

# WHERE THE CROSS MEETS THE STREET

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD  
WHEN GOD IS AT THE CENTER

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## A LENS FOR MID COUNCIL WORK

## INTRODUCTION: MUMBO JUMBO

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**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.**

**Noel Castellanos**

## CHAPTER FOUR: BECOMING AN EVANGELICO

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**IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY MINISTER IN A VULNERABLE NEIGHBORHOOD IN A WAY THAT IS TRULY BIBLICAL, OUR MINISTRY HAS TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS OF MINISTRY: INCARNATION, PROCLAMATION AND FORMATION, DEMONSTRATION OF COMPASSION, RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AND THE CONFRONTATION OF INJUSTICE. IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THIS IS WHERE THE CROSS MEETS THE STREET – IN PLACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE WE ENCOUNTER THE VERY PEOPLE THAT JESUS CAME TO LOVE AND LIBERATE.**

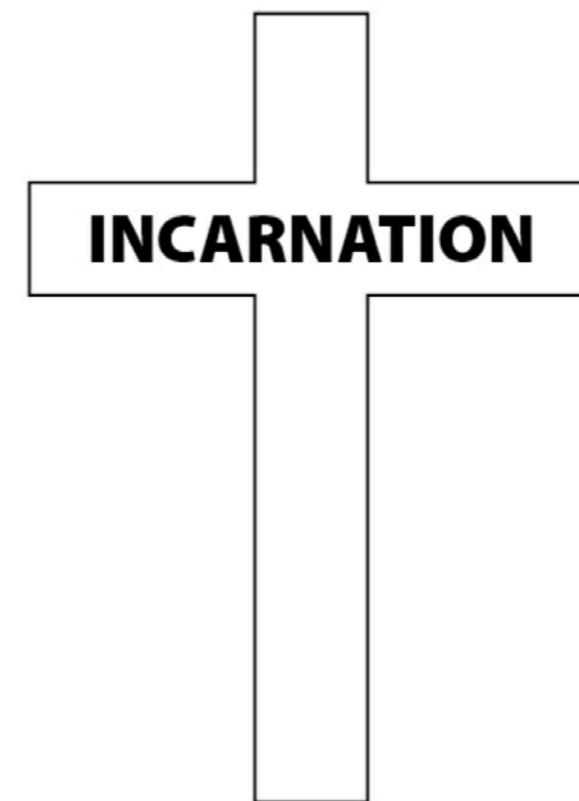
**Noel's framework for ministry**

# CHAPTER FIVE: INCARNATION

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## INCARNATION

- ▶ Incarnation is the linchpin and foundation for all effective ministry
  - by entering people's lives through
    - ▶ proximity
    - ▶ relationship
    - ▶ solidarity
    - ▶ humility



# INCARNATION

- ▶ Proximity
  - ▶ Living in close proximity to those we are called to minister to, regardless of the context, makes all the difference in the world!
  - ▶ Can you imagine Jesus commuting to Nazareth from heaven every day instead of being fully present in the everyday situations of his family and neighbors?

# INCARNATION

## ▶ Relationships

- ▶ Moving from seeing our neighbors as targets of ministry to seeing them as friends begins with establishing relationships. Once these relationships deepen, we earn the right to speak into people's lives, and we gain the credibility to share our stories in a way that touches people's hearts and souls. It is also through these relationships that we are transformed, because relationships are never a one-way street.

# INCARNATION

### ▶ Solidarity

- ▶ Somehow, on the cross, Jesus not only offered redemption and forgiveness for our sins, but he also demonstrated absolute solidarity with every [person] who had ever experienced extreme suffering, rejection and humiliation.
- ▶ “Some persons working with Mexican Americans have thought it would be better to shift the emphasis from the cross to the resurrection. I would agree if the situation were changing in such a way that we could say that resurrection was indeed becoming a meaningful symbol. But that is not yet the case.”

# INCARNATION

- ▶ Humility
  - ▶ It was even more imperative for our Anglo church members and leaders to find ways to relate to our Mexican neighbors as equals. We were learning together that the kind of humility we needed to practice had more to do with consistently making decisions to give up power and share leadership. More than being meek, quiet and mild mannered, we all had to work at treating each other with respect, and we needed to humbly look for ways to serve one another.

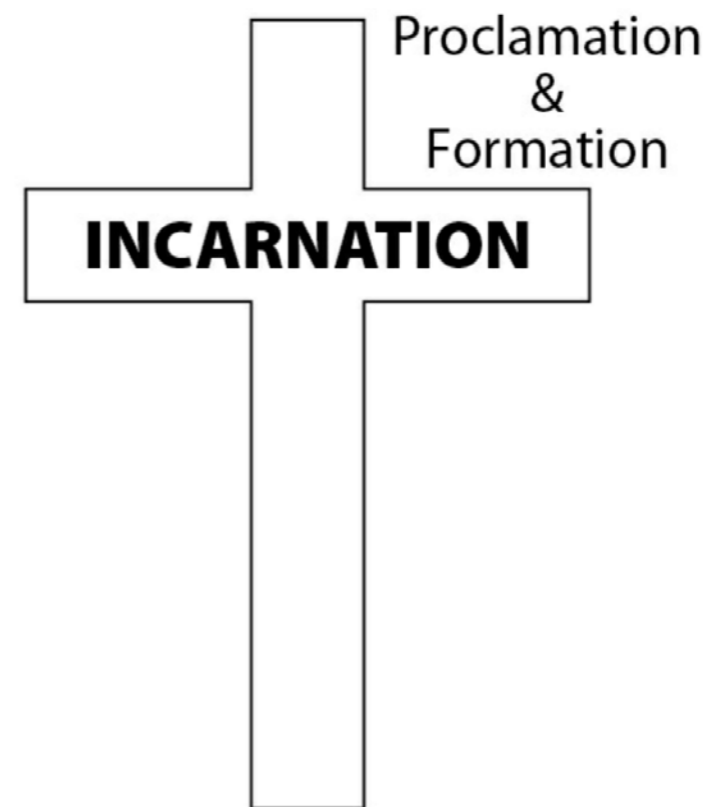


# CHAPTER SIX: PROCLAMATION AND FORMATION

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## PROCLAMATION AND FORMATION

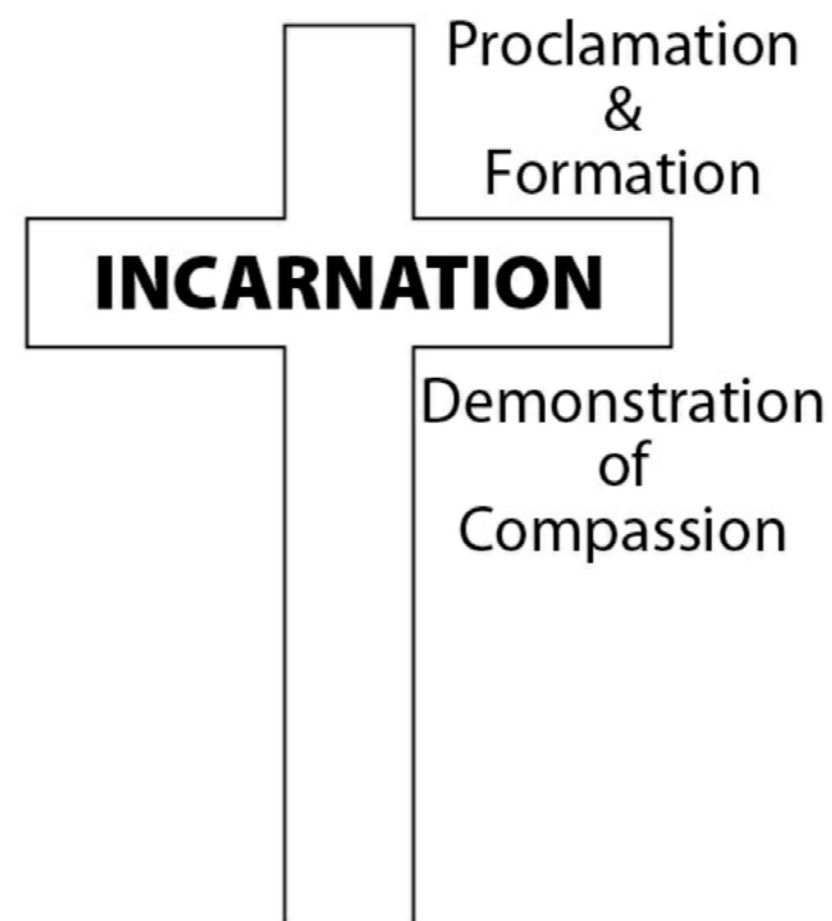
- ▶ To be biblical, proclamation and formation had to be tied to incarnation.
- ▶ We were tired of seeing the Great Commission inscribed on walls and lit up on huge Jumbotrons for all to see, without seeing evidence that Matthew 28 was being lived out by the members of these churches.
- ▶ I was convinced that if we loved the [people] in our barrio, we would have an opportunity to communicate God's love in a compelling and respectful way.



# CHAPTER SEVEN: DEMONSTRATION OF COMPASSION

## COMPASSION

- ▶ Being [people] of compassion in our needy world and risking involvement, even to the point of being inconvenienced, is a clear way to love our neighbor.
- ▶ Jesus made it clear that regardless of our orthodox theology, our consistent church attendance or even our full-time ministry vocation, loving our neighbor requires the demonstration of compassion as a regular practice of our faith.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: DEMONSTRATION OF COMPASSION

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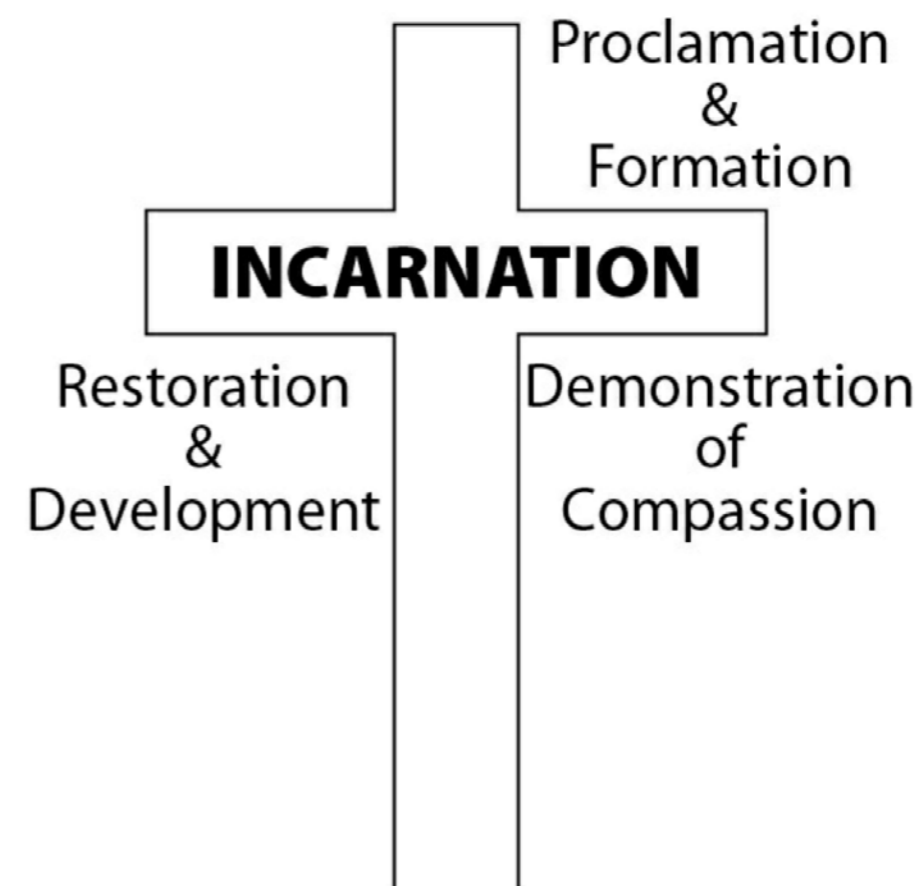
### COMPASSION

- ▶ We were learning that compassion without incarnation could be devastating.
- ▶ A better system would be to treat the poor as business partners, empowering them to start businesses, build houses, plan communities, and ultimately take control of their own lives with the support of compassionate, caring believers.
- ▶ It means coming alongside them to temporarily ease their pain and suffering in a manner that does not take away their dignity, knowing that one day they may do the same for us.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

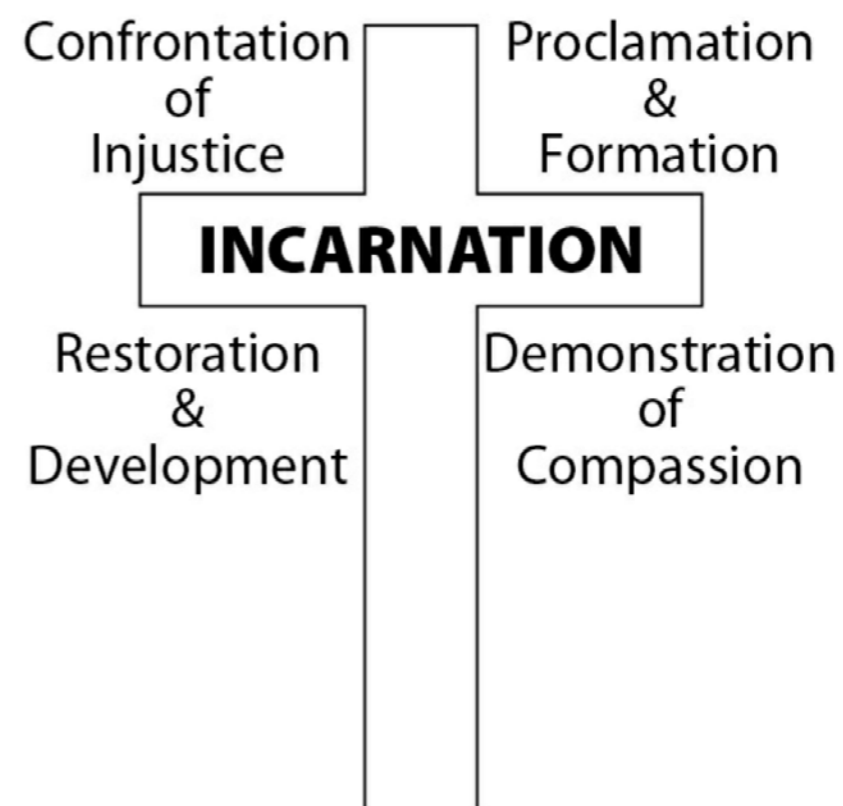
- ▶ The book of Nehemiah is actually about the strategic importance of rebuilding and restoring a city in ruins.
- ▶ While he cared greatly about the spiritual condition of the people in Jerusalem, his God-given assignment was to deal with the broken infrastructure of the city - the walls that were torn down.



# CHAPTER NINE: CONFRONTATION OF INJUSTICE

## CONFRONTATION OF INJUSTICE

- ▶ Without being incarnated in the community, we would not know what issues to advocate or how to advocate in a way that empowers those affected by these issues to lead the change. Ultimately, our prayer is that God's justice would flow like a mighty stream in the most vulnerable neighborhoods of our nation.



## CHAPTER NINE: CONFRONTATION OF INJUSTICE

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### CONFRONTATION OF INJUSTICE

- ▶ Wherever we see these injustices, we have to get involved.
- ▶ We will pray.
- ▶ We will work to understand the issues.
- ▶ We will organize our neighbors to get involved.
- ▶ We will protest if necessary to bring light to injustice.
- ▶ We will advocate for better policies.

### FINAL WORDS

- ▶ If we are truly going to be agents of good news among the poor, I insist that each one of these expressions of kingdom ministry must be embraced and implemented from within the community.
- ▶ My prayer is that Christ-followers will realize that being faithful to the God of the Bible necessitates putting the poor and the marginalized at the center of our ministry activities and priorities.
- ▶ This is where the cross meets the street. This is where we discover what happens when God is at the center of a neighborhood.

# SEEK THE PEACE AND WELFARE OF THE CITY

- ▶ Unequivocally, people of faith need to challenge our culture of self-seeking indulgence, financial disparity and racial injustice.
- ▶ Since creation, God's desire is for all people and every community to flourish and experience love, goodness, provision, and [God's] kingdom in all of its fullness. This is evident throughout Scripture. But the reality is that most people, families, and communities fall far short of God's plans.
- ▶ There is no way to offer real hope without entering into the pain of our communities. Working from the outside rarely brings lasting change and today, more than ever, we need to embrace an incarnational approach to relating to the poor.