



*Where the Cross Meets the Street: What Happens to the Neighborhood When God Is at the Center*

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**“If we want to help someone appreciate the gospel we bring, we must appreciate their culture and mentality. By understanding them we can help them to know Christ.”**

*– Taken from chapter four, “Becoming an Evangelico”*

## The Importance of the Cross in the Barrio

*In Where the Cross Meets the Street, Noel Castellanos shows the strengths and limitations of a narrowly focused church and broadens our imaginations to embrace a gospel that proclaims Christ and forms disciples. This life-giving gospel also demonstrates compassion, confronts injustice and restores individuals and communities to wholeness. In the book, he makes these important points:*

- Have we been limiting the importance of the cross?
- Can you explain the longing you felt to connect with other Christian leaders of color? What made you overcome what you call your belief “that Mexican Americans might not be expected or qualified to lead”?
- How have your life experiences as a *Tejano* affected the way you approached this book?
- “The browning of America is upon us, with unbelievable ramifications for our society, our politics and the future of the church.”
- What has been your mission as CEO of Christian Community Development Association (CCDA)?
- “If we are going to be faithful witnesses to the message and mission of Jesus in vulnerable neighborhoods, we must expand our current paradigm of gospel-centered ministry to make certain that it puts the millions of people surviving on the fringes of our world at the center of our concern, because the margins are at the center of God’s concern.”
- “Through the influence and instruction of many mentors, authors and friends, I have come to the conclusion that it is precisely the men and women who have been overlooked and rejected by society who have a special place at the table of God’s kingdom *pachanga*.”
- “I am convinced that we can no longer maintain our old paradigms of ministry that compartmentalize and truncate the work of the kingdom and still make an impact in our world, which is in need of love and restoration. Broadening our understanding of the message and the work of the gospel can feel uncomfortable, to be sure. Almost treasonous.”
- You mention quite a few personal stories of people who modeled surprising love and grace with you throughout your childhood and adolescence. How did that influence your mission with CCDA?
- How did your move to Chicago to get involved with CCDA shift the way you viewed missions and social justice?
- “It is not just the unlawful behavior of undocumented individuals that is at fault, but in fact our entire economic system is complicit in creating the mess we are in.”



Noel Castellanos, author of *Where the Cross Meets the Street: What Happens to the Neighborhood When God Is at the Center*

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## Castellanos: Ministering to Underserved Communities from the Inside Out

Inspired to serve the poor according to Christ's relational model, Noel Castellanos teaches young leaders the importance of long-term commitment in order to affect significant social change. He has worked in full-time ministry in urban Latino communities since 1982, serving in youth ministry, church planting, advocacy and community development in San Francisco, San Jose and Chicago. He is chief executive officer of Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) and was the founding pastor of Chicago's La Villita Community Church.

"[Through our] relationship with Noel, we have grown tremendously in our understanding of others living in the margins of our society," write John Perkins and Wayne Gordon. "Noel helped us to move from a black/white association towards a more full expression of the American experience of Asian, Native American, Latinos and being more inclusive towards the great diversity we have in America. His voice has been a tremendous asset to CCDA, the body of Christ and God's kingdom."

In addition to being a popular speaker, Noel mentors young leaders across the United States and directs the CCDA Institute, training emerging leaders in the Christian Community Development philosophy. He was appointed to serve on President Obama's Council for Faith and Neighborhood Partnerships and has a deep passion to serve and invest in the lives of leaders committed to serving the poor.

Noel is the coauthor of *A Heart for the Community* and *New Models for Urban and Suburban Ministry* and has contributed to various other books and publications including *Deep Justice in a Broken World*, *A Heart for the City* and *Crazy Enough to Care*. He and his wife, Marianne, have three children and make their home in the barrio of La Villita in Chicago.

You can find Noel on Twitter @NoelCCDA and see more about his work at [www.cdda.org](http://www.cdda.org).