, because I shared with you the story of my grandparents, right, China, they were going to be killed by the communists because of their faith. My grandfather was one of five major pastors targeted to be killed. And that's why they came as refugees to the United States. To say that I'm a Marxist is just so stupid.

Ed 22:15

Well, that's powerful stuff. And I just hope you kept the movie rights to the book, because some of the stories you're telling are just so cinematic, I hope I want to see the film.

Robert 22:27

Amen. Lord, please bring those those gifted filmmakers.

Ed 22:31

Well, we need to take one more break. But when we return, we'll continue our conversation with Robert and find out why he was the right person to have written this book. But first, it's time for our behind the book segment, where we will pull back the curtain and find out more of the story behind the scenes here at IVP. Today, you'll hear from David McNutt, who served as Robert's editor for Brown Church.

David McNutt 23:06



I'm David McNutt, an associate editor at IVP academic and imprint of InterVarsity Press. As an editor, I have two primary functions for each project acquisitions and development. So we acquired Robert's project, we're very excited for that. And then in the development process, I worked with him, you know, my role there is really to help the author to come alongside to help them in their own voice produce the best possible project, and every project can be improved, there are things that can be done along the way for every book. So I would say the biggest challenge that I had, working with Robert was distilling his passion into text, kind of translating it, you know, the kind of obvious interest and passion that He has for the project, and kind of making it work on the page. Well, he did a fantastic job with that. And you know, another challenge that we had, in a way was working with Spanish language, he wanted to include a lot of that. So we have included some translations, it was obviously very natural for Robert to speak in both English and Spanish and to write in that way. And so you know, we wanted to both preserve that voice, but then also make it accessible to a broader readership. I loved working with him, it was great. And it was just wonderful to see his passion. If we as Christians are going to embody the call for justice that we see not just in the Old Testament, for example, with the Minor Prophets, you know, the call to serve the widow and the orphan. If we're also going to embrace the New Testament message that Christ has for his followers, then we need to take the story seriously. And so I think there are people for whom, you know, they're just awaiting this, you know, it's just great timing, very helpful. I would also say that this book is a bit of a challenge in the current cultural and political climate. But it just reminds me that our faith is a political faith. And let me be clear, I'm not suggesting that Christianity aligns with one political party. It doesn't. There's no one party that represents our faith, and yet our faith is political. And by that I mean that it should inform all aspects of our lives. And so I love that Robert in this book and brown church was able to talk about the ways that the Christian faith has informed the history and the lives of Latino Latina Christians, I hope for this book is that people will get to know their family better. And what I mean by that is the broader Christian family. If you think about a Thanksgiving meal, there are family members that you know very well. And then there's always you know, that part of the family that you don't quite know as well. So my hope is that this book will help people get to know the other end of the table a little bit, the family members that they may not know quite as well. I'm also hopeful that for Latino, Latina Christians, it will remind them of their own history and encourage them. So publishing these kinds of books by people like Robert, who have an obvious passion for their subject, this has been a long standing part of our publishing industry profile. So I'm just really pleased to have been able to come alongside Robert and them on this project.

Maila 25:45

You're listening to the Every Voice Now podcast, and I'm Maila Kim. And today we've been talking with Robert Chao Romero, author of Brown Church, which you can find wherever books are sold. So Robert, let's talk more about your voice and the importance of your voice to this



conversation that you're contributing in this book. And so does it surprise you that despite the length of time that there has been Latino and Latina presence in evangelicalism that it took this long for a book like *Brown Church* to be released? What were the barriers that prevented it from happening earlier?

Robert 26:18

It is surprising in the sense that like, there's this giant history theology, and I'm certainly not the first person to read about this, the world of Latino Latino theology, who still Gonzalez, Elizabeth Conda, Frasier, Auster, Garcia Johnson, I can go on and on and on, people have been writing about this studying this for decades, right? They didn't need me to come and do that. But by God's grace, like, I guess something about the UCLA platform, and then IVP, and something like that allowed me to sort of bring that specialized knowledge together, maybe in a way that was that a lot of people are finding kind of attractive, I guess what I provide is just a different framework, the brown shirts, and so forth and bring in Chicano Studies, frameworks and ethnic studies and CRT with sort of grassroots experience in ministry, right in the Latino community. Yeah, by God's grace, I just had the privilege of sort of basically introducing people to all this amazing work that's been going on long before I showed up on the scene.

Maila 27:17

And so a question we asked our authors on this podcast is, what is it about you that made you the absolute right person to write this book at this time?

Robert 27:27

Oh, that's a very generous question. I don't know if I'm like the absolute right person. But I think that like what allowed me to write this from a unique perspective, is that I'm an outsider, I'm outside of the Guild, I'm not a trained theologian. I'm a good pastor, or Dean in the hood, or I read my Bible like 20 times, but and I've done ministry for 15 years, so that I didn't come with any like preconceived, or I came with some, but I'm kind of just an outsider, right? I was able to just in a very organic way to say, Okay, how can we take Chicano Studies, but you know, theology, ministry, and mix it all together. And I didn't have any inhibitions, because I already have tenure. I'm not trying to please anybody. have anybody looking over my shoulder, right? And then by God's grace, this was the result. And hopefully, it's meaningful to some people.

Maila 28:15

That's good. I love that you say that. I'm just an outsider. Because I think a lot of our listeners will resonate with that feeling like an outsider, especially in an industry that's still predominantly white. And I think you being able to write *Brown Church* provides hope for authors of color who want to write and to be published. And so I love that you even named it like that. Because I think



that resonates with people who feel like maybe they I'm the only one who feels like an outsider. And there's a place we're hoping that there will be places for voices of color in the future.

Ed 28:48

Yes, Amen. Connected to that. Robert, I'm curious, who are some of the folks in your life who helped you find your voice and raise your voice?

Robert 28:57

I think like we talked about, like the legacy like of my Chinese grandparents faith in Calvin Chao, my own abuelita, my grandmother who kind of gave us that foundation of faith, mentors like Michael Mata and Alexia Salvatierra. Those are folks that people will know, like, you know, amazing leaders and authors and so forth themselves. As a historian, I mean, I forgot to throw in one white guy like empty, right? I love N.T. Wright, and just helping me to kind of understand sort of the history of Galilee and having you take that history of Jesus's time, then apply it to the present, mentor book authors like Julio Elizonda, Orlando Costas, Samuel Escobar, Rene Padilla, Elizabeth Conde Frazier, who kind of like these folks that have been sort of pillars in Latino theology, Latina theology, they're my biggest heroes.

Maila 29:49

So you named a ton of people and I'm wondering, how can the church do better to find and listen to these voices and also voices like yours?

Robert 29:59

I'll do a selfless plug, Brown Church introduces all those folks. So if you're looking for like one place to kind of like, get an intro, it's just a starting point, right? Then you can read the books yourselves and so forth. There are Latino Latina hubs of Christian theology that are there, right, like done through Latino central Latino at fuller, HDI the Hispanic theological initiative at Princeton, is that the Hispanic theological Association, that's eth, the Hispanic house at Duke, there's these amazing places and people that have been sort of already crafting these institutions for several decades already. And I think they're really the the experts. And from there, they'll be able to see, the whole world will open up.

Maila 30:44

And so in your opinion, do you think that Latino, Latina voices are hard to identify in Christian evangelical spaces, just from what you know, and what you've experienced?

Robert 30:55



Yeah, very hard to identify. I mean, we're out there. But again, it's like I'm looking at my experience. For example, like I remember, like, just to share a story, like when we were in grad school, our dream of our Christian cohort was like, be the next CS Lewis, who's gonna be the next professor and did it. And I achieved it by God's grace, God opened up all the doors. I'm a UCLA professor, and no one even cares. But if I was a UCLA Professor talking about like, intelligent design or something, Oh, my gosh, I would have been the doors would have opened up to me 15 years ago, right? And how much more so folks that are having to like, they have to fight to create a platform, right? And those are my friends, right? And I think it's just super hard because we just get forgotten. Honestly, maybe like Hispanic Heritage Month, people will be like, oh, let's have a keynote speaker speak. And then they forget about us the rest of the year. Right. And it's totally true. Right. You know, you mentioned platform that as many aspiring authors know, that's one of the things that we talk about a lot in publishing, having a strong platform, could you talk about your own platform and how you developed it, and if you have maybe some advice for other authors of color, you know, my particular platform came through my academic position, and, you know, came from being an academic, and then also being able to work with students over many years, right, like, in the grassroots. I wasn't trying to build a platform. I mean, that's a lot of is that is my privilege, because I'm a UCLA professor. Right. And I have too much privilege with that. But that was really key. I think it was the grassroots ministry with students over the years over many years. Right. And community organizing, putting in the work, right? Yeah, like, the best Latino theology comes out of pastoral ministry, in my view, some of the stuff that's really hard to read, it's just all out there doesn't even make any sense, right? Because it's just in the head. And I think that from that, like, was just all my friends and mentors. I think that's super huge. Right? Elizabeth Condor, Frazier, Alexia, Michael Mata, many others who have who just said, Oh, they saw my potential. And they said, you know, we want to support you. And the thing about all these folks that I'm talking about, we're not chasing fame, though. That's the thing. We're not we're not trying to. And I think that's really key to Me, too.

Maila 33:07

That's good. Well, thank you, Robert, for just even your time, we loved having you on our podcasts. And so just for our listeners, if they're interested in following you or hearing more about you, where can they learn about you,

Robert 33:21

It's pretty easy to find. RobertChaoRomero.com. I'm on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. Basically, if you look up, Robert Chao Romero, all those things, just find me.

Maila 33:34



Awesome. And you mentioned earlier, you had written *Jesus for Revolutionaries*, which you had said publishers turned down and didn't publish, but you actually ended up self publishing it correct.

Robert 33:45

part of that experience was I said, I'm going to make this available basically for free. So you can find it like on Amazon a digital copy for 99 cents on Lulu for free. If you want to buy a paper copy, you could probably buy one too. But I didn't want to be like, *Yes, Jesus Revolutionaries*, pay me \$30.

Maila 34:05

Very generous of you. So just for our listeners, we'll have that even linked in the show notes for you guys just to easily access. Also for our listeners, you can find Robert's book, *Brown Church* wherever books are sold. But if you go to ivpress.com and use the code EVN40 you can get 40% off plus free shipping. So that's a great way to get a great deal on Robert's book.

Ed 34:27

Thanks for listening to the *Every Voice Now* podcast brought to you by IVP. Our producer is Helen Lee and engineering is by Revision Sound in Dallas. If you are enjoying our show, we'd be really grateful if you share about it with your friends. Please review and recommend us on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts.

Maila 34:50

And we'd love getting your feedback. So get in touch with us with your comments, critiques or questions and you can find us on Instagram and Twitter @EveryVoiceNow or email us info@EveryVoiceNow.com, and join us next time for another inspiring episode of *Every Voice Now*.

[More about Robert Chao Romero](#)

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Maila is IVP's events marketing coordinator; she holds a B.A. in English Language & Literature and a B.A. in Communication Studies from the University of Michigan, and an M.A. in Christian Formation & Ministry with a concentration in Bible & Theology from Wheaton College Graduate School. She enjoys photography, growing and caring for her plants, and listening to podcasts such as *This American Life*, *Invisibilia*, and *Unlocking Us*. Follow Maila on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).

Ed Gilbreath, Co-Host

Formerly an editor at IVP, Ed is currently an executive leader at Christianity Today; he earned his bachelor's in communication arts from Judson University and a master's in philosophy of history from Olivet Nazarene University. He is also the author of two IVP books: *Reconciliation Blues* and *Birmingham Revolution*. Ed loves listening to an eclectic mix of music, reading narrative nonfiction books on American history and pop culture, and taking long walks while listening to podcasts such as NPR's *How I Built This*, *The Daily*, *Pass the Mic*, and CT's *Quick to Listen*. Follow Ed on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).



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