



Episode 58: Catalyst | Biblical Marketing for Every Message

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Anthony Miller

<https://thepodcast.com>

Transcript:

Mingo Palacios: [00:08](#) 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: [00:21](#) Welcome everybody to the Purpose Driven Podcast. My name is Mingo and today Anthony Miller across the table from me, not just the Pastor of Communications at Saddleback Church, a pastor of people, somebody who in my own life has been the emergency phone call when I questioned what was next in my ministry career. Anthony's one of those

people that gets my phone call because I know that he's not just interested in what he can do for the church, but he's ultimately concerned about the wellness of people. I trust him with my own questions when it comes in a ministry and a today. While we're at Catalyst. It's awesome to catch you in our airstream. We're lucky to have you here.

Anthony Miller: [00:21](#) Thank you.

Mingo Palacios: [01:09](#) And I just want to remind our visitors, our listeners and those who are on Facebook live, sometimes the best leadership capital is wandering amongst you. That has been something that has been catching me so much as we've been having these conversations. Yes, there are unbelievable stories of ministry championship that's on the platform, but man, wandering around the lawn and the lobby are probably people who could pay deeply into your ministry. You just have to be willing to go the extra mile and ask and find out and build a relationship and see what they have to offer. So, Anthony, thanks for being on the show.

Anthony Miller: [01:46](#) Yeah thanks for having me in these new digs, man. This is beautiful in here.

Mingo Palacios: [01:48](#) Yeah, it is pretty. If you haven't seen the air stream on any of our social feeds, follow @pdchurch. Follow my personal stuff @mingo2. Anthony Miller, you're on social media.

Anthony Miller: [01:48](#) Yep.

Mingo Palacios: [02:01](#) You've got some stuff there. But Anthony-

Anthony Miller: [02:01](#) Yes.

Mingo Palacios: [02:08](#) The Pastor of Communication, that is a title. I'm guessing you've had some controversy over the years of being in ministry.

Anthony Miller: [02:08](#) Yes.

Mingo Palacios: [02:16](#) So what is the role? What does that role find itself responsible for or for a church that's listening, who's like, "We don't have to do any marketing just by being us uniquely the people will come." How do you describe yourself when you enter a circle of people who have no idea what you do?

Anthony Miller: [02:35](#) It's probably the number one question I get when I tell people like what I do and they asked me for my title. They're like, "What is that?" So let me define what it isn't before I tell you what it is. What it isn't is I'm not a firefighter. I don't go around putting out all these fires, looking for all these problems to solve. That's just reacting to the problems, not actually proactively leading the church to reach New people. I'm not the brand popo. I don't go around busting all these rogue brands and criminal designs. I'm also not the scapegoat. I think marketing typically is the first to be blamed.

Mingo Palacios: [03:16](#) Catch the case.

Anthony Miller: [03:17](#) Yeah. When the church is not growing in attendance is down, it was marketing's job, right? That's not, that's not the case. So the way I like to define Pastor of Communications is kind of simple. First, my first and foremost function is to serve the vision of the church in leadership. I'm here to serve. I'm here to catch what Pastor Rick is saying and then help him mobilize it and make it happen using my abilities, my gifts, my unique giftings. Second, I'm here to shepherd, the content creators on the communications team.

Mingo Palacios: [03:49](#) Excellent. Uniquely, specifically because that's your passion. That's your gifts.

Anthony Miller: [03:52](#) Yes. Yes, and I think it's important because you've got to understand having a communications team you need to have professionals. It's important. Pastors out there listening, it's important to know you have to have professionals that actually could go anywhere. Designers can do work anywhere, but they're specifically called to the church. Therefore you need to shepherd them in a different way because they need to equally have the professionalism of the expertise. And also the-

Mingo Palacios: [03:52](#) Discipleship.

Anthony Miller: [04:18](#) Discipleship, the heart for ministry. So I'm shepherding them along the way, discipling them along the way. And then lastly, I steward the brand. I don't own the brand, I don't control the brand. Like I

said earlier, I'm not the popo over the brand, but I make sure we are who we say we are. If we're going to say we're a welcoming church, I want to make sure that our frontline is not the security, the frontline looks welcoming. If we say we're going to look like a family and we'll make sure we present ourselves as a family and across all of our mediums-

Mingo Palacios: [04:18](#)

So excellent.

Anthony Miller: [04:44](#)

For diversity, we're going to make sure we're diverse onstage and across all of our channels. So that's kind of my role.

Mingo Palacios: [04:52](#)

It's a much more influential role than probably if we have listeners who are, let's say pastors thinking, "You know, I just need to get a communication person because we need to manage our Twitter feed better. We need to manage our Instagram feed better." That's a shallow expectation for somebody who is called to be a shepherd over and through, like you said, stewarding the brand.

Anthony Miller: [05:20](#)

Yep. See, it's important for people to know and pastors to know, and most people already know this intuitively, that communications isn't a thing we do. It's the thing we do as a church. So you can't do discipleship without communications. You can't do evangelism without communication. You can't do ministry and missions without, without communications. So we as a team, we can't approach communications as a team function.

Mingo Palacios: [05:43](#) Right. Or like a spoke on the wheel.

Anthony Miller: [05:43](#) Right.

Mingo Palacios: [05:46](#) It has to be all integrated.

Anthony Miller: [05:48](#) Completely integrated into every area of ministry. So therefore we have to serve and export communications and the knowledge and what we call tools, templates and trainings. We export those things so we're empowering our ministries to be able to do communications within their realm. That's how we approach it. Now, the trick is to make sure they're always doing it. Obviously within our brand. That's always a representation.

Mingo Palacios: [05:48](#) Those are the guide rails.

Anthony Miller: [06:14](#) Those are the guide rails. It's important for you to have a communications pastor because they're the ones collectively curating the voice and the visual identity of your church. And making sure all the other teams is aligned with that.

Mingo Palacios: [06:14](#) Yeah.

Anthony Miller: [06:14](#) Go ahead.

Mingo Palacios: [06:33](#) Well, I was going to ask, you have had a growing career. Saddleback was not the place that you started.

Anthony Miller: [06:33](#) Right.

Mingo Palacios: [06:38](#) So with our listeners, very few of them are dealing with the scope of a brand as wide and influential as let's say Saddleback's and Rick Warren's, what are some insights you can give to probably somebody who's managing both or a basket of responsibilities and communications just happens to be one of the eggs in that basket? I'm sure over the seasons of leading others and your own efforts, you boiled down some principles that we could apply and share with our listening audience that would help them better clarify what they should be focusing on as they steward their own brands.

Anthony Miller: [07:13](#) That's a great question. I'm a PK. I'm a third generation PK. So I grew up in a very small church. It was about 50 people. 75 on a good weekend, right? And so my first ministry experience was at The Rock with you over 12 years ago and at that time, we went from about 3000 to about 13,000 over the course of our time there. And so I've kind of seen now I'm at Saddleback, which we're averaging about 30,000 in a weekend. I've seen different variations of the church and the function. And I will say this, every church is doing marketing. Not every church is doing marketing well.

Mingo Palacios: [07:13](#) That's so good.

Anthony Miller: [07:49](#) So you have to understand, and I'll also say this, good marketing will make a bad product fail faster. So you have to be very intentional about your marketing and I

get why we have to wear multiple hats in the church.
I'm still not immune to that.

Mingo Palacios: [07:49](#) Of course.

Anthony Miller: [08:07](#) If I have to sweep the floor, I'm sweeping the floor.
We as a church body, we do what we have to do. But
you need to be intentional and put somebody in place
that is responsible for this area that is waking up
thinking this way.

Mingo Palacios: [08:07](#) That's good.

Anthony Miller: [08:19](#) And it's just as important and we can't just react to,
"Oh, I need to run this social channel.

Mingo Palacios: [08:19](#) We need 500 pages.

Anthony Miller: [08:25](#) Yeah, I need this brochure or this bulletin so let's go
get the designers. No, there needs to be strategy in
that. You need to build it into a story and tell the story,
not just something pretty in design. You need to
always be communicating a story and everything you
do. So someone needs to be eat, thinking, drinking,
waking up, passionate-

Mingo Palacios: [08:25](#) Breathing.

Anthony Miller: [08:42](#) Breathing this and that is your communications
pastor.

Mingo Palacios: [08:44](#) That's good. Now are there tells, are there cues that
we could help people lean towards? It may not be a
hired person but is this something that you can groom

up? Let's say there is a super savvy kid amongst them who is quick with social. They may have like built a following in and of themselves. How would you recommend they raise up, let's say somebody who may not be employed at first? But you know, the grassroots version.

Anthony Miller: [09:19](#)

I will say this, that's how I came up.

Mingo Palacios: [09:19](#)

Good.

Anthony Miller: [09:21](#)

You know, when I came into ministry, it was funny, I started in the marketplace for about seven years and I had, I was destined for Madison Avenue. That was my dream job. It was like "I'm going to be an ad man like Mad Men. That was like my thing, right? The next Don Draper. So this was about 15 years ago, well, actually a little bit longer and I started serving at a church and I didn't even realize that I can do what I love, which is communications and marketing for church. And in fact I was so arrogant at the time, I was like, "Oh, I'm going to go into the church and teach the church marketing."

Mingo Palacios: [09:51](#)

I'm going to show them.

Anthony Miller: [09:51](#)

"I'm going to show them how to do it because they suck." And I soon found that the church should be teaching the marketplace marketing because Jesus was the greatest marketer of all time.

Mingo Palacios: [09:51](#)

Ooh, I bet you you've got some principles. You got right below the surface.

Anthony Miller: [10:05](#) Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Right. Because it's a kind of a blessing and a curse. When I read the bible, yes, I'm reading for spiritual food and edification, but I'm also like seeing tons of marketing strategies all over the place. Started years ago, I was reading the Old Testament about Rahab and one of the things that had her believe in this God of Israel, she went up to the Israelites and said, "Hey, I heard about you and I believe there's so much that I was willing to hide and risk my life to hide your soldiers about my attic because I heard something about you." I was like, "Well, how'd you hear about it? The only way you're going to hear it at that time is word of mouth. So there was communication happening for years. So I started reading the New Testament like, "Well, how did Jesus draw crowds? How did Jesus get the word out?" So I started seeing marketing strategies. I'm going to get back on track, but I think I came up into the church willing to serve and surrender my gifts, but I didn't really know how to do it in the church.

Mingo Palacios: [10:56](#) Of course, of course.

Anthony Miller: [10:58](#) So I would say, "Pastor, there are people in your congregation right now that understand marketing from a marketplace sense that love your church and they can be raised up and groomed up in your church because I was. I was a product of that.

Mingo Palacios: [11:09](#) That's good. And there are probably inside of those hungry marketing kids, a potential pastor.

Anthony Miller: [11:14](#) Absolutely. And I think that was again I will say you have to be called and anointed to this is. This is not something you just go into. So I think that's what is the difference between a marketing director or the communications director and the pastor of communications. You've got to be called and anointed to pastor.

Mingo Palacios: [11:30](#) Well you gave a key indicator that it's not just stewarding the brand, but it's also shepherding the creatives and I've seen it fail a few times with great intention. Somebody who's not a creative tries to like get into the head space of a creative and it's just, it's a hard match.

Anthony Miller: [11:49](#) Because they're trying to create something pretty. They're trying to create something cool and you've got to create something with a purpose.

Mingo Palacios: [11:49](#) That's good.

Anthony Miller: [11:57](#) And so that was for me, when I knew I was called out of the marketplace. I was sitting, actually I remember this, I was sitting across from a client in the middle of a pitch and I was making a lot of money on this pitch. And I remember thinking like, "There's got be more to this. There's got to be something that I'm going to use my gifts that has eternal significance."

Mingo Palacios: [11:57](#) That's good.

Anthony Miller: [12:16](#) And this is before I even thought about doing it for the church. And so yes when we create as

communicators, we have to create with a purpose. We're telling a story that's eternal and that drives us in everything.

Mingo Palacios: [12:28](#) And interestingly enough, I think that it can be said with some amount of confidence being in church creativity for over a decade, that doing it just because it's cool will not fulfill you as a creative.

Anthony Miller: [12:43](#) Yeah, I tell my team, we're not chasing cool, we're chasing effectiveness.

Mingo Palacios: [12:43](#) Hey.

Anthony Miller: [12:50](#) We're not in the business of cool. We have a mission to reach as many people for Christ, to lift Him up so that people will be drawn to him. He's going to do the drawing. We're not going to do the drawing, we're not going to promote Jesus. He's going to promote Himself. We've just got to lift Him up.

Mingo Palacios: [12:50](#) That's excellent.

Anthony Miller: [13:01](#) So that has to be pervasive in all of our content.

Mingo Palacios: [13:08](#) So give us for our listeners, just give us the theory and the philosophy is important because that sets the stage for why, but give us some of the what, right? There are a couple of like basic ABC's that you have developed that I think everybody should hear because it's a perfect starting point for people to think, am I deploying a biblical strategy? Or am I just following the latest trend?

Anthony Miller: [13:35](#) Yes, like I was saying earlier, I believe Jesus is the greatest marketer of all time and I think so easily we follow a world model and there is a model of the world is very effective. It's actually been about a hundred years old. You may not know this, but have you heard of the guy named Claude Hopkins?

Mingo Palacios: [13:35](#) No.

Anthony Miller: [13:52](#) Most people don't know his name, but everybody knows him and loves him. Here's why, because before him, less than 10 percent of the country was brushing their teeth.

Mingo Palacios: [13:52](#) Before this guy?

Anthony Miller: [13:52](#) Before this guy.

Mingo Palacios: [13:52](#) You sure his name wasn't Colgate?

Anthony Miller: [14:03](#) No, it was not Colgate. So a friend came to him, he had been known as a scientific advertiser. In fact, he wrote a book in 1923 called Scientific Advertising. So he had created a formula for advertising that is now being used in every ad campaign since, for the last 100 years.

Mingo Palacios: [14:03](#) Okay.

Anthony Miller: [14:20](#) And so he created this scientific formula that took the art out of advertising and made it a science to use manipulation on us to buy products. And this was now being used everywhere. So what's happened now over the last 100 years, the church has adopted this

model. He's known as the father of modern advertising.

Mingo Palacios: [14:39](#) You said that before him 10 percent of people were brushing their teeth, so what happens after him?

Anthony Miller: [14:45](#) After him, 65 percent of the nation was brushing their teeth. He took on a product, Pepsodine toothpaste.

Mingo Palacios: [14:45](#) Ok, as a client.

Anthony Miller: [14:53](#) As a client. His friend begged him. He wasn't going to do it. His friend begged him to do it. He ended up doing it and it basically changed the face of advertising. Because he created this formula and the formula is kind of simple. It's manipulating our brain to queue up a routine in our life that pays off with a reward. And now we are almost a coerced into buying products.

Mingo Palacios: [14:53](#) Wow, so routine based.

Anthony Miller: [14:53](#) Yep.

Mingo Palacios: [14:53](#) Interesting.

Anthony Miller: [15:14](#) So that formula has been created in the scientific. The science and advertising is now what we gleaned from as a church. We approach church marketing the same way the marketplace does. Where we, we sell our products.

Mingo Palacios: [15:14](#) Ah, yes.

Anthony Miller: [15:29](#) Jesus didn't come to sell. He came to serve.

Mingo Palacios: [15:30](#) Here in lies the difference.

Anthony Miller: [15:33](#) This is the fundamental difference between marketplace marketing and biblical marketing. Jesus didn't come to sell, He came to serve. Jesus, didn't come to create customers, He came to create a community. So when I look at marketing, I have to almost retrain my brain to stop doing what the world does, look what Jesus did and try to model that.

Mingo Palacios: [15:33](#) Yes.

Anthony Miller: [15:53](#) So I did create what I call the ABC's of Marketing, and I'll go over real quick because we don't have much time to get into the details, but a is assessing your audience, really understanding your audience, knowing that you're not going to reach everybody. You're church is designed by God to reach very specific person. Now collectively, the big church is going to reach everybody.

Mingo Palacios: [15:53](#) Capital C.

Anthony Miller: [16:18](#) Will reach everybody. But your church has been created, designed and positioned to reach a very specific person. Do you know who that person is? How well do you know that person? Because how much you understand who that person is, is going to be determining the success of your ministry. So you have to start with really understanding your audience.

Mingo Palacios: [16:32](#) That should be a permission statement also, because too many people will waste valuable energy, time and resources trying to reach everybody when they are built to reach a specific target.

Anthony Miller: [16:44](#) It's arrogance to think you're going to reach everybody. Jesus Himself, contrary to popular belief, didn't come for everybody. Yes, everybody can receive salvation, but he said Himself, "I came for the sinner not the saint. I came for the unrighteous, not the righteous."

Mingo Palacios: [16:44](#) For the sick.

Anthony Miller: [17:04](#) So he Himself had a target audience that he came. Everything that he did, said, the way he entered into this earth was aimed for that target. So that is your first part of biblical marketing, is understanding your audience, knowing who God gave you to reach. Then once you understand that, then build your brand. People always ask me all the time, is branding a biblical concept? Absolutely. The first assignment God gave man was a branding assignment. You said Adam named the animals. Yes. Right. So, it is very biblical because all you're doing and in branding is you're distinguishing yourself.

Mingo Palacios: [17:04](#) There you go.

Anthony Miller: [17:35](#) That's all branding is. How do you distinguish yourself from the pack when Jesus says, "I'm the way, the truth and the life" he's distinguishing himself from every other belief system on this planet.

Mingo Palacios: [17:44](#) So good. I'd never even think about it in that context. And yet it's so obvious that that's what's happening.

Anthony Miller: [17:51](#) And what the problem is when we start adopting the world model of positioning statements and all these other world view approaches to marketing, we start actually competing against other churches because you're distinguishing yourself from other churches. We're not competing with other churches. We're competing against people's time and apathy. That's our competition.

Mingo Palacios: [17:51](#) So good.

Anthony Miller: [18:11](#) So you have to build your brand. And when I say brand, again, I'm not going to go into this deeply. Checked me out later. Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [18:11](#) I'll catch you outside.

Anthony Miller: [18:19](#) But your brand consists of four main parts. Four parts make up your brand, not just your identity, which is your logo. What you see on the website, that's the only one fourth of it. It's your identity, it's what you look like, it's your experience, what you feel like, it's your product, what you do and your culture, how you do it, those four things make up your brand and to build your brand as being intentional about who you are. Because the fundamental difference between marketing and branding is this, marketing is you're telling people who you are, branding is people fundamentally know and understand who you are.

Mingo Palacios: [18:19](#) What they're experiencing.

Anthony Miller: [18:51](#) It's the words they say about you. You can't control what people say about you.

Mingo Palacios: [18:55](#) I feel like some people need to do personality branding.

Anthony Miller: [18:58](#) Absolutely we our brands. We are brands as individuals. And it's interesting. It's interesting. We don't really pay attention to what people are saying about us, but what Jesus did many times throughout scripture He says, "Who they say I am?" I'm not saying he was doing market research, but he understood kind of what they understood the value of knowing what people-

Mingo Palacios: [18:58](#) What people were saying.

Anthony Miller: [19:18](#) Exactly, exactly. Oh good. So being intentional about what people are saying about you is the only way you can help shape that is being intentional in your brand.

Mingo Palacios: [19:25](#) Okay, so I'm going to ask the question that probably a bunch of a communication slash other creatives are going to ask, how good is your Instagram feed?

Anthony Miller: [19:36](#) Yes, yes, yes. And you know, I think social media is an under utilized tool, but it's also a manipulative tool that the church has abused as well. Like we just push out all of our agenda.

Mingo Palacios: [19:36](#) I'm not saying church. I'm saying Anthony Miller.

Anthony Miller: [19:36](#) Oh, mine? What do you mean mine?

Mingo Palacios: [19:36](#) Yes, your social feed.

Anthony Miller: [19:54](#) You know, what I do is social media is I just be me. I want people to connect with me. Me is not just what would I do. Me is my family, my interests. I try to show you me so that maybe you're inspired or you're saying, "You know what, I like what he's doing with his kids. I'm going to start doing that with my kids.

Mingo Palacios: [19:54](#) That's good. Inspiration.

Anthony Miller: [19:54](#) Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [20:19](#) Okay. You gave us a, you gave us b, at least entertain us with the c that closed the conversation down. Yes. So see, create a community, not customers. Create a community. The best brands in the world to figure this out, Starbucks is a community. They have their own language. Apple is a community. They wage war against every Microsoft user on the planet, right? These are community, Harley Davidson. That's a community. You never see them riding alone. Crossfit, community. So create a community and you can't create a community without a sense of caring, and this goes back to the serve, not sell. She just said Himself, "I didn't come to be served. I came to serve." So we have to quit going out and trying to push our brands and push our churches on people, expecting them to show up on the weekend. How are we reaching them where they're at and serving them?

Mingo Palacios: [20:19](#) Yes.

Anthony Miller: [21:01](#) That's what's going to grow your church. That's what's going to expand your brand.

Mingo Palacios: [21:01](#) Caring.

Anthony Miller: [21:06](#) Caring for them. That's how Jesus created the crowds. He went up and healed and helped people at a very practical way. That's where the crowds started coming.

Mingo Palacios: [21:06](#) A lot with no strings attached.

Anthony Miller: [21:14](#) No strings, and then he hit them with some biblical truths, of course, right? But he served them first. So that's the ABC's in a nutshell.

Mingo Palacios: [21:22](#) And there is so much more behind it. You actually run like a bootcamp or communication people, people who are tasked with stewarding the brand. Why don't you tell us a little bit.

Anthony Miller: [21:32](#) The last five years we've ran a summit every summer, a three day summit that we just unpack everything from marketing to storytelling to creative to web, social strategy, everything. I bring my team out, we all share the good, the bad, the ugly, pop the hood and we share. I mean we're not saying we've got it all figured out, but we're willing to share what we know. So this year I think it's July, I want to say July 18th.

Mingo Palacios: [21:32](#) Oh man.

Anthony Miller: [21:56](#) I'm already right. Look at this don't even know my own stuff.

Mingo Palacios: [21:59](#) Hey, if you're watching this on Facebook live and you know that date, maybe you can comment with the date.

Anthony Miller: [22:06](#) It is July 18th through the 20th.

Mingo Palacios: [22:06](#) Okay, great.

Anthony Miller: [22:06](#) And you can find it at summit.saddleback.com.

Mingo Palacios: [22:10](#) That's great. And you're also making a guest appearance at the Purpose Driven Conference. You're going to be leading a couple of workshops there, you and your team at least, right?

Anthony Miller: [22:10](#) Yes.

Mingo Palacios: [22:18](#) So what are some other avenues by which people can get in the room and become a part of your community as you all grow together through the discipline of marketing and communications.

Anthony Miller: [22:18](#) Absolutely.

Mingo Palacios: [22:29](#) Anthony, I appreciate your biblical posture and I would argue with anybody who would argue that there's not a foundation of scripture and modeling after Jesus based on what you just unpacked on the microphone, so thanks for challenging us to be more disciplined, less obsessive about who we think we are, and more committed to who Jesus has said we

are always and we're more committed to who Jesus has said.

Anthony Miller: [22:29](#) Yes. Amen.

Mingo Palacios: [22:59](#) He is saying that it's our job to steward that in a responsible way.

Anthony Miller: [22:59](#) Amen.

Mingo Palacios: [23:04](#) I'm praying that this conversation blessed you, and if it did, would you share it? I'm sure there's a few communications gurus that you know that need to know who Anthony is. He's not trying to self promote. He's not trying to self promote. He's trying to create community and this is why we do what we do. So for our listeners, thank you so much. We love you. We know that time is of the utmost value. It's not even money because you can always make more money, but you can't get more time and so sharing your time with us matters. We appreciate it. Thanks for letting us speak a little bit of love in your ear as you're going where you're going. For the rest of you, we'll talk to you soon.

Mingo Palacios: [23:43](#) We'd like to thank Purpose Driven Church for making this podcast possible. If you've been feeling burnt out or plateaued in your ministry, we invite you to join us for Purpose Driven Church conference happening this June right here in Southern California. You can learn more and register by visiting PD.church. We hope today's insights left you feeling inspired and propelled towards your greatest potential. Thanks again for

joining us for another episode of the PD Podcast.
Until next time.

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