



Episode 97: Pastoring MarketPlace Professionals Part 3

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Pete Sanchez & Robert Cortes

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Transcript:

Mingo Palacios:

This is Part 3 in a conversation with some marketplace leaders specific to what it looks like to be involved in and members of local ministry. If you haven't listened to Part 1, you've got to go back and listen there. There's a disclaimer on that episode. It's so valuable that you understand that these are the people that God is using and working uniquely in the lives of – and it may not translate to you; you may not understand them at first.

But it's so valuable to hear their stories, because I think in understanding their stories, you'll understand best where to meet them and how to use your personal walk with Jesus to deliver things like hope, perspective, and to articulate purpose in a way that maybe might be the one thing that gets them to understand that God has gifted them in a unique way that serves a purpose in the larger Kingdom. I hope you listen to the convo, I hope you get something

great out of it, and I hope you share it with somebody. Thanks for listening.

Robert Cortes:

So I found myself torn sometimes, like, I'm part of this church, but I'd like to help this church. I'm part of this church, but they're church planting. I want to help that church plant as well, and I also want to help that church learn how to do this, and I want to help that person do that. I don't want someone to say "No, you can't do that. You need to give all your effort, all your money, all your time, all your talent, all your treasure – you need to give it just to our church."

Mingo Palacios:

Yeah. I hear you resonating with that, Pete. Unpack what your perspective is on that. I'm hearing Robert say, from a church's perspective, they're going to say "All of your efforts, all of your finances, all of your gifts, I want them to be all in at this one spot." You're giving me cues across the table as if that's something that resonated in you. Have you experienced something similar to that? And how'd you wrestle through it?

Pete Sanchez:

A mentor of mine told me, "Pete, you've got to really have an awareness to where you see God showing up." That's where I like to lead my life. Where do I see God showing up? Okay, He's showing me that He wants me to go work on this project at this church for maybe a season or just to help out. Robert's right. I was like, wow, that is so true.

One of my mentors, Mark Miller, was talking about "Pete, you're an apostle. If I keep you in a bubble, you'll eventually leave because you and Gisela (my wife) are creators. That's part of being an apostle. You want to create things." If you take that away from us, we'll go out somewhere else where we're needed or where we –

Mingo Palacios:

You see opportunity.

Pete Sanchez:

Yeah, where we see opportunity and our gifts are going to be used.

Mingo Palacios:

It's interesting. I know that there's a pressure as a pastor to hope that you keep people for a long time because those people – every person, there are things

that come with a person in your church. You get added manpower, you get the complexity and diversity of a church that has different kinds of folks at your church.

And in the fullest expression, there is a financial component. It doesn't make sense to beat around the bush. If somebody becomes a member of your church or aligns with the vision of your church, they'll financially support that church.

Is there something wrong, or – I'll just come out and ask – how do you approach when somebody says, "Hey, I'd love for you to financially consider supporting this initiative or this new idea or this thing"? Have you ever been asked to do that? And is it appropriate, if I know that you're a business owner, to approach you with the potential of supporting through the channel specifically of finances?

Robert Cortes:

That's a good question. I tend to take the approach, when I'm asked something, I go to my wife first. [laughs] We have a conversation, and we just want to hear from God in some of these endeavors.

But a lot of them are smaller, I think, and I just say yes. There's been a lot of times where I've said yes and I probably shouldn't have said yes. Even though I know God's call in my life is just to be available and share what I know, but also help when I can help and stretch me constantly – He's always stretched me, and I always look for the opportunity. I always ask myself, is this going to be really hard? Is this going to stretch me, or is this going to be like "Hey, you need 5 bucks? Here's 5 bucks." So I always figure – that's how I look at it.

Mingo Palacios:

So you're looking for the sacrifice. You're seeing what it's going to cost you in a given 'yes'.

Robert Cortes:

Well, I was really bad at it, actually, up until the last few years I've gotten better at it. Then I've just focused. If my home church is Torrey Pines – which is my home church, me and my wife – then that is where we're going to give and that's where we're going to

present most of our offering. Like, hey whatever you need.

Our yeses are going to fall more toward our home church first and foremost. Then we have more capacity, and we're like, hey, this church needs this help, and they're actually coming out of the EastLake Network. We're friends with them. Why don't we help them a little bit? Why don't we give them some of our knowledge and our time?

Mingo Palacios: So your discretion is being applied accordingly. That's what I hear you saying.

Robert Cortes: I look at it from a perspective like, if I'm going to help this church, obviously I want God to be in it with me. If He really wants me to be part of this in some capacity, sure. But I always take a pragmatic approach. I'm like, wait a minute, this is actually helping my home church do something that they're committed to. Why wouldn't I want to be part of that?

I knew God specifically interrupted me and my wife's lives at a conference where we met them, and then we didn't know if they were going to be –

Mingo Palacios: Right, it all lines up.

Robert Cortes: It all lined up. It was God. So we were like, okay, we're going to be part of this. But we were just careful in the stewardship of it. My wife is always the one like, "Stop saying yes to this thing or that thing. Focus it back to God and make sure that we can actually execute it with the level that God would want it to be."

Mingo Palacios: That's good. One of the most successful businesspeople that I know, even in the smallest ask – I asked him, "Hey, can your daughter babysit my kids?" He'll say, "Me and my wife prayed about it, and we were like..." So he's always got that tether back to his significant other as a person who can keep him accountable. They're saying, "Hey, we talked to God. We feel good about this (fill in the blank about whatever the ask is)."

Pete, what's your two cents on that, asking? Is it okay, or is there a preferred method when there is something that a minister would approach you, maybe you and your wife, about and say, "Hey, would you guys back this financially?" Is there an appropriate approach? Or have you ever seen it abused? What's your perspective on that?

Pete Sanchez:

Good question. I've never seen it abused, which is cool. My perspective is I think as business owners, we've been given a lot of gifts to go and produce an income – a huge income that the majority of people will not ever be able to make.

With that type of money, there should be way more responsibility. There should be way more giving. So my thought on that is that as business owners, we should be the ones seeking those opportunities. Get in the mindset of – as business owners, we're there to solve people's problems, so go in with the same mindset to your church.

I remember at 1825, there was food there. I was like, oh, I'm making pretty good income on these flips, was more than I ever need; I'm going to start buying pizzas every week. I don't know if you remember that.

Mingo Palacios:

I remember at Fight Club, our men's gathering, just massive amounts of food, and Young Adult Café got a ton of it also.

Pete Sanchez:

I'm like, hey, I'm going to go buy 10-15 boxes of pizza because I see there's a need. Tomorrow I'm going to have a conversation with someone from one of the churches we plug in, because I'm part of the social media team and I set up the audiovisual. It's a lot of work. I'm like, you know what? There's a camera that would alleviate a lot of this, and I'm going to talk to them and see if they need it, and I'm just going to go purchase it.

As business owners, we've got to go out there and just like, okay Lord, open up my eyes to seek opportunities where you want to be able to pour into. God just brings the right things.

It's funny because a person at church, he's going through a tough time, and I remember when I was going through a tough time, Robert actually helped us a couple years ago. Like \$200-300 bucks. I don't know if you remember that.

Mingo Palacios:

It was probably your wife. She probably didn't talk to you about that then. [laughter]

Robert Cortes:

Oh, I did remember something around food and stuff, and there was a gap. I think Liz said, "Hey, I'm going to go do something for Gisela." I said, "Yeah, do whatever you've got to do. You don't have to ask me. If God wants you to do something, I'm all for it. Go for it."

Pete Sanchez:

Yeah, it's being able to recognize those opportunities. Someone in our church is going through a tough time, and I personally reached out to him. I said, "Hey, is there any way I can help you out financially?" The guy was really humbled and he's like, "No, it's okay." It was hard for him to say yeah. Then it's funny how God shows up, and I got a message from somebody else like, "Hey, we're going to raise money to buy a vehicle for this person." I'm like, "Dude, I'm all in. Let's go, heck yeah!" Because I knew it was already confirmation that I was supposed to give to this person.

So we've got to seek those opportunities, guys. God's obviously given us the ability to create wealth, not for our kingdom, but for our church.

Robert Cortes:

There's also something I'd like to add not just from the financial perspective, but from the skillset perspective. I remember recently, my wife got invited to go to the Tony Robbins conference in LA with a friend of hers, Sabrina, and Sabrina got this free ticket because the owner of her salon couldn't go. The tickets that she was given were like the personal friends of Tony Robbins and his wife, and there's 40 or 50 of these seats. So my wife and Sabrina are sitting in this special front row area that's all this VIP stuff. She got it for free.

Mingo Palacios:

In the splash zone of Tony Robbins.

Robert Cortes:

And my wife loves going to events. She did the fire walking, got burned. [laughter] Literally. She literally got – but she had so much fun.

But what happened in that, she's always looking for opportunities to pray for people or to help people, and there was a business owner who actually did Facebook ads. We know how to do ads for clients, campaigns, but this guy, that's all they do. They do Facebook ads and Google ads.

My wife and her friend had a conversation with them, and they talked about church and how to help your church. I don't even know how this conversation got started, but the guy said, "You know what, I go to a church up in LA, and I never thought that they might need some help with ads."

Mingo Palacios:

Yeah, what they're good at.

Robert Cortes:

He's like, "Can I get a 30-minute call with you and your husband, and maybe you can give me some tips?" So we set up a call and we shared with him how we help churches. He's like, "I'm going to go do that."

I don't know what happened. We should do a follow-up call. It was months ago. But he said he's going to go back to his church and offer up his service. He never thought that maybe what he did could actually help his local church. He said, "I don't even know if they promote on Facebook, or I don't know what they do, but I'm going to ask them."

Mingo Palacios:

That's so good. It's skills. Rick always says a person's time is way more valuable than a person's wallet, a person's money. Why? Why would that even make sense? He says, because you can always make more money, but you can never get time back. You can never make more time.

So when a person of influence or an entrepreneur or a business owner takes time out of their schedule to give critical input back to your church or to your specific ministry, there's so much value in that, way more – I love flipping the script on people and saying, no ministry happens without people's generosity,

bottom line. The church doesn't sell a service, or it shouldn't sell. We're not making enough money on swag or coffee cups or whatever to be able to provide the kind of ministry opportunities that we do for our neighborhoods. Everything happens on the back of generosity.

But your time, when you utilize your skill to look at our ministry and give me insight on how to make it better – if a pastor can read that and value that, I think it puts that church and ministry head and shoulders above and in front of the others that are around them because they're listening. They're not just looking for a dollar. They're listening for insight and wisdom and discernment, and God has uniquely, obviously, given that to you in the makeup of who you are as business owners.

So I will say this for pastors as we wrap this episode up: you may listen to this and go, "I didn't hear a single thing." You've got to know that you're talking a different language. You can hear a common denominator between Pete and Robert that is a language that is vastly different than that of the pastor. If you don't commit to learning the language and the values and the things and the ways that businesspeople and entrepreneurs and leaders in the marketplace see, the way they feel, the way they read, the way they spend – if you don't take the time to learn that, you will miss that segment of people in your church.

So do your due diligence. If you're not good at hearing or reading or seeing those individuals at your church, ask somebody who is to help you see them and build relationships – not for a dividend for yourself, but so that you can better learn how those people think, how they dream, how they execute, and watch it help your ministry become better and more suitable for other business leaders.

My hope is this, because I'm a part-time entrepreneur. I think every pastor's got a little bit of hustle in them. You've got to know that your church is called by the mandate of the Gospel to be a melting pot for all people in all places, across all economic scales. If you

don't see that as a value, then you're missing major parts of the Gospel.

Jesus went after the most wild and out people, like Pete before he knew Jesus. He went for the most broken individuals, and he went for people that had a lot going for them. Together with that total equation, they met every person across every spectrum – the most down and out, the least of these, those on the margins, and those right in the middle of the temple, running services.

So evaluate who you have at your table, and then ask yourself, "Lord, show me what it looks like to see and meet the people who are across the spectrum. Who are the educators? Who are the influencers? Who are the businesspeople? Who are the lay pastors? Who are the people who are coming to terms with their relationship with Jesus, and how might we be able to partner in the ministry that you've put right in front of us?"

My encouragement for a pastor is to not chase a dollar that is represented behind a business owner or a person who's got affluence, but to ask God, "How could I serve that person towards their purpose?" That will create more opportunity than you could ever bargain for in a relationship aimed towards Jesus.

I think that's why we've gotten together, Robert and I and several others, and fast forward, we're hoping that we're going to put together a whole series aimed at business professionals that Rick once put together 39 years ago aimed at business leaders in his own city. We're going to try to resurrect those Bible studies and those DVOs together with Robert and Pete, and hopefully see a whole new wave of professionals inclined towards ministry, hoping to see the Gospel roll wherever God would have it.

Like what Pete said – Rick said it in Chapter 1 of *Purpose Driven Life*, that you can learn to serve, but you can never make waves. God's job is to make the ministry waves, and our job is to learn to read them and write them as best as we can.

So that's my hope with this conversation. Sorry it's a little business-y or it's a little entrepreneurial in its makeup, but you've got to hear the heart between each of these people. Every person has a breaking point, and every person is pursuing Jesus the way that Jesus is pursuing them.

So meet them where they're at, build a ministry that they can understand, and invite them to be a part of the significance of the outcomes of those ministries. Don't tap them for what they've got; show them what they could be a part of.

I hope this ministry and this conversation inspires you. We'll talk to you guys soon.

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