



Episode 69: Leading a Brave Ministry

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Miley Waterman & Noemi Chavez

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Transcript:

Mingo Palacios: [00:02](#) 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](#) What's up everybody? Welcome to the PD Cast in the UYWI Podcast mashup. This is a collaborative podcast that you are listening to and today we are at the conference here at Biola University and across the table from me I have Miley and Noemi. We are hanging out together and we're talking about some of the ministry that the Lord has given you guys unique access to the ability to lead that called BRAVE

ministry. Ladies, thanks for being a part of the podcast today.

Miley Waterman: [00:52](#)

Thank you. Thank you for having us.

Noemi Chavez: [00:52](#)

Yeah, we're excited to be here and share.

Mingo Palacios: [00:54](#)

Why don't you ladies give us each little backdrop or a little bit of background on who you two are independently and then maybe how you guys got together to collaborate on ministry.

Noemi Chavez: [01:05](#)

For sure. So, my husband and I pastor Seventh Street Church in the city of Long Beach. We've been pastoring there for over 10 years. From the beginning of us starting ministry and working there and being a part of what God was doing in that corner of Seventh Street and Obispo. We will always ask the question, "How can we better serve our community and how can we reach people that are not being reached through the Gospel?" So, engaging those conversations with people and authority and in government positions in the city was how a lot of this started.

Miley Waterman: [01:36](#)

And I am an event producer by trade, but actually four years ago I think I became one of Noemi and Josh's staff members at Seventh Street Church and that started my journey in ministry and that was actually where BRAVE, the young women's empowerment conference, was birthed about five years ago and now we are BRAVE global.

Mingo Palacios: [01:54](#) That is awesome. I love that it's the birth of a vision comes out of the church. There are too many great things that should be coming out of the church, and so when you hear something really amazing that starts birth inside of the effort to bring people closer to Jesus through the church, that to me is like the greatest thing ever. So BRAVE, why don't you unpack that for our listeners who may not know what it is?

Miley Waterman: [02:23](#) Well, it's what you said about the local church and BRAVE was birthed out of Seventh Street Church in response to a statistic that is true for at least LA County, which is that out of any girl that is picked up for or turned in for sex trafficking or prostitution, 70 to 80 percent of them are from the foster care system, which is a staggering statistic.

Mingo Palacios: [02:43](#) Interesting.

Miley Waterman: [02:43](#) And so a woman from our church at the time, she worked for the city as the violence prevention coordinator, she is part of our core ministry team. She came to us to Noemi and a group of women and said, "Not on our watch. It's the local church's responsibility to respond to these girls. We need to somehow bring them into the house of God so that they can be empowered and understand that there is a different way of life."

Mingo Palacios: [03:07](#) That's great. Now tell me, how does it uniquely serve those girls once you, let's say, have the inspiration for the vision, you understood the need. What are the

mechanics that BRAVE delivers to those girls in need?

Noemi Chavez: [03:20](#) So, initially what we do is we have in order to even connect with the girls, right? These girls are on social workers' case loads. So we had to develop a relationship with probation and with DCFS for the girls that would be in our community, right? So we knew that we could provide for them stories and examples and opportunities for them to see that there's a choice that can be made. And so our dream was, what if we got to them before the pimps do? What if they heard something that's shifted their understanding of what their future could look like and not necessarily make choices based on what their circumstances are right now.

Mingo Palacios: [03:54](#) Yeah that's really good.

Noemi Chavez: [03:55](#) So getting the girls to even come to the conference was the first challenge because we were like, "How are they going to even trust us? How are they even going to bring them to church?" Like, what probation officer who's not a believer is going to be like, "Yeah, I'm taking those girls-

Mingo Palacios: [04:06](#) "Perfect. Church is great."

Noemi Chavez: [04:06](#) Yeah. So no, it was a conversation that then developed into a trust relationship with probation and with DCFS. So, the first time we did this we didn't know how many girls would show up and we had almost 200 girls show up.

Mingo Palacios: [04:19](#) No Way.

Miley Waterman: [04:20](#) Yeah.

Noemi Chavez: [04:20](#) So we had maybe about 30 girls from our youth group, 20-30 girls from my youth and the rest were girls who were from the system.

Mingo Palacios: [04:27](#) Wow.

Noemi Chavez: [04:27](#) So it was exciting to see that. What we do in this catalytic event, it really produces an opportunity for churches to become brave. The church has become brave as girls are empowered to be brave because you started the conversation with DCFS and with probation, right?

Mingo Palacios: [04:42](#) DCFS. What is that?

Noemi Chavez: [04:44](#) The Department of Child and Family Services. So, whatever that the name of it is in your county, so it's basically at risk youth who are in foster care. And really what we did is we brought strong women, women of God, women who have a powerful story, women who have gone through something really difficult, maybe foster care or probation or they've come from broken homes who maybe found themselves in a bad situation and made bad choices, but now have come a long way where maybe faith has intersected their story. They've made some better choices. They've pursued careers. They are women who have their own businesses, who are lawyers who

are working in professions where they're actually rescuing-

Mingo Palacios: [05:23](#)

They have a platform.

Noemi Chavez: [05:23](#)

A platform. So these girls are able to say, "Your story is a lot like mine and I actually could make some decisions right now that could prevent me from living out every detail of your story." Right?

Mingo Palacios: [05:34](#)

Right.

Noemi Chavez: [05:35](#)

So we expose the girls to see the lens of what their story could look like.

Mingo Palacios: [05:39](#)

Future potential.

Noemi Chavez: [05:40](#)

Yes. And the fact that you've gone through something difficult and the fact that you're living a difficult season doesn't mean that this is what it has to look like forever.

Mingo Palacios: [05:50](#)

Right. Your present circumstance doesn't paint your future potential. Right?

Miley Waterman: [05:57](#)

Exactly.

Noemi Chavez: [05:57](#)

Yes.

Mingo Palacios: [05:57](#)

That's a tremendous and super powerful truth that where you are right now, you don't have to be the farthest away, or the most at risk to have that be applicable to your own life.

Noemi Chavez: [06:09](#)

Exactly.

Mingo Palacios: [06:10](#) You could be just in a season where you don't feel like God's got much to do with you and you have to be reminded that what you're in right now does not predict your future potential.

Noemi Chavez: [06:21](#) Absolutely.

Miley Waterman: [06:21](#) Right.

Noemi Chavez: [06:21](#) Exactly. And for that matter, the churches that we're coaching, Miley is like our lead to coaching. And also, we have other people who coach as well. The idea is not just kids because we believe every girl is at risk.

Miley Waterman: [06:36](#) Whether they're on paper at risk or just yeah, all girls are at risk. This is for all girls.

Mingo Palacios: [06:41](#) That's a great posture.

Noemi Chavez: [06:42](#) All girls, yeah. So the value that we would bring all girls, but then also specifically target the girls that are on probation and under the care of the government is really a value for us as an organization because we understand that they are targeted specifically by the streets. We believe that we can offer an answer that can shift the culture and the numbers of women that are actually being trafficked in our cities.

Mingo Palacios: [07:09](#) Yeah, that's really powerful. So I have a question. If somebody is listening to this and they either want to like adopt the program or if they want to come and see it in action, how do they do that?

Miley Waterman: [07:24](#) So you would go to our website, which is braveglobal.org and there's a lot of information on there, how we started and there's a church partnerships page. And so what happens is you would basically sign up to become a BRAVE church partner and you would get assigned a coach, myself or one of the other coaches that we have and we would walk you through what it is to become a BRAVE partner church and coach you all the way up until throwing your event. And then what it means to sustain that relationship with those at risk girls beyond the events. So we have a ton of tools, resources, templates, creative assets, logos, media, all kinds of things that you'll be able to use at your local event. We exist to equip the local church to reach these girls in their community and we're not trying to make it hard. We're trying to make it easy-

Mingo Palacios: [08:09](#) Yeah, that's really good.

Miley Waterman: [08:09](#) For these churches to be able to do this so we have resources available and we want to get them to use so that you can get with those girls in your community and empower them and stop the exploitation. I mean, we really do believe that it's a local churches responsibility.

Mingo Palacios: [08:23](#) I fully agree with you first of all. Two, I think that this program and the vision doesn't just sit inside of urban churches. Like you said earlier that` women at large, girls at large, are at risk everywhere. Culture is attacking all of us. Right?

Noemi Chavez: [08:42](#) Yes.

Miley Waterman: [08:42](#) Absolutely.

Mingo Palacios: [08:42](#) And so to have a guiding light, if you will, and something like BRAVE and the leadership that BRAVE brings together and trains would be such a valuable commodity inside of any ministry, in my opinion.

Miley Waterman: [08:56](#) Absolutely. You know we have one of our mega church partners down in Orange County, actually. They've just done their second BRAVE church.

Mingo Palacios: [09:04](#) Who are they?

Miley Waterman: [09:04](#) Mariners church.

Mingo Palacios: [09:04](#) That's awesome.

Miley Waterman: [09:04](#) The misconception is that girls in maybe an affluent area like Orange County aren't "at risk" but like Noemi was saying this is for all girls because maybe they're from a seemingly functional and safe home. They might have two parents, but those girls are just as much at risk and exploitation comes in many different forms.

Mingo Palacios: [09:26](#) In shapes and sizes, right?

Miley Waterman: [09:26](#) There's anxiety, there's self esteem issues, there's depression. I mean those girls are suicidal, they're cutting themselves. They are being bullied. I mean their exploitation does not discriminate. So the answer

to that, the response to that, we can't discriminate either. This needs to be in all areas of the nation, all areas of the globe.

Mingo Palacios: [09:43](#) I appreciate that because I think stereotypes oftentimes disqualify the potential where it's needed most.

Noemi Chavez: [09:53](#) Absolutely.

Mingo Palacios: [09:53](#) I would say this for our listeners, we have an interesting audience, so we've got emerging leaders, people who are just beginning the journey of leadership and then we've got a lot of seasoned leaders, those that have been running like church planters, husbands and wives that have led ministry for decades. For the emerging leader, right? Maybe there are some young ladies or some young adults who are just on the beginning of their journey. There's a BRAVE vision inside of them by a different name aimed at a different pain or a different-

Noemi Chavez: [10:29](#) Population.

Mingo Palacios: [10:32](#) What advice would you give them as beginners beginning the journey?

Noemi Chavez: [10:38](#) I think that my advice would be that if God shows you a need, he's trusting you, right? So I always tell my church we could sing I'm a friend of God all day long, but if God asked you to do something, you're not willing are you really His friend, right? So if He's showing you there's a need, there's the pain and you

see, "I think there are ways in which I can bring an answer to this." When we started BRAVE, we did this as a local effort just for our church. What God has done with this, it's like it blows my mind. I always tell Miley I am not the girl for the job.

- New Speaker: [11:12](#) [laughing]
- Noemi Chavez: [11:12](#) How did God do this?
- Mingo Palacios: [11:14](#) I think that's the attitude of most CEOs or ministry founders. They would self disclose like "I don't have what it takes to run this."
- Noemi Chavez: [11:23](#) Exactly. And I think that that's why the movement that's taking place with it is so much by the power of the hand of God because we always say we're not going to stress over this because these are His girls and He wants to rescue them more than we do. So we just happened to be the people who said yes.
- Mingo Palacios: [11:38](#) That's great.
- Noemi Chavez: [11:39](#) So what's great about this is that you find the people who lock arms with you. And we've locked onto people in our city, other churches in our city. It's not just about Seventh Street. Seventh Street Church reached out to pastors and leaders in the city and we said, "How can we come together and create the space for girls where we're going to validate them and speak life and truth and hope into them?" The churches blocks away, started giving us gifts for the

girls, money for the event. It was such a unification of the body of Christ.

Mingo Palacios: [12:08](#) A display of the collaborative heart. I think that that's what happens. If a need comes to the surface, somebody just has to be willing to uncover it.

Noemi Chavez: [12:16](#) Yes.

Mingo Palacios: [12:17](#) And I think a lot of times churches may not be the spark of the inspiration, but that doesn't negate them from the opportunity to join in as partners. Right?

Noemi Chavez: [12:25](#) Absolutely.

Mingo Palacios: [12:25](#) So many times I think it's so petty churches go, "Well, if we didn't think of it, then we don't want to belong to it." And what an opportunity loss, right? It's like the collaborative spirit represents who Christ is. I was just listening to Megan Fate in the main room. She was saying like, "God existed in community already." So for us not to operate as a local church in community with other churches, it's in direct opposition to the person of God. We've got to watch out for that because I think that can be like an easy trap for us to go like, "Well, if we didn't start it, I don't know if we should condone it or promote it or adopt it." Right?

Noemi Chavez: [13:01](#) It's definitely when we come together, there's so much strength in that. Right? And what an answer it is that we as the body of Christ be united in a time when the world is so divided. Right? So when we come together as a body of believers and we cross

nominations and we cross cultures and we cross ethnicities and we come together, there's the voice of the house and the people of God becomes stronger and louder.

Mingo Palacios: [13:26](#) Let's go. Yeah. That's what I'm talking about.

Noemi Chavez: [13:28](#) That's such an important value and it's such a powerful value. So what it has done also for us in our city is that we've developed a trust relationship with probation and with the Department of Child and Family Services. For instance, when there's been a need, they've called us and said, "Can you help us with this family? Would, would you guys be able to maybe coach or mentor? Can you send somebody to connect with this young girl?" So what I like to say is, "What happens when 911, who does 911 call?"

Mingo Palacios: [13:54](#) The church.

Noemi Chavez: [13:55](#) The church.

Mingo Palacios: [13:56](#) Yeah. That's perfect.

Miley Waterman: [13:56](#) Isn't that beautiful? Yeah. And this is catching on like wildfire. I just have to mention this. We've had several BRAVE events in Long Beach. We have had them in Orange County. There's a church in Seattle who just did their second one. It's going to be happening in Raleigh, North Carolina. It just happened in Spring Arbor, Michigan.

Mingo Palacios: [14:13](#) That's tremendous.

Miley Waterman: [14:13](#) I mean it's happening all over the place.

Noemi Chavez: [14:15](#) Nebraska.

Miley Waterman: [14:16](#) Nebraska just happened

Mingo Palacios: [14:16](#) BRAVE Nebraska. #BRAVENEbraska I love it.

Miley Waterman: [14:20](#) And what's exciting is that as they're being coached by BRAVE global, we tell them in this really important, it's almost top priority is that it's one of our imperatives that it's not just a drop in the bucket. As a ministry, as a church, you understand how like events are being done just for event's sake sometimes.

Mingo Palacios: [14:39](#) One and done.

Miley Waterman: [14:39](#) It's like, uh okay, what happens now? Well, with this particular population that is critical that that doesn't happen, that they don't just come and experience this one day of being loved on and motivated, empowered, and then we're like, "Bye. See you later next year." Some of these girls are moving around from group home to group home every 30 days and they're like, "I don't even know where I'm going to be next month, let alone next year. So how are you going to say, 'Hey, see you later.'" So we coach these churches on what does it look like for your congregation, for their hearts to be bent toward these girls that are truly at risk in the most vulnerable way and how do you link arms with all the people that Noemi mentioned, Child and Family Services, probation, law enforcement, to stay in front of these

girls? What does it look like for us to break down curriculum and go into their homes every week and maybe bring pizza and just spend time with them and prolong that relationship to let them know like, "Hey, we don't just see one day a year, we're with you."

Mingo Palacios: [15:32](#)

Yeah. It's a simple yes, right? A lot of times I think that we overcomplicate things and what you're describing is just a simple yes repeated over and over and over again, right? That's what makes a moment a movement at the end of the day and I think that that's the heart of a great ministry is that it doesn't just show up and then it's gone, but it's a series of simple yes's by tons and tons and tons of people who believe naively that they can answer with a simple yes also.

Miley Waterman: [16:05](#)

Yes.

Mingo Palacios: [16:06](#)

That's how I ended up here. That's how you ended up here and that's how that movement has become a full fledged nationwide movement now. So for our listeners who are like, "Man, I have this idea but I don't have the resource or I don't know how I'm going to make this thing go on and on and on." You just have to respond with a simple yes. That's the building. So for people who maybe have never been to UYWI could you give us like what it means for you guys, for you in particular, what has this event done for you personally so that others who are listening to this might get an idea of what it's offering to people who are doing urban ministry?

Noemi Chavez: [16:43](#) Absolutely. I mean we've been bringing our team. Anybody who is a mentor or leads in any capacity with students, we've been bringing them for the last 10 years. Like this is how we bless our team, right? We have one staff person who is our youth pastor, and then everybody who is a mentor or an assistant to her, our church says, "We're going to pay for you to go because we're going to fan the flame." Because the work of doing urban ministry is no joke. The grind is real. You're working with kids who come from all kinds of backgrounds and this conference equips young leaders to effectively communicate the gospel in a way that transforms lives and communities. And I'm telling you, I'm a lead pastor now for over 12 years and I have not missed this conference one year.

Mingo Palacios: [17:28](#) That's awesome.

Noemi Chavez: [17:28](#) It's my favorite conference and I speak at so many conferences throughout the country, but even if I'm not speaking, I'm in every session. I sit in different classes. Why? Because it's sharpening me. The most important ministry in the church is youth ministry because that's where the real conversation that leads into adulthood that is shaping the next generation of faith and so we're if not being intentional about equipping our leaders who are doing the hard work of ministry in the urban setting. Right? The inconsistency of urban ministry, the inconsistency of urban life, the ups and downs.

Mingo Palacios: [18:01](#) Preach. Preach.

Noemi Chavez: [18:01](#) These kids need somebody who's going to love on them and this ministry fans the flame for you to stay there and stay there long.

Mingo Palacios: [18:07](#) Yeah I love that. Larry said yesterday on the podcast, he just wants to convince you to stay one more year. That's it, and that's a simple yes, right?

Noemi Chavez: [18:17](#) It is.

Mingo Palacios: [18:18](#) It's not easy, but it's a simple statement. I just want you to come and do one more year.

Noemi Chavez: [18:24](#) And here's the thing is that it is urban. We're talking urban, right? But I'm telling you something that's really important and I tell my friends who do pastor in suburbia, I say, "Listen, maybe the way suburbia stuff is done, might not work in the urban setting directly and immediately, but what we're doing in the urban setting does work in suburbia because your kids do listen to hip hop and they are being exposed to all the drugs and they're all being exposed to all this stuff in the culture." And so, we will equip suburban leaders to do the work there.

Mingo Palacios: [18:51](#) Yeah, you're just saying, "Just wait." That's what I tell people. Just wait. If you don't think that this is like an inundated, like it's a cultural explosion, right? So if you think, "Well, urban issues aren't something that we have to deal with." I'm going to tell you two words. Just wait.

Noemi Chavez: [19:10](#) That's good.

- Mingo Palacios: [19:11](#) Growing up in San Diego, I know why. So ladies, thank you so much for just exposing just a small bit of your own heart with BRAVE the movement and also your dedication and love for this conference. If people want to jump in and follow you, maybe personally or if they want to follow the church or the ministries you lead independently, what does that look like?
- Miley Waterman: [19:34](#) Well, for BRAVE Global it is BraveGlobal.org on the website and we're a BraveGlobalinc on Instagram and you can find us on Facebook too. And then for Seventh Street Church we are SeventhStreetChurch.com and that's where Pastor Noemi and Josh are there as our leads and I'm on staff there and that's where BRAVE was birthed.
- Mingo Palacios: [19:52](#) I love it. Noemi thank you so much for your heart. I appreciate it. Miley, thanks for being the backbone, the infrastructure. I know one, when I see one.
- Noemi Chavez: [20:01](#) Thank you for having us.
- Mingo Palacios: [20:01](#) You bless all of our ministries and for our listeners, our live listeners and for those on the podcast or on Youtube, if this conversation encouraged you, I encourage you to share it or to tag somebody in on it so we can be mutually encouraged. We appreciate you ladies so much.
- Miley Waterman: [20:16](#) Thank you.
- Noemi Chavez: [20:16](#) Awesome.

Mingo Palacios: [20:16](#) We'll talk to you guys soon.

Mingo Palacios: [20:19](#) 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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