



Episode 110: Part 2 – Mission Vision Method

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Robert Cortes

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Transcript:

Mingo Palacios:

This is Part 2 of a conversation that Robert and I have over understanding the differences between mission, vision, and method. I was getting around the microphone particularly on this episode because I realized that I just rolled through my 18th month as a lead pastor. I hope you are encouraged, and I hope you learn something great off of these reflections. Enjoy the conversation.

We pull our heads together and we think, what's a way that we can change the rhythm here, we can change this method? Maybe it'll reveal to us or it'll engage people in a more significant way. Maybe we can draw some more accurate information or data out of this community coming together.

So we do this thing. We call it an "end of series survey." Super simple. We put two minutes on the clock; we ask like three basic questions – and this is

something that I've seen and heard Rick do in seasons past. He goes, "Hey, I want to create two minutes inside of the sermon."

The conversation that we were having, the whole message was about having better, more authentic community. The series was called "Life Plus: The life Jesus through John 10:10 promises us all." We made a commitment. We said at Torrey Pines Church, "We're committed to creating more authentic, better quality community. By you participating in this survey, you can actually tell us. You can give us feedback on how we can make it better for you. On a scale of 1 to 5, was the content that we had over the last 5 weeks helpful to you in your personal life in any way, shape, or form?"

Robert Cortes: I was like, "Yes! 5, 5, 5." [laughs]

Mingo Palacios: People are so honest. Some people wrote a 4.7. They made their own marks.

Robert Cortes: That's awesome.

Mingo Palacios: As a leader, I took a picture of that person's card – his name is Kit. I took a picture of his card, I took a picture of his number, and I intend on calling him because it was such a unique answer. Not 4, not 5; 4.7. Then he wrote some more details in the notes, which was really great.

Robert Cortes: He might be an artist. He doesn't like being boxed in.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, I know, he's a scientist. He's specific.

Robert Cortes: Oh, analytical.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah. But inside of this, we asked the question, "Anywhere during this series, did you either make a first-time decision for Christ, or did you recommit your life? Did you re-up your relationship with Jesus?" That's Question 2 and Question 3 outside of the "Did this content help you?" Then Question 4 was, "Was January your first month visiting Torrey Pines Church?"

Robert Cortes:

Good question.

Mingo Palacios:

The data was shockingly way more engaging than any of the connection cards we've had all year long. We actually saw more people check the box letting us know that they had made a reestablished decision to follow Jesus – some people call that a rededication. They were just saying, "I'm very keenly walking closer with Jesus more intentionally because of this series." More people made that decision in the month of January than we saw the whole year in 2019. I know, shocking.

Robert Cortes:

That's amazing. What!?

Mingo Palacios:

I think it's because we were willing to change the method. We were willing to change up the way that we try to find out this information.

Now, hear me; I'm not somebody who obsesses over every single number, but I do think it's the organization's obligation to find out if you're setting out to accomplish and you're actually accomplishing what you want to do or what you say you're doing.

Robert Cortes:

You've got to have some kind of measurement, right?

Mingo Palacios:

Totally.

Robert Cortes:

Some kind of metrics to balance stuff off of.

Mingo Palacios:

Yeah. In the other box, the first-time decisions for Jesus, 51% in the month of January versus all of 2019.

Robert Cortes:

Wow.

Mingo Palacios:

Just huge metrics. Obviously God is doing something. It was a great series. But this is a great example of how we changed the method while still staying so true to the mission: people helping people find and follow Jesus. Let's change the method by which we try to earn back some of this data, and boom. We hit a bull's-eye on the target.

Robert Cortes:

You tested, right? It's kind of like in our world, you do A/B split testing in marketing. You try something, and if that doesn't work out well – it gives you let's say a 5 – then you change an image or some copy on it, and you get a 4. You're like, "Oh wait, that didn't work as well. Maybe I should go back and use the thing that worked better."

Mingo Palacios:

That's super good. I want to give somebody what is going to enable you to be more flexible. We're saying being fast, being fluid, being flexible is the value in order to see more Jesus movement in your ministry. So what is it that's going to actually help you be flexible? What's going to actually help you become able to shift and turn on a dime? Because you can't just decide. You have to have a compelling factor to get you there.

I'm going to offer one word out. I'm going to offer an image and some illustration that I found in the New Testament.

I think that the way we get flexible, the way we've gotten a 60-year-old church to flex well in 18 months, is by reminding people about compassion. I think it's compassion that keeps us flexible. It's not innovation; it's not a desire to be on the bleeding, cutting edge of innovation in ministry. I think that it's compassion.

This is why I'm anchoring this statement, because if you look through Jesus's ministry, there's probably – off the top of my head, I know nine occasions, Old Testament and New Testament, where compassion was the motivating factor for something to change. And it was a fast change. It wasn't slow.

I'll give you two examples. Matthew 14:14-16, it says that when Jesus went out, he sees a great multitude. He had a different endeavor before he went out, but –

Robert Cortes:

Is that the fishes and loaves deal?

Mingo Palacios:

It's a little bit there. It's going to lead into that. It says when he goes out, he saw a great multitude and he was moved with compassion for them. It says that he healed their sick, and when it was evening, his

disciples came to him saying, "This is a deserted place and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." But Jesus says to them, they don't have to go away.

Robert Cortes: Dude, that's amazing. I literally was reading a snippet of that today.

Mingo Palacios: Were you?

Robert Cortes: It was saying that Jesus had so much compassion for the people, despite that he heard that day that John –

Mingo Palacios: John the Baptist was beheaded. His cousin.

Robert Cortes: He was beheaded. And they served it on a plate to people. And then he felt so hurt.

Mingo Palacios: He was getting away.

Robert Cortes: Yeah. He goes, "Let's go. I want to go to the mountain."

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, because he was super bummed.

Robert Cortes: I was like, whoa, man. To me, I felt like the – what's the opposite of compassion and empathy? Like frigid, cold.

Mingo Palacios: You're depleted.

Robert Cortes: He said in that Scripture that his head was on a platter and nobody was shocked.

Mingo Palacios: In the palace, yeah.

Robert Cortes: Yeah. I was like, what? If I saw a head on a – I'd be shocked.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, you'd be repulsed.

Robert Cortes: You'd throw up.

Mingo Palacios: Totally. And they were just like, "Oh, that's awesome."

Robert Cortes: But then he pointed out Jesus had compassion, even though he just –

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, heard that news.

Robert Cortes: Wow.

Mingo Palacios: I think that the compassion is compelling for him because he sees the crowd. I think that that is the motivator for being flexible. When you see real people in front of you – not when you are trying to accomplish X number of things in a certain amount of time, but when you can see through the program, you can see through the way things are always done and see people. If you can feel something, I think that you've got a shot at being flexible.

Robert Cortes: It's crazy. Today I was reading about – someone said "wisdom is the art of steering." That hit me. That is such a great, clear statement. Wisdom is the art of steering. I'm still thinking about it. It rocked me all day.

Mingo Palacios: That's really good. Vision works into that. So that's Matthew 14.

Then we go to the next chapter, right afterwards. Matthew 15:32. It says now Jesus called his disciples to himself. This is an action Jesus is doing after he sees something, and he says to them, "I have compassion on the multitude because they've now continued with me for three days and they've had nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, lest they faint away."

It's interesting, I think, that Jesus displays to us compassion when he sees the multitude, the many. There's also a bunch of great cases where Jesus sees an individual and he's compelled to compassion. And he changes. He's going from one place to another, and then he stops, he waits.

Robert Cortes: He's moved into action, healing people.

Mingo Palacios: He goes into action, yeah, exactly. He is flexible because of his compassion.

If you're not flexible, if you have a hard time making pivots and being fluid, I want to challenge you to measure the compassion that you see. I don't know if you're in a tough season of ministry or if it's just not ringing true the way it once did, but man, one of the prayers I've been praying personally as I've been entering into this 18th month is that God would give me compassion for the people I see.

We can have plans for the way we want ministries to operate and who we want those ministries to magnet, and when there's a different group of people that come to the table – I was talking to Ted about this on the previous episode. When there's a different group of people that come to the table, if you don't have compassion on them, you can lose them because you're saying "this is actually not for you."

What a tragedy. If God is bringing them to you and you're too obsessive about this being just a young adult thing, or just a Wednesday night thing or just a (fill in the blank) thing – if God is widening the scope from what you originally intended by way of ministry and you don't have compassion to integrate or to bring in who He's bringing to the table, I think you miss an opportunity.

Robert Cortes:

You have that compassion and empathy because you're seeing their perspective. Otherwise, it's just yours, and like, fall in line.

Mingo Palacios:

Totally. There's a great example of the disciples reacting in kind of that same fluidness, that same willingness to be flexible, to be able to change if the situation presents itself. It comes out of Luke 5, and I'll summarize it. Jesus is preaching, and he sees two boats, and he steps into the boat because the crowd is pressing in because they want to hear the good news. So Jesus makes a lateral call and he gets into the boat and is preaching.

It says the disciples – not yet fully disciples, the fishermen – had fished all night long, and they say "We caught nothing." Jesus, after he's done teaching, tells them, "Hey, put it out into the deep. Cast your nets." The response is, "Man, we fished all night. We

caught nothing.” There’s a moment, there’s an opportunity presenting itself to be flexible.

I wrote this in my own notes, that sometimes our best timing, what I think is appropriate or what the professional opinion of the ministry thinks is appropriate, isn’t going to be Jesus timing. Jesus timing is oftentimes different than what I think the best timing is.

For these guys, it was at the end of their work day. They had gone and they had caught nothing, and Jesus was like, “Hey, give it one more try. Get out there one more time. Go back to that place that you went to first and struck out.”

I wrote in my own notes that the optimal time for these professionals had already passed, and the expert efforts had yielded nothing. But when we make pivots on Jesus timing, Jesus timing is always going to be about Jesus’s glory. It’s not about your best idea. You’re making a pivot, and it’s not planned well. It’s not fully baked. But you’re making this move inclination on the vision from what you see is in front of you, not forsaking the mission. You’re saying, “I’m going to flip-flop this method for that.”

They go, “We went fishing at this time and we caught nothing,” and Jesus is presenting a different method. He’s saying, “Go fishing again. Just do it in a different time slot.” Then his supernatural implication and his presence in it, they yield a bigger catch than any of them expected. The Bible says that there’s not just one, but there’s two boats that pull a catch so large that both boats begin to sink.

Robert Cortes:

And the nets were ripping.

Mingo Palacios:

Nets ripping, that’s exactly right.

Robert Cortes:

Craziness going on.

Mingo Palacios:

All the implications of that – because fish are worth money in a fisherman’s world, so they get the biggest catch ever, they’re like –

Robert Cortes: This is a lotto. [laughs]

Mingo Palacios: This is hitting the lotto. This is better than hitting 10 clients in one day. I just stacked our savings and checking account. And at the same time their boats are sinking. That's the vehicle by which they make their money, so they're probably insanely stoked in one minute and then they're totally freaking out in another.

Robert Cortes: Terrified. [laughs]

Mingo Palacios: It's like, you're sinking the boat by which I make a living. They're so taken back by the whole thing, the Bible says that those fishermen are astonished by the catch.

Here's where I want to leave every listener on this episode. When you pivot fast, sometimes when you strike gold, it's really going to be tempting to make it about yourself. Like, man, didn't we do the right thing when we pivoted? All the people came, all the results were measured, all the things we expected to happen, we hit bull's-eye. Man, it's so easy for you or for a team to do your own cheering, patting yourselves on the back. Here's the deal: when you make a Jesus move, a Jesus timing decision, it's all about Jesus's glory.

If the analogy that comes out of Luke 5 holds up, then that means the cast of the nets is the only thing that's up to us. Are we going to choose to cast our nets or not? The catch, the volume of the catch, salvations, commitments, people coming, people getting baptized, that room filling up – that's Jesus's responsibility. The cast is your responsibility, the willingness to go out there and pivot and make a decision. The return, the catch, is up to Jesus.

Robert Cortes: Kind of reminds me of Rick saying, you're responsible for the depth and God is responsible for the breadth.

Mingo Palacios: Breadth of your ministry. That's exactly right. That is a perfect PD principle put into place.

If you're listening to this episode, man, I want to encourage you: understand that being fast and fluid and flexible will always yield a chance for you not to be the hero and Jesus to be the hero. It's always going to test your team. It's going to be tension worth managing. But when you are able to make quick decisions, especially around the vision that's right in front of you, the methods you use to accomplish the mission – man, God can do a great work.

So don't hold too tightly to the things that you're practicing or the things that you're doing when it comes to seeing the mission come true. I believe with your willingness to see the methods change and discerning the vision that's right in front of you, God's going to do a great thing.

Robert Cortes: Man, I completely agree with that statement. It reminded me of another 3F word.

Mingo Palacios: Oh, come on.

Robert Cortes: Fail fast forward. That's another Rick, right?

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, fail forward, fail fast. There's another one, maybe for another episode. Maybe we'll talk about this next. He says fail often and fail cheap. Fail fast and fail cheap. You don't want failure to be drawn out and take forever, and you don't want failure to be super expensive.

Robert Cortes: Or repeatable. Don't repeat.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, don't make the same mistake over and over and over. So fail often and fail fast and fail cheap.

Robert Cortes: Fail differently, too. Don't do the same thing over and over again. [laughs]

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, exactly.

Robert Cortes: Awesome.

Mingo Palacios: If this conversation encouraged you, I would ask you to tag somebody in or share it, or if you haven't yet, subscribe to the podcast. Maybe this is a perfect

moment to do that. Appreciate you giving us a listen, and we'll talk to you soon. Thanks for being on the podcast, Robert.

Robert Cortes:

Loved it.

Mingo Palacios:

We'll talk to you guys soon.

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