



Episode 43: Harnessing the Potential of an Online Campus

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Jay Kranda

<https://thepodcast.com>

Transcript:

Mingo Palacios: Welcome to the purpose driven Church podcast where we sit down with leaders in and around the church to discuss current trends and challenges and how the five purposes of the local church matter today more than ever.

Mingo Palacios: Welcome to the purpose driven podcast/ this is a coming together of not just the PD podcast that we typically host, but also like a unique little sliver of the micro-site podcasts that we've been having this conversation over the last couple of episodes aiming at how do we engage the online community if your church is streaming via Facebook or some other proprietary method. We've been trying to address the fact that there's an opportunity and for a lot of churches there's a big miss when it comes to just streaming your services.

And how can we be better owners, better shepherds of that opportunity. Today in studio. I've got Jay Kranda. Jay, welcome to the studio. Jay is the pastor of online experience, the pastor of the zeros and ones. Much like your title and much like the ambiguity of what online church looks like, you've had to do a lot of pioneering and a lot of, I would say sleuthing as you represent Saddleback and the strategy-heavy entity that is Purpose Driven. Jay, why don't you introduce yourself and give us just a tad bit of a roadmap on how you arrived at the online pastor for Saddleback.

Jay Kranda: Yeah. I always tell people it's not something I went to seminary for.

Mingo Palacios: Yep. Absolutely.

Jay Kranda: Yeah. And a lot of my seminary professors were kind of just fully disagreed. Like that's not possible at all. So, for me, you know I grew up in Southern California my entire life. I've lived in a couple of different places, but for the most part I found myself at a church in high school. I'm in Bellflower and I was part of a kind of a church that was doing PD actually. And I was a youth pastor. So actually the first time I encountered church it was a purpose driven church that was doing purpose driven youth ministry. And I actually read, for those who are more familiar with purpose-driven, I read, Doug Fields' book before I even read Pastor Rick's book that was very much aware of the purpose model. So a lot of my early framework of how I do church was actually shaped early on by PD. And I really believed in and what I always kind of loved about that was I loved the health kind of metrics where you were able to easily see-

Mingo Palacios: A focus on healthy ministry of healthy pastor, the congregants.

Jay Kranda: So I never really considered it purpose driven. All I really just was like, oh, here, here are the five things from the great

commandment, the great commission, and it's a great way to measure health from a church from myself and all that. And so I did youth ministry. It was a smaller church, so they hired one of my friends and my senior pastor told them, 'hey, we're not going to have a job for you after college and so you better start looking somewhere else.'

Mingo Palacios: The news, everyone's been really serving diligently and unfortunately when you graduate we ain't gonna have a spot for ya.

Jay Kranda: I know. I know. I'm like OK, I gotta move and figure out. And this isn't fully true, but it's like when you're at a church and I think anybody who has tried to get a job or especially if you're working at a smaller church, you're kind of a big fish in a small pond

Mingo Palacios: Totally.

Jay Kranda: And then you're like trying to figure out does anybody else know about this pond? And you start putting stuff on your resume and it means nothing to any everybody else. So anyways, I interned at Saddleback, had an opportunity a friend came on staff and said, hey, why don't you just intern with me your last year? I was going to Biola. So, my last year of my degree there. And it led to a ministry opportunity where I was the communications ministry manager, which meant that under the communications team, you know, the joke was at the time was you had all these creatives that didn't know how to manage people. And so they wanted to hire more of a pastoral

Mingo Palacios: Somebody who had ministry experience.

Jay Kranda: Yeah. I mean, I didn't really have that much. I had a lot of youth ministry experience. But yeah,

Mingo Palacios: Small pond, big fish, small pond, big fish.

Jay Kranda: So, they had a web ministry. They had a writing ministry. They were soon to have a social media ministry that I started when I came on staff.

Mingo Palacios: Interesting.

Jay Kranda: And one of those things was the Internet campus and it was kind of this thing that was there and nobody was really doing much with it at the time. There was some vision early on, a lot of it was around offering a way for members who traveled because we, our position, our church, saddleback is positioned in a place where Orange County people are traveling all around the world. They wanted people to watch the services. So we were streaming video, uploading notes, all this stuff. We were doing that, you know, pretty much since, I want to say 2007 2008.

Mingo Palacios: I heard at our staff development day, rick was talking about how Saddleback was the first church online ever. That's such a bold statement to say I was like, 'is that tried and tested?' But you're saying since like the nineties,

Jay Kranda: If you go to the way back time machine, you can actually see our first website and it's very pink, very retro.

Mingo Palacios: A lot of salmon,

Jay Kranda: A lot of salmon. It makes you want to fish.

Mingo Palacios: All that to say though that Saddleback has been in the arena of streaming or presenting their content in an online format for a long time. So there's been a lot of errors, a lot of bumps in the road, and a lot of developments that have helped us shape our culture, our

philosophy of what it means to do online church now for those people who aren't familiar the purposes or the crowd to core or the crowd to commissioned philosophy. And really it starts back at community. A community would be like your town, your city, the area, the geographic area by which your church sits inside of. Saddleback identifies those folks yet to engage with your church as the community at large. It has strategic methods or it has strategy to move people closer and closer and closer to what would be considered the core and then eventually commissioned would be like the bullseye because that's when you send people back out into their own community or you send people out to, you know, other areas think missions, both local and global. So, where does something like an online campus or in my own book, a running microsites. Where does that strategy fit in to the larger movement of moving people in and growing a healthy church?

Jay Kranda: Yeah. So, the thing that online ministry immediately disrupts really is for most churches the community is people who live within a 15 mile radius because the idea is that a core person will drive at great length, but your friend won't. So really your community has a 15 mile radius for the most part. And so online, the disruption is, well, if I just give them a link to our service, there is no restriction. So what do you do now?

Mingo Palacios: Instantly? The barriers are removed.

Jay Kranda: Yeah, it's removed. So there's going to be some restriction on who your church best reach for sure. Like the persona of that ministry. But for us there's definitely been an evolution of where to place it. And actually that's something that I respect from Saddleback highly. Rick talks a lot in PD church that he didn't want to be a televangelist and when the Internet kind of started doing this whole streaming

stuff, there was this auto kind of like, lets us replicate the strategy online and you know, there's pros and cons to that. And what happened was there was like, oh hey, but with online, with Internet ministry, whatever you want to call it, you can have a deep engagement. So, everyone goes through this, you've got 1.0 where websites are static and you've got 2.0 where there's actually social engagement and when the 2.0 kind of Internet got introduced in experience with things like Facebook and so forth, that it was like, Oh hey, that's actually something that's not just-

Mingo Palacios: There's potential here.

Jay Kranda: So a lot of people are really good at dispensing information, which is what 1.0 it really was about. It was just a static pdf brochure. But 2.0 showed, oh look, there's some community there. And when Saddleback first launched the website, I was like five years old. And so by the time 2.0 Internet came along, that's when there was a lot of questions like, oh, maybe we can experiment with some stuff. And so early on that's why the ministry fell. Actually to my knowledge, a lot of the early stuff actually fell on kind of the broadcast kind of area. And so there's a lot of worship. It was just like, hey, let's just echo our worship experience. So it sat there and then as it evolved, one of the things we started to do was, this was not me, but this was Steve Gladen and a couple other people they put it under fellowship. And for a long time, the way they treated the online ministry, which I thought worked for all sorts of reasons, but they treated it kind of like an affinity. Like the same way you treat a singles pastor, a marriage pastor of women's ministry.

Mingo Palacios: Like a bolt on to core ministry.

Jay Kranda: And the reason was because we had one large campus. And the idea is that we can kind of, hey, let's just kind of reach it this way. And really a lot of my job early on when I first got hired in the role was I was just a small groups pastor. And the idea is that I had an online venue. And so it was like, hey, people are watching online. I've got to get them into a small group. And so Monday through Friday, most of my job was around-

Mingo Palacios: Clicking away, hammering away, and getting people connected to physical groups.

Jay Kranda: And I also knew somebody who's part of Saddleback, because I know that if I want to scale my care, I want people doing life with other people. If I can get them in a small group, wherever they're at with a couple other people, then hey, no longer online church, that's just church. So we had them just under fellowships over a long time. We were kind of under that model. Now we've evolved quite a bit now because a couple of things. First off you can do a lot more on the Internet now and of course-

Mingo Palacios: It's so much more engaging. There's more options, there's more connectivity and there's more people watching.

Jay Kranda: Yeah. And it's just crazy the amount. When we first started doing stuff years ago we had 500 people watching every week. I have a Facebook group for my online community with 4,000 people. And that's just the difference of growth and it's actually people were actually able to interact with each other without me engaged.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah. It's not one to one anymore. It's. It truly is become peer to peer. So people are connecting to other viewers, other spectators, other engagers in it no longer requires a pass-through from the pastor or the host.

Jay Kranda: Which for a long time we were the bottleneck because we did have to facilitate a lot of that connection and because of privacy issues and all that stuff. But now, we're still trying to figure out some things. So anybody's watching it's like I don't know and actually we're gonna we may talk about it, but I did this survey with 100 churches asking them those doing online ministry, what do you think? How does your leadership feel about this? Ninety one percent said, 'we like it but we're not sure how to integrate it into our strategy.'

Mingo Palacios: So good! That should be a huge pressure release for anybody listening is you might have it and it might be even working somewhat well according to what you want it to do. Ninety one percent are still trying to manage the best potential place for it. They're still trying to determine where it fits best. I would say from the conversations I've had with some from my executive leader, David, Shaun, a mutual person in both of our circles, he always saw it as a pathway or like a gateway from people on the farthest outside to make one step closer to actually make their way into the crowd. Right? Hey, I've come check this out. I love what that represents in a certain sense. I love that somebody, if you think of a church that has zero online presence, they can't even search you. Right? They couldn't even get past just your general website. I've done this as I've gone and looked at certain churches, I want to know what their building looks like. I want to know what their community is, what it kind of looks like reflected by photos or videos that I can find online. And sometimes when there's nothing, I'm super suspect, right? I'm like, do you even exist? Unfortunately, that's kind of where we are right now. Whereas if you don't have a footprint, if you don't have a digital footprint or a thumb print somewhere online, if you're not contributing to that, anybody can

declare who you are. Unfortunately, most times, in most cases, it's really those that are unsatisfied with what your church is doing that will have the loudest voice. So you have to be responsible for speaking something into existence in a digital form. Correct?

Jay Kranda: Yeah, and you know the funny thing is Rick talks about in Purpose Driven Church that he says that's one of the reasons why Saddleback, when they ended up building the worship center, they had glass doors and windows inside because the idea is that they knew most people, more and more people are unchurched and unfamiliar with the culture of what Christianity is about. And that's framed by whatever they're watching. It's like the character, the Christian character or modern family or that Christian person. Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: Whatever's represented. Correct?

Jay Kranda: Yeah. And so the idea is that they, he wanted people to be able to look in safely and not think like we're sacrificing goats or something. You know what I mean? So, that's why my petition to most churches is if you're thinking about online ministry or you're trying to figure out how to position it, I would position it right off the bat. One of the easiest things is with your first impressions ministry. Just think of it as, as kind of this megaphone to your existing strategy. So put it there and make the connection. I actually think that's one of the number one misses is that usually if I'm talking to somebody who's doing it, it's hey, think about how does somebody move from that online as pastor David Shaun was talking about there is how do you move somebody who's watching online to physical? I call it online to offline even making the connection of, if you have your next step card, have things like how'd you hear about us and make sure, hey, if you show up, go out to the patio we have a gift for you. And making special calls to the people watching. Hey, by the way,

we're, hey, we're right here. We're in this city in Long Beach or we're here in San Diego. We're here in wherever and making that connection in. One of the things that I think a lot of people do is because Facebook live, for example, has made streaming reachable for everybody, it used to be like years ago, we were spending like \$4,000 a month just on streaming and now-

Mingo Palacios: Totally. You can hold your cell phone up and have an hd signal running from any place at any time.

Jay Kranda: Yeah. It's crazy, but even in that if a church's streaming, something that we do when we Facebook live is we put a link to our website and we say, hey, to learn more where we're at, or to access the message notes, go here. So Facebook live is great for exposure to struggle with Facebook live is kind of a retention.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, it's, it's user interface. It's UI is shallow when it comes to being able to disseminate more information about you and your church.

Jay Kranda: Yeah, and they're working on that because they've got stuff like, you know, AirPlay and Chromecast built in. They got the Apple TV APP and they're trying to throw, you know, they got the whole watch tab there. They're working on that strategy. But for sure making the connection of like, 'hey, by the way, go here' kind of like a 'plan a visit' type of thing.

Mingo Palacios: That's great. That's a great way to actually consider it. For anybody running an online strategy. Think of the ways by which somebody is going to decide to come. Right? And aim your efforts at that because it's easy for you to put a link out there for anybody to click and watch, but are you being responsible with the ways by which they can dive deeper and they can inquire for more and there's

some really basic ways. Most of the time we're just trying to mind info, right? Give me your email address, your social, but if you can give, give, give, give, give people more channels and more opportunities to arrive physically. Whether that's at an event Monday through Saturday or if it's for them to show up for the first time to be ready to catch, to being ready to respond, to be ready to receive, that's going to be the best position you can put yourself in or somebody who's managing that online experience.

Jay Kranda:

One of the things that we've realized is just within our audience, people could watch on our desktop, laptop, mobile app. We got TV apps, Youtube. If you did a heat overlay of our website, the number one button that people press is full screen. So most of the people that are consuming our content is in full screen. So we spent a lot of time on our design and it's nice and it works for engagement. But most people they'll say, hey, photo response card. It's right here. So a lot of people think like lower thirds. I'm like, no, everybody's full screen. So something that we've realized that we've started to do is just to kind of throw out, hey, like if you watch online, use something like if you want saddleback's online service, something that I say verbatim pretty much is like, 'hey, thanks for watching online. You can fill out a response card or you can email online@saddleback.com' and by even having easy action call like that. So somebody watched it on Facebook. What you want is you want them to go, 'how do I contact?' so they can private message. They can comment below or email online@saddleback.com and that's what we do even with Youtube at the end of our messages on Youtube, there's a 30 second pitch for me. Or say, 'hey, thanks for watching on Youtube this week. I want to challenge you to get into community.' And the next step because I can't give them a response card.

Mingo Palacios: Because they're full screen.

Jay Kranda: They're not going to go to the description and click on a link. They might, but it's a very low percentage. But online@saddleback.com is an easy, memorable way

Mingo Palacios: Something they can remember. Even after the watching, he can remember that you can hit it. Now, do me a favor because you know, as much as I'd like to just unpack everything and have like an all day conversation, dig into some of your survey questions and some of the results so that you can provide a little bit of clarity for folks if they're asking maybe some of the same questions, you can give them a little bit of a tension release in a sense in comparison to maybe a hundred other churches that you said you had surveyed.

Jay Kranda: Yeah. And so my big heart with this, and I'm actually still kind of crunching the day that this was kind of an initial thing that I was kind of looking at is there's a lot of opinions about online ministry. There's a lot of thoughts. The church online platform that a bunch of churches developed. There's churches like Elevation, Life Church, Westside Family Church, they made this platform. So they made this platform. And it just turned 10 years old. So most people doing online ministry are using this platform. There's a lot of people doing stuff, but there's not a lot of here's what's working and what's not.

Mingo Palacios: Here's some empirical data.

Jay Kranda: So I surveyed 100 churches doing online ministry, trying to figure out here's what's working, here's what's not.

Mingo Palacios: You heard it here first folks, you heard it here first breaking news, breaking news, right?

Jay Kranda: I love that. Um, yeah. So a couple things that stood out is, one of the first things was 51 percent of the people that we serve, we're reaching at least 500 people weekly and only less than one percent over 10,000. And really the trend was most people were reaching the same amount of people that they were reaching locally. So the amount of people coming to your church, you kind of on average it was, we were reaching that many people. And so it's like if you're reaching 25,000 people locally than really you can pretty easily over time attain that same number online. About only 27 percent had an online pastor.

Mingo Palacios: Interesting. So you've got a lot of consumers without a shepherd.

Jay Kranda: Exactly, exactly. And I think that's generally like what do we do with them and how do we position it? Only, and this is actually the number that really encouraged me, only point zero two percent said that their local attendance was impacted negatively.

Mingo Palacios: Interesting. Oh, and that's a big fear is fear. If we put our stuff on line, nobody's gonna want to come.

Jay Kranda: No one's going to come. I don't believe it.

Mingo Palacios: I don't believe it either.

Jay Kranda: But um, I think it only grows it, but you know, I don't know.

Mingo Palacios: Like you said, it's only from your own lens and your own experience, but this with a hundred churches impacted less than one percent said that it impacted their growth in the building negatively.

Jay Kranda: Majority of them, about 95 percent had been doing ministry for at least a year and then 21 percent said that they actually saw growth

of their local attendance since launching their online ministry. And this is actually something that encouraged me highly, 67 percent noticed that people would watch online and then show up physically. They were seeing a direct correlation between launching this kind of Facebook live or something on the chat platform. And then it lead them. And then just real quick, 23 percent saw giving increased. The actually saw launching an online campus and online ministry, they actually 23 percent saw they're giving directly. There's a lot of people who weren't sure, but 23 percent actually said, no, no, no, we directly saw an impact. And then this is where we're kind of talking about before is that 19 percent are considering using online ministry. They're talking about it to launch future churches or campuses.

Mingo Palacios: Right. They're using it as a strategy for physical growth, infrastructure type growth. So many of those statistics are so encouraging and I feel like a lot of them were like myth busters. Yeah. People are like, no, it's going to do this or it's going to do that. The data is clearly showing that there are a lot of benefits if managed well and if managed with a purpose I started to hate like beating a Piñata that way, but it's true. You, when holding a digital strategy with a purpose, you can actually use it for a lot of momentum and a lot of good where you may not be able to yield the same results by just having people come and go physically. Right. As we wrap up, tell me what would be some of the best pieces of advice for somebody who is, and I think this is probably going to be the majority of our crowd. They're running a live stream of their services, but they're yet to really staff it or back it with a pastor. What would be your advice for those who are streaming but not managing it to its fullest potential.

Jay Kranda: Yeah, I would say right off the bat, make sure you have some kind of response engagement type of deal there. And I think that's where a lot of people are dispensing a lot of amazing information, but there is no correlation between what they're streaming and how to get somebody physically responding. I think I would not just with live streaming, but all your content and you know, I think about all the churches that are putting stuff on stuff on Youtube and so forth where people are having, you know, God is moving, you know, I could watch a message from pastor rick two years from now that, that got recorded two years ago. And you know, the question is how do I respond to that message?

Mingo Palacios: That's great. That's the best first question. How do people respond?

Jay Kranda: So, with all your live streaming and everything, just make sure if it's a link in there, a link to a digital response card and email address to talk more. But I would say the number one thing, just make sure all your website and all your content that you create is there. It's an opportunity to generate leads and you've got to make sure, do you have something for them to follow up? So Amazon's great at this. All these companies are great at and I think a lot of churches we struggled with what's the next step? And I just want to make sure if it's a live stream on Youtube, it's something on your website. Make sure that there is a response card or some kind of engagement so somebody can get connected and, and the. The easier that response correlates with the media, the more likely they're going to follow it. So yeah. Hey, I have a contact us thing on our website. Yeah, but if they just washed this message about getting into a group, they're not looking at contacting us.

Mingo Palacios: And they're not connecting the dots between those two. You have to make it very specific. The response has to be specific to the content.

Jay Kranda: And so I would say right off the bat, just make sure you have, you know, as simple as replicate your response card or your local church and put it out your church's website slash and create it. And then have that forward to somebody who can follow up. So how have a response card I think is the number one thing. And then I would highly recommend as you move forward, talk about, how do you integrate the strategies into your overall strategy? Because I really believe that it's a both and strategy and it used to be online ministry was this like well, should we do it? Well now the thing is everybody, we're reaching everybody. If you draw up your Saddleback Sam or whoever your target is, that person is on the Internet.

Mingo Palacios: Guaranteed.

Jay Kranda: So they are on the Internet.

Mingo Palacios: Unless your core audience is eighty five year old people.

Jay Kranda: But you know, the funny thing that I always tell people, I had a online small group hosts who is 91 years old.

Mingo Palacios: No, you stop it. That's awesome.

Jay Kranda: No, no no. She actually hosted five small groups. I found out about this later. She's like, 'I'm running five groups because I just want to reach people.' And she was like, 'I can't get people to fill it.' And I didn't have the heart to tell her that. I don't think her friends wanted to join her influence grew up totally warranted, but she is so

passionate. But that's the funny thing is technology is not an age thing. It's just a trait. So like people that, you know, the Internet has been around so long now that you know, wherever the Internet is in like 20 years. Like my kids might be better at it than me, but I'm still going to love technology and so it is a little bit of a love language. I would think you have to be talking about this stuff because your community, it's part of their life.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah. There's nobody right now, especially who are coming to age. If you're trying to engage the next generation and you don't have a strategy for online, you've got a big mess that you have to figure out how to fill in. The easiest way I would say to get the ball moving is just to engage somebody in that age range and give them just a few nickels and say, how would you reach your friends? How would you reach your peers through this medium? As we wrap up, I just want to say thanks for sharing a little bit of wisdom. How, if we're going to glean from you more Jay, how would we be able to reach you or are there some things that you're teeing up, more thoughts through our listeners can track you down with?

Jay Kranda: Yeah. So for sure that the online, I would say pastor community is very rich. It's actually one of the benefits as people share a lot of information. So it's an open book community and so there's actually a really great Facebook group of a bunch of online ministries that I would love if you want to check it out, contact me and I'll share that. But there's a group that always just sharing stuff that's working or not. And it's been around for like eight years. Like right when actually I think Facebook group started right around there. They jumped in really early on. But I actually have a free course where I talk about how to do online ministry in a healthy way. I'm on my website, JayKranda.com and so it's free. There's no, I'm not selling anything

Mingo Palacios: Perfect.

Jay Kranda: It's all free and I would love to talk to you more. I care passionately about the church utilizing this amazing resource in a healthy way and there's a way to use it where you're reaching people online and you're driving them physically. And there can be a way to do this where it's not a, it's not dangerous, but it's actually healthy.

Mingo Palacios: I love that. Jay. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom. Thanks for sharing some of the survey data here. Again, always breaking current news on the PD Cast. Jay, thanks for your time. For all of our listeners, thanks for listening in, we appreciate you and we'll talk to you guys soon.

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