Brad Mann & Jason Morris
Speedway Campus Pastor (Brad) and Online Campus Pastor (Jason)
Westside Family Church; Lenexa, KS
Interviewed by Emily Stratton
Westside Family Church, Lenexa Campus, Meeting Room
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Transcribed by Kaitlin Manley

Abstract: Westside Family Church is a well-established Southern Baptist affiliated church based in Lenexa, Kansas. Beginning as Quivira Rd. Baptist Church back in 1976, but in the mid-1990s, church leadership began to re-vision the church and begin implementing new approaches to running the church. As a part of this transitional period, Quivira Rd. Baptist underwent the name change to Westside Family Church and began some serious expansion planning. Throughout the later 1990s and continuing into the present, the church has undergone numerous building relocations in order to accommodate for a rapidly growing congregation size. At the same time, the church also began transitioning into a multi-site church model, establishing a few other campuses outside of Lenexa. Today, the church operates four primary campuses: Lenexa, Speedway (a campus located near the Kansas Speedway, better known today as the Legends shopping area), Lansing Prison (there are three sub-campuses there), and an online campus.

This interview features Brad Mann, the Speedway Campus Pastor, and Jason Morris, the Online Campus Pastor. Both Brad and Jason, however, have been instrumental partners in establishing Westside’s multi-site operations. Questions focus primarily upon the logistics of shifting an independent single-site church into a multi-site church, and how each of Westside’s current campuses function (including the Lansing Campus). The end of the interview focuses primarily upon Jason Morris and his role with the Online Campus—a new, if not cutting edge, approach to running church in an age with incredible technological capabilities.

Note: Emily’s questions and responses are in bold font, Jason Morris’ responses are in regular font, and Brad Mann’s responses are in italics.

Okay, so it’s June 27th and I am at Westside Family Church in Lenexa sitting with Brad Mann the campus pastor for Westside Family’s Speedway Campus and Jason Morris who is with the online campus.

So anyways, we’ll go ahead and get started with some interview questions. So I guess I’ll just start with Jason then, I’ll have you guys both introduce yourselves. So Jason, what’s your background, where did you grow up, how did you get connected with ministry, all that jazz.

Okay, well my background I grew up in Columbia, Missouri was introduced to church and Jesus and all of that at a very young age and decided when I was 11 that I was going to be a missionary and kind of went with that goal in mind from then on. Took a missions trip to Mexico when I was 16, loved it! Helped kind of refine what I felt like I was doing in my heart and went then to college in Pensacola, Florida where I studied to be a missionary and then continued on there. That’s where I met my wife. Continued on there to get my master’s degree. I got my
bachelor’s in Missions and my master’s in Biblical Exposition. When I graduated from college with my bachelor’s, Marie and I five weeks later got married. Continued on with my master’s and 6 months after graduating with my master’s we were both in Paraguay, South America where we stayed for almost 9 years. There…that’s a different story, probably for a different paper. There’s lots of really great history there.

Coming back to the states, kicking and screaming, it was 2004, coming back to the states. During the time we were in Paraguay, we had connected with Dan Southerland and that was where the connection started with us and the Purpose-Driven International network which with church history you’re probably familiar with Saddleback and all that. We were, at the time, one of the Paraguayan branch offices for Purpose-Driven International coordinating…all kinds of really great things happening in Paraguay. So when we went up to California, because the church won International Church Health Award by Purpose-Driven, that was when we met face-to-face with Dan Southerland, although through his written materials, some transitioning, we were already familiar with a lot of the things that he was doing. So that was how that connection got started.

When I came back a few years later to the states, because of just really being forced back more than anything else for my family’s safety, we started looking around at churches and other ministries to get involved with. I was kind of lost. I really thought that I was going to stay in Paraguay for my life. I just thought I would just do ministry there forever and die there…well I almost did a few times (laughter). So I was pretty much lost for about a year or two, maybe even more. Getting over PTSD, which I didn’t understand at the time, and trying to understand what God would have me for my next stage, my next phase of ministry. And that was when I got a hold of Dan Southerland and he, at the time, was teaching here as a teaching pastor and so Westside became kind of a focal place for what our next phase would be for us. We moved our family here and I got a job here…actually I was working my first, well I started working with the venue as a volunteer and that was the first kind of experiment that Westside was making into this whole multi-site strategy where they had a venue across the street, just for space reasons. They didn’t have enough space in the box that was over on Shawnee. I, while I was in Paraguay, was studying the whole multi-site paradigm and all of that because that was new stuff and I really felt like that was going to be the next evolution of what church was going to become. And I was really excited about it. In fact, I almost implemented it in Paraguay, but it just didn’t work out. So got here, got involved in that and it was within a few months they decided to launch the Speedway campus and Brad was heading up that whole effort and I was asked to come alongside Brad at the time, as I had done at the venue, and helped with the Speedway campus. That’s kind of how I got started there.

Later they asked me to kind of help out and…I’m always filling holes!

He’s been everywhere (laughter).

Then over at the OP campus helping out there, being a campus pastor for the OP campus for a while.

That’s Overland Park.

And then the Olathe campus when that transitioned that way. Because technology and internet and all of those things have always been a part of my life, it was a natural transition when they asked me “What do you want to do?” for me to say, “I think an online campus would be really cool.” And they’re like “Okay, do that.” Which was kind of surprising. Most churches have to
scratch and claw to get that kind of freedom that I enjoy. And so I was able to start, it was what? Three years ago, that we started our online campus and has grown from just a small group of people who were passionate about online ministry to reaching, well this past Sunday there were 2,500 that joined us from all around the world. It’s been a really cool journey and I still don’t know where it’s going to end (laughter). It’s really neat some of the things that have happened. But part of it, a lot of…it was an algorithm of the multi-site thing that we’re doing. If multi-site weren’t in place, doing an online campus would be really difficult to pull off. In fact, there’s a lot of synergy that happens between us because we share the same feed, we do a lot of things…what works well for me also works well for them. So we just kind of feed off of each other as far as that is concerned. Is that enough information for you?

Yeah, no that’s great!

Okay, alright.

And I always jot down notes so I’ll do follow-up questions based on the little tidbits I’ve heard here and there.

One extra thing that I think is helpful is that when I was so messed up in the head and just really disillusioned with God that I couldn’t be a missionary and always frustrated me as a missionary that when Jesus called us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all the nations, it bugged me that as a missionary I felt so limited because I could only be in one country at a time. I barely got to Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil a little bit, but now even though I didn’t see it at the time, God brought me back here to the states and I have the world coming to me. So it works out.

He brings it to you everyday.

(Laughter).

So (Emily turns toward Brad) introduction…same sort of deal.

Yeah. My name’s Brad Mann and I’m one of the Speedway campus pastors, have been for about 7 and a half years now. Grew up in a great Christian home with Godly parents, grateful for that. Never had the desire to be in fulltime ministry. I had the desire to be a professional athlete. So I went to college on a basketball scholarship and I played basketball for four years and had the opportunity after college to travel on a missions trip…a basketball missions trip with Athletes in Action, which is a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, and felt like God was continuing to lead me down a path of… I thought the desire, God’s desire for me was to be a professional athlete. In hindsight though, I look at that and God really was shaping me to do fulltime ministry because that’s what he wanted all along. So he allowed me to play a little bit of professional basketball, but after that trip with Athletes in Action, I got a contract to play a little bit of basketball for one year and then I got offered to go overseas, it really wasn’t anything big and then September 11, 2001 happened and so, as you know, many Americans at that point in time kind of reevaluated what their plan was in life and my wife and I had just gotten married a month before that and we had decided that going overseas probably was not the best thing for us at that point in time. So I was heartbroken and really my identity at that point in time, I didn’t realize it until my wife brought it out of me, but my identity was wrapped up in what I did as an athlete. It was not wrapped up in Christ. Even though I proclaimed him and I walked that out in my life, it was not apparent by some of the desires and goals that I had set for my life.
So with that being said, I felt like God was...I had felt this pull in my heart whenever I was traveling with Athletes in Action and I felt like God was telling me he wanted me to start something similar to that. Almost like I thought “Well maybe he wants me to work with Athletes in Action. That’d be a really cool job!” But that’s not what he wanted from me. He wanted me to start something new that was similar to that but had different facets of it than what they had. So I, in 2001, the summer of 2001 I felt God’s call to start a sports ministry. So I started a sports ministry called Livin’ the Dream: Basketball and we used basketball to...we do camps and clinics and all this stuff with younger kids and we also things with pretty much every age group now and it’s grown over the years. I’m just grateful to God for giving me that experience because as my wife and I...as we started Livin; the Dream, a year and a half into that, and 2 years into our marriage, God called us back to Kansas City, which this is where I went to school and at the time we were living in Oklahoma right after we got married and God called me back to Kansas City. I didn’t want to come back to Kansas City, I had no desire, after college was over with I had been burned kind of in college so I was like “I don’t want to go back there, I have a sick feeling in my stomach.” But I had job offers here so I had to come try it out and my wife had a job offer. So we came back and I really feel like I know, without a doubt now, that this is where God led us.

As we searched for seven months for a church to get plugged into, God led us to Westside and as I was in Westside...we kind of, for about the first year or so, didn’t really do much. We just kind of stayed under the radar. But after that, felt like God was calling me to get involved in doing some things. So really it wasn’t until one guy that I had befriended had came up to me and said, “Look, I need you to be a part of this team here, a volunteer team at the church.” And so I ended up doing that just because he had asked me and I had respect for him. And out of that, I blossomed and the pastors, at the time, the senior pastor and the associate pastor at the time saw that and so they set up a meeting with me on several occasions, which kind of scared me because I didn’t know what I had done, I thought I had done something wrong, and they had said “Hey look, we...we’ve got this vision to start a multi-site campus and we believe that you’re the guy to lead that.” And I’m like “Who told you that?” and they said, “Well, God told us that.” And I was like “God didn’t tell me that!” Because I had no desire to be in fulltime church ministry, I had a desire to be in sports ministry and that kind of thing. But over the years, God has allowed me to do both and God has allowed this opportunity to help me to become the man that I need to be so that I can do whatever he has for me in my life. Whether it’s to be a pastor or whether it’s to be a pastor to regular people or a pastor to athletes. Right now he’s allowing me to do both. So that’s kind of how I’ve gotten here and how I got into ministry. I have a communications degree, I did not have any...I didn’t go to Bible school, I didn’t go to seminary, which in turn, I think for me as a pastor I know...

It’s probably better.

Sometimes I hear that from a lot of our pastors, “You’re in a different spot.” So I think because I have a different background, I can relate to people in a different way than what Jason can, than what Pastor Dan can because I come from where most of those people come from. I mean, we’re all normal people, but I don’t have that background so I’m a little more at their level. I come from the business world so I can relate to people on a little bit of a different level. Does that help?

Yeah, absolutely. And so I’ll follow up and keep talking a little bit about Speedway especially since you’re a part of it too and start talking about how that got going. When
you were approached then, about getting it going, had the Speedway location been
determined at that point or was it still like “We’re going to start another location, let’s
start planning out the vision.” Or were you just told “Hey we’re going to send you out to
Speedway, ready?”

That’s a great question.

No, that is a really good question.

Because when I was hired on, I was brought on...as I mentioned, the pastors had began talking
to me in the summer of 2006, so this was 7 years ago...summer of 2005, sorry, summer of 2005
because we started in 06. And so they started talking to me over that point of time in probably
June and then they brought me on to doing some meetings and things probably in October of
2005. I wasn’t hired yet, I was still confused as to what we were doing. They just wanted me to
sit in on all of these meetings. I was like, “Why in the world am I here? What is this all about?”
and then 2005 at the end, it was November, I was brought on, they hired me to start what was
going to be the Overland Park campus. We were going to start a campus at 103rd and Metcalf in
Overland Park in a vacant retail spot. Apparently the owner of that building was a Jewish man
that did not want to sell it, so we...the plan to start in Overland Park was thwarted and so we
ended up...one of our ladies that was on staff at the time lived right next to...or she lived in
Kansas City, Kansas and she lived right across from where the Legends is now. Legends wasn’t
there at the time, but it was being built. As it was being built, there was a big, huge theater in the
middle of it and the theater was the one that...it was the building that was actually completed
before any other space in that whole area was completed. So she went in one day, just on a
whim, and said, “I’m going to talk to somebody and see what the possibilities are here.” And it
was just concrete, but they still had the forms out and she was looking around as the concrete
was there and she thought, “Well, the way this is laid out, we might be able to do church here.”
So she asked the general manager and they got her in contact with corporate headquarters,
which is in Nashville I believe for the Phoenix theaters, and we started to talk. We set up a
meeting with them, we were able to go in and kind of write down some ideas and the idea, that’s
where it all came about. And so here I was, hired on to start the Overland Park campus...that
was nixed and then all of a sudden, they said, “Well, you’re now going to be in Kansas City,
Kansas,” which is obviously 25 miles further away. So I was like “Okay, cool.” So that’s kind of
how it all transpired that yes, we started out with one idea in mind, but God totally said “Nope!
You’re following me, but you’re not listening to me. I’ve got something different for you.” So
that’s really, that’s how that all started. And obviously in that, Jason and I...Jason obviously
being the guy who had all of the experience in this and I know that that...when we first started, I
know that it had to be extremely difficult for you because you’re going “Here’s this kid who’s 27
years old and”...because Jason doesn’t look older than me, but he is. (Laughter). I like to rub
that in (laughter), because he looks like he’s 15. He...I know it had to be difficult for him
because here he is, a guy who had this in his heart for so long, this was his desire. This was his
dream. And it wasn’t mine, but it was God’s dream for my life. And so God was...in all this, he
was working on both of us and I learned a ton of things from him and hopefully he learned a few
things from me, I don’t know what he learned. In that, God developed our friendship, God
helped us to grow in him and to figure out what it was that he really wanted for both of our lives
because without those experiences, as Jason mentioned, he wouldn’t have been able to do
what he’s doing now.

Oh yeah, totally.
Yeah, well I would love to hear a little more from both of your perspective in terms of getting that ball rolling whether it’s collaboration between both of you or just the whole entire process of now that you have that venue kind of secured, how do you get it going? How much planning was behind it?

*Ridiculous amounts and obviously some of that…*

The complexity of church grows exponentially with each site that you do.

*Absolutely.*

And that’s one of the things that going…I think for a lot of churches when they think about the multi-site strategy, there are some definite upsides to…from an economic standpoint because you don’t have to build a building that could house thousands of…for like a mega church scenario, you’re not building a 3,000 or 4,000 seat auditorium, you’re…it’s a whole lot easier to find retail space that could fit a smaller crowd. And that’s how we started was in a small theater.

*We started with 300 people, that we took from this…or from our old campus, which is just a couple miles away and planted them there in the hopes that they would start a movement up there.*

That some of them would stick. Some of them did, some didn’t. I think there was a lot of demographical data that they were looking at and saying, “Okay, we have a big population of folks that come to our Shawnee,” which at the time was the only campus, “we have a bunch of folks that go to the Shawnee campus, a bunch of folks that go to the venue, so we know that video teaching works.” Because we had 300 people there…because that was a big step to say, “Okay, we’re not going to have a live pastor, it’s going to be video teaching.” It was a testing model.

*It was testing ground.*

It was a testing ground. So they just kind of ooched that way and decided, “Okay, this works, we have a big concentration of folks up in Leavenworth, Bonner, Lansing area.”

*We have 28 different cities represented at the Speedway campus.*

And what’s great about that Legends location is, we didn’t know this at the time, of course God did, we didn’t know it was going to be like the location. I mean, as far as highways and stuff and visibility, it’s awesome, but it’s grown sooo much bigger than when we first…because the only thing that was there before was just the Speedway. That’s why we called it the Speedway campus. We could call it the Legends campus today and people would get it, but we called it the Speedway campus then because that was the only thing that people knew in that area. Anyway, just pulling people and asking people “Well, if you already live up there anyway it’s a shorter drive for you,” and I think one of the strategic things is that while there are people that would drive from Leavenworth to here, they can’t invite their friends to drive here because there’s not that relational connection yet, but it’s a whole lot easier to invite your neighbors and friends if it’s nearby. So we thought, “Well, we’ll just bring the church to them.” And that was the big impetus for the multi-site thing, which I think is genius. A lot of churches when they’re exploring the multi-site thing, they look at it from a lot of the benefits and things they don’t have to deal with in growth, and that is true. Many times they’re not considering the complexity of ministry that is required to make that happen. And when you heard this conversation and it was largely about
how it’s going to affect the Speedway campus, you don’t have to have those conversations if you’re in one location and you especially don’t have to have those conversations if you’re only teaching one message at one time slot.

And that’s been a big learning for us…

Yeah!

Because the first five years it wasn’t like that...the first four years probably. We were going “Hey, we’re here too! You’re not thinking of us! You only have the Overland Park campus which is no longer.” But when we had that we were going “Hey, we’re here too! You’re not thinking of us! That doesn’t fit here.” And over time, that has developed into what we saw right here. They’re going “We’re doing this because it affects, not only one campus now, but it affects five campuses now. It affects, well five or six; Lenexa, 3 facilities at Lansing, which we’ll talk about that in a second, Speedway, and online.” I mean, it affects all of those.

And if you stop and think about it, and this is the shift that is kind of taking place, is that the person that’s on stage, like Dan, he knows that he’s teaching probably to more people through the camera than he is on site. And on Sunday morning that’s exactly what happens because he doesn’t play to the camera like we would love for him to do in our context selfishly, but he’s cogniscent of the fact that there might be 100 or 200 people on our lowest attendance service that we do to kind of siphon off pressure from our primetime services. There might be 200 people there in the room, but there are hundreds more that aren’t in the room that he needs to be aware of.

Or thousands more.

Yeah.

Because people, even, I don’t even know how many hits we get on our website because we post all of our stuff online afterwards. I know I direct people there all the time and say “Hey look, go check out some of our videos before you come, see if this is something you think you might be interested in.” And so I don’t know how many hits we get on those.

Yeah, it’s crazy. That’s just nuts.

Yeah, well and if you want us to talk a little bit about how the Lansing campus got started this actually involves both of us too.

Yeah, definitely.

Because both of us were, I guess, instrumental in how that all came about. We had been asked by one of our Speedway members, who used to be a pastor, who was working with a prison ministry at the time, he was a director of a prison ministry. He asked us to just come up on a Wednesday night to play music and to give a message for the guys to…“Let’s have church service on Wednesday night, you guys come up and do it.” “Okay.” So we all go up, at least a couple of us went up before hand just to kind of get a lay of the land and we go “Woah, this is cool!” While we’re in there we’re going “Man, we could do some really cool stuff here.” I’m thinking, “Hey, we could come in and do this more often, we could do more worship services like this.” I’m also thinking, “Man, I’ve always had a desire, my athletic background, I’ve always had
a desire to bring a basketball team in to a prison to play against some of the inmates and have just some comradery there.”

We come in for a Wednesday night worship service, Jason comes with us because he…I don’t know if you were playing keys or…

Yeah, I was playing keys.

Yeah, because Jason’s a musician too, this guy does everything. But he comes in and we start talking and we start scoping things out. And again, I thought “Oh, we could come in here more often.” Well Jason being the smarter one’s going “Well why don’t we just start maybe doing church here.”

This is a campus, we have it all set up. All they need is a projector and we’re done.

Yeah, so that’s how the idea came about is…he kind of took all that a little further and which he usually does and again, because I’m not that smart and he’s like “Why don’t we do this?” and we’re like “Dude, that’s amazing!” So we take the idea to the director of the prison ministry. He loves it and we ask him “What do we need to do?” So we start scoping that out for months and then we end up…before, the biggest challenge was to take that back to our pastoral team here and say, “Look, this is the idea we have.” There were some pushback at first.

So we have a campus that’s actually spawning off of another campus. That again, is another layer of complexity…

Yeah.

…that when you have multi-site paradigm in a structure, the leadership of the, I don’t want to call them mother church because that’s a different model, but I’ll say of the initial church, has to be comfortable with relinquishing control of, in some cases, the message content, the way that it gets expressed in that site’s context culturally because Johnson County’s different than Wyandotte. There’s a lot of…

Inaudible text.

Yeah, exactly. And it’s really different online so there is a measure of control that has to be let go of and not every pastor should or is willing to give up that control or think at that level of complexity, because if you don’t give up control, you’ll run yourself in the ground with the complexity that is generated. It’s just like running a small business, really, when you start franchising, at some point you have to have corporate headquarters decide things and you can’t have the original owner/manager doing everything. It just…it bottlenecks it all. And so that’s kind of…it’s a rough analogy, but it has its’ merit in this particular church space. And so yeah, it took a while for them to warm up to the idea.

Yeah and…but once we did it, we kind of did it in a test for a while and then it started to work and we had several hundred inmates coming on a weekly basis. That is since kind of…it kind of dwindled because we’re working with guys that the hope is that they’re going to get out, so you’re getting a new influx of people. Some of these guys are lifers, they’re in there…they’re going to be in there for life and so…but the first, we only had access to a certain group of inmates, it was the guys that were involved in this program that, I mentioned the director, it was only those guys, it was about 250 guys that we had access to. Only about 70 of them were
coming to church on a weekly basis because they...sometimes they’re allowed within the prison to do other outside jobs, those types of things, so they weren’t able to make it every week. So with that, we’re able to minister these guys on a weekly basis. We also do some coursework and stuff with them during the week where we can go in and we can partner with this ministry to teach classes, to offer these guys some things that they can...it can help them develop to when they get out. They can be better fathers, they can be better husbands, they can be better men in society, they can be productive, they can put together budgets and things like that so they can be actual functioning members of society and productive members.

And the cool thing that we didn’t really anticipate that happened was while all of that was going on inside Lansing Correctional, we didn’t anticipate the ministry that could be happening outside with their families. So what happened was, there was an inmate in Lansing Correctional and the mom and the kids come to the Speedway campus, share the same message, hear the same experience so it’s not like they’re living separate lives anymore. They have at least one shared experience as a family that they can talk about.

That’s been really cool to see and as Jason said, there’s challenges even with that that you may not want to get into, but we’re not able...there’s certain things that we can and can’t do—within the prison and even outside the prison. If there are inmate families, we can’t contact them they have to contact us. We can’t respond to inmates when they send letters to us, as pastors we can’t respond to them because...now Jason could because he’s not a registered volunteer up there. I can’t. I can’t respond to any letters and I was doing that for a while...well I found out that’s illegal and I could be put in prison for doing that, which is crazy. There’s all sorts of stuff, like it...it adds even more to the complexity it already is as far as a church setting. There’s even more complexity when you go into a prison setting because you are now under someone else’s jurisdiction and you have to follow every rule that they have that you may not know every rule that they have. It can get you in big, big trouble if you don’t. So I mean, that has been a beautiful thing. We started out with one campus in the maximum facility, we also do a concert every year for all of the inmates, which is general population, which is around 1,000 people. And then just within the last three years we were allowed to go into the minimum facility, which is another 1,200 guys and then just probably within the last six months, we were able to go into the medium facility. So there are three facilities at Lansing, minimum, medium, and maximum. We are now in all of them. We have access to the majority of the guys in every one of them. We only get probably 250 guys that actually will attend services, but yet we still have the opportunity on a weekly basis to impact thousands of them, whether it be directly or indirectly through the guys that we minister to. So that has been blow-you-away cool stuff...what God’s allowed us to do, what he’s thrown on our laps.

And it all started, you know a couple years ago I was praying that prayer before we even went up there, God was doing something in my heart when I was praying “God just get us, Westside, get us out of our comfort zone.” I felt like we were kind of just in this comfortable spot where we were growing and we were just kind of like...I had this desire for us to look different, multi-cultural type thing. So I began praying that for...especially for Speedway..."I want more people to come in, I want Blacks to come in, I want Asians to come in, I want this to be a place where we can look like your family because your family is big and it’s not just White people.” And so we have that at the Speedway campus, but we really have that at Lansing. And God just totally allowed that to happen and he got us out of our comfort zone in a way that I wasn’t thinking he would. Because going into prisons is not comfortable. And even for people here, sitting in our seats, especially in the very...affluent Johnson County, you’ve got people here who were affected by some of those guys up there. They’ve got a family member that was killed by one of those guys or something like that. It’s hard for them to hear us talk about prison ministry. It’s
hard for us to talk about ministering to a guy that’s living in prison, because they see him as scum of the earth, just as most of society does.

It’s hard for them, if they knew, they could be actually sitting right next to them.

True, that too.

(Laughter).

When they’re out, we have guys that are here sitting in these seats.

And I think that’s awesome.

I know, it is because that happens here and that’s cool and that’s uncomfortable for all of us, but it’s an awesome thing.

Yeah, so talk to me a little bit about kind of just the really nitty-gritty logistics and setting up in terms of getting the videos out to each of these facilities...how do you run it? Because I’m thinking of the three Lansing then you have Speedway going on and how do you get all the tech set up?

Well that was a process. We started off at the venue recording with cameras, all of the stuff, and sneakernet style taking a VHS tape across the street and popping it into a projector at the venue. That’s how it got started. At the time, because of space constraints there, we were doing Saturday night services so what we could do at the time was film it, record it, put it on a DVD and then take the DVD sneakernet style out to the Speedway campus for the next morning service. So at the Speedway campus, they actually got the Saturday night service from here at Shawnee for a while. And that was why it was so difficult for the speaker not to say “tonight” because there’s a big disconnect for people. It’s like “What? You know, are you talking to...?” And then it’s just like ‘psht’ he’s not talking to us. So there’s all that complexity that get involved, not just from a tech side of it, but in the way that you communicate. So we started doing that. We were actually, we’ve delayed. We delayed for a while because we wanted to make sure it was all edited perfectly and that it was all going to work out great. We snapped it in to, I think I was the next day after a while, right?

Yeah, it took us a couple years. I think initially we started doing day-of and then we...then it wasn't...we delayed for the first few years, probably 2, 3 years and then we decided years ago to go day-of.

Or weekend of. Right, because then finally we could be all in sync, all experiencing the same thing as one big church. Because one of the aspects of multi-site church that I think is so different when you look at it from a historical perspective of church, church plants and church splits that plant other churches have been happening for millennia. You go back to the reformation, you see that happening. The difference between a multi-site church and any other phenomenon that's happened prior is that while it creates another church body, there’s unity between the two and they both consider themselves to be the same church. They don't stop thinking of themselves as Westside Family Church and I don't, on online campus, don’t think of myself as stopping being Westside Family Church. We are all one church, we’re all led by one leadership, we have the same accounting, there’s a lot of things that facilitate the centralization that free us up to do pastoral ministry. Because he has a pastor’s heart that I wish I had. I kind
of think of new and fun ways of doing ministry, pioneering entrepreneurial style, but he has the pastor’s heart that I don’t. So what happens is, is that he doesn’t have to worry about preaching a message every single weekend and have that message preparation eat up all his time. He can take all of that time to minister and love on the people that God has brought to him and that is a unique thing that the multi-site strategy and church history has allowed us to do that we haven’t been able to do before.

Another thing that it’s allowed us to do, depending on the style of multi-site, is to bifurcate the church leadership and pastor role with a speaking role. So for him, again in our context this is what it does, is it frees him up, he doesn’t have to speak. He doesn’t have to even necessarily even be a good communicator. He can, on occasion communicate but he doesn’t have to do the weekly grind that would run you in the ground. It would run me in the ground. And so it frees us up. We don’t have to worry about it, we just worry about making the church run, ministering to people, calling them up and that’s what he spends…he spends half of his time just on the phone, it’s crazy.

Or in the hospital doing visits.

Yeah, right, exactly. And so, that is one thing, church history wise, where you have a church that can be multi-cultural, multi-campus, and yet have unity for a city or even greater. That is a shift, that’s a paradigm shift that has never occurred in church history before. Depending upon the style of multi-site church, it is also a shift where, before the pastoral role was considered a teaching and leading role together and very few have done that well because it takes a special person to be able to do that at a mega church level. It’s easier for a generalist to do that at a smaller level because of all the demands on the pastoral side that inevitably affect the way that he communicates and vice versa. So what splitting these two roles up has allowed us to do is to specialize, to have an awesome communicator and an awesome pastor at the same time. Which, in any other model, is really difficult to pull off. So where was I headed with that?

Logistics.

We went from DVD, just picking it up and doing it that way and making sure that all of our chronological references from the stage were eliminated as much as possible, which never really happened.

It would really get difficult when the Super Bowl or something like that…

Yeah, even we delayed even doing the Easter Shuffle was nuts. That was just crazy. And then it’s like “Okay, which week are we going to be doing this message and that message?” It was crazy.

I don’t miss that.

We finally got to the place and we always wanted to where we could actually do it live. While at the time, technology wise, doing it satellite to just one campus wasn’t cost effective. From what I understand, once you go to ten campuses then it begins to actually be cheaper than doing it internet style, which is the way we’re doing it. And that was largely due to us really, really wanting to go live. To take the heat off of our teaching pastors so he doesn’t have to worry about it. He just talks however he wants to talk. You don’t have to think about it. The only time he has to think about it is for our backup. But Sunday morning is Sunday morning. He can say “Good morning” and it doesn’t matter. It matters online, but that’s a different story. Anyway, it’s all live. All the stuff we do online is live, so what that allowed us to do is we have a point-to-point
communication. We send our stream up to the cloud, I don’t know how technical you are, but we send it up to the cloud…

Not very.

Okay, we just send our stream up from the…to the internet and then these guys have a cable modem on the backend that bring it down and there is a little bit of time shifting where they DVR it because our 8:30 service here is their 9:00 service. Our 9:45 service is their 10:20 service. So there’s about half an hour or so of leeway there so the people that are receiving the live stream over at the Speedway campus or watching it, they’ll pick “Okay, this is where Pastor Dan started speaking.” So we have live worship with Jimmy which who you just met.

Our children’s program…

Everything else is live. The only thing that’s not is the teaching and I think by design that was a really smart move for us, especially initially. And that’s one of the reasons why we still have the Speedway campus and we don’t have a church split right now. Because the guys over at the Speedway…there was enough cultural difference between Wyandotte and Johnson county, that if there were not that unity between us by having the same leadership, same direction, same vision...if we didn’t have that he were speaking every week, I think we would...they would be their own church. And it would be a good thing, but it wouldn’t be as powerful as having a unified church in many locations. Do you know what I’m saying?

Yeah, absolutely. Because we almost went that route, we almost went...there have been several times where we discussed that Speedway becomes autonomous. They do their thing, but yet we miss out on some of the beautiful things that do happen with that unity too. It could be great either way, but yet I like the way it is right now. Here we are, we have missions and all these types of things that we do locally, we also do globally all over the world with orphanages. I don’t know how much you know about Westside but we’re probably bombarding you with all sorts of stuff.

(Jason leaves momentarily)

No, you’re good.

There’s so many facets of this...what is Westside? We even have a campus in South Africa now that was a church plant. It’s crazy the things that we’ve been involved in and it’s because of the unity that Jason mentioned.

So then I was going to merge over to talking about the online campus, but I’ll wait until Jason comes back. So over at the Speedway right now, do you have any capacity problems? I’m trying to thing of...I haven’t actually been to the Legends Theaters, I don’t know how they are inside.

Come check it out, come check it out! We had 300 when we first started in 2006, February of 2006 was our start date. We now have anywhere from 900-1000 on a given weekend so it’s more than tripled. It’s not that way during the summer a lot of times. Sometimes in the summer, I don’t know what you know about churches, but churches a lot of times attendance takes a huge hit during the summer, as with anything. And then it spikes back up in the fall when
everyone...all the kids are back in school, that kind of thing. So we have around 900 consistently, 850, 900 on a weekly basis. Hmm, what else.

No, I was just wondering if there was seating capacity for that, I'm picturing...I was like “How do you fit everyone there? Do you have to have multiple theaters?”

We do, we do. We have 7 theaters we use and two party rooms. They have 14 theaters there. We use 7 of them and they all, this is the crazy thing, I almost feel like God really built that place for us. Because every room that’s in there is not, it’s not like a normal movie theater. Some of the movie theaters you have about 10 feet of clearance between the seats and the screen. These have about 20-25 on some of them and then a lot of them have a stage. And the stage isn’t just some little stage, it’s a huge stage which is the entire width of the screen. So we have room to put our, like our students can put their worship team on the stage and they can do worship. Their actually, the students are using the theater that we started in when we first started here with 300 people. And then now, we’ve moved to the big theater which holds 635 I think is what it holds total, even in the balcony, and with that we can seat...that many people can seat almost 1300 people in there for two services, which comes in handy on Easter because Easter, we’re sometimes running up close to 1500 people. Or Christmas, Christmas gets around that sometimes too. So we’re able to fit those people in there. Each theater, even the kid’s theaters...since there’s so much space in between the seating and the screen there’s room for them to set up little slides for kids, if they want to have a little recreational room, areas where they can do their lessons and things like that. And even the landing, these are multi-tiered spaces. On the ground level, or below ground level is this big space where the kids...they can do some of their activities. And even on the ground level...like the mezzanine or whatever, there is area there where they can plant some stuff...they can do things on that level to. So each area has room for us to grow.

The thing that is more difficult for us is children’s space right now. We have a little bit of room to grow, but we would have to go into the other side of the movie theater. We take over an entire wing, we would have to take over another theater in order to continue to grow, which presents even more challenges with volunteers because when you have those issues and you have more people, you’ve got to have more people there to help run it. So those are some of the challenges that we face.

And then from a logistical standpoint, another thing that happens too is basically it’s church in a trailer. They bring it in, wheel it out, set it up, tear it down and you got to...your turnaround times...it has to be able to be set up and in a trailer within an hour?

An hour. Well it has to be set up within an hour. It has to be torn down within half an hour.

So whatever kind of logistical things that you’re thinking of...do you hang lights? Do you do this, do you do that? Do you set up a projector? Do you put up decorations? And all of those details that happen from a logistics standpoint, you have to think through not how much does it cost as how long is it going to take us to set it up? Because you just don't have the time. I would...one of the things that would really change the experience for the Speedway, in my opinion, is you getting able to get in there at 5 o'clock in the morning instead of at 7. And being able to tear down until 1 or 2.

Oh yeah.
That would change everything. Because then you could do so much more to customize the space to what you want it to be instead of constantly fighting this balancing act of efficiency.

Yeah I’m thinking of sound checks for the bands with an hour of set up time. Do you guys have much time to just go up there and you’re ready to go?

Sometimes they don’t. It’s really bad.

*Which is why they have to come in pre-prepared.*

Yeah, they have their rehearsals and everything like that so when they show up…the whole crew comes in, sets up all the equipment, all of the PA, lighting, all that stuff is set up so that when the musicians actually come, they’re supposed to just jack in and do a run through. If they get a good, decent run through in before the 9 o’clock service, before 8:15 or 8:30 when people start coming in, we’re doing good.

*True.*

A good solid run through. What ends up happening is if you don’t get that run through…if you’re still…cable screws up or something’s wrong with the soundboard or whatever, you’re on a ticking time bomb because everybody’s going to be there at 9 o’clock. We haven’t had a major…God’s been really good to us because all it would take is the projector to blow up or the soundboard to blow up and we’d be toast.

Yeah. *Well this stuff has happened before. You mentioned how we’re live by internet. We also, before that, we were DVD. Well there have been times when the DVD player doesn’t work. Or there are now times, where this has happened frequently where we get an internet stream that doesn’t work.*

*Yeah.*

And so I mentioned to you before, one of the reasons why we do this is so in case that happens. *But sometimes this doesn’t happen. And sometimes when we get this, this doesn’t work if the DVD player or whatever doesn’t work.* So, which now this isn’t a DVD, this is uploaded right?

Yeah.

Yeah, so it has even more possibilities of failure than what a DVD…

Yeah, this gets encoded and sent to Dropbox, which then is being downloaded as we speak over on the machine that’s going to hit the trailer.

*And so when that happens, if it fails, me or Jimmy or someone needs to be prepared in order to get up and deliver the message.*

That’s happened a few times. *That’s happened quite a bit. It happened 7 times two years ago, or whenever we first started this. It happened 7 times in like 15 weeks. So it was more than almost half the time. I was like “It’s failing again, it’s failing again! It’s again!” So I had to take notes from someone else’s*
sermon and make it my sermon, which sometimes is easy, sometimes it’s not. The easy part is going “Well nobody expects anything out of me so I can go out here and totally bomb this thing and be okay! So no pressure.” But then again there is that pressure of “Holy crap, I’ve got 5 minutes to write a message and I’m…I don’t do this every week. So I got to get up there and pray that God speaks through me and I’ve got to speak with this.” And that’s really all I know how to do. Is speak with this because the other part I’m probably not the most gifted at. So those are different challenges.

You don’t have to be. That’s the cool thing is that...what I really like about the way that we’re structured is that everybody’s gifted in their area and contributes what they have to the greater cause. So I don’t feel bad…I have felt bad that I don’t have your pastoral gift that I don’t really want to sit down and cry with somebody and I don’t want to do hospital visits, it’s just not my thing. Because I’m not as empathetic as I probably should be as a pastor. That’s everybody doing their thing in the body of Christ as the Bible says. It all works.

And I can’t play music and I can’t do have the junk he does. I had to give him something.

(Laughter).

I’m giving you all the leftovers.

He says the leftovers...come on.

I’m not empathetic, I’m pathetic.

Those Speedway folks love you even though you live in Gardner.

Ahh I love them.

Yeah, so we haven’t really talked at all about the online campus at all. So tell me, how does this function?

From a logistical standpoint, basically the live feed that would go to them goes live to us. They DVR it, I don’t and so I just take the stream as it is, as it gets uploaded and we have our encoder box it sends out if it matters. We have different streams for different bit rates for people’s different...not everybody has 1 megabite down of speed, especially out in Pakistan and places like that. So we have different tiers of speeds that we do and then devices. So we stream to IOS mobile devices and Android as well as Rokubox, we have a Roku channel. And actually the Roku channel is the new thing that I’m super excited about because it takes the church experience from being a solitary experience in an online setting to being a communal experience and I think that that is more of a native church experience having it being more of a community thing. So when I can get it off of the laptop and into the living room, that’s a win. Because at the very least, the possibility exists for there to be more than one person to minister and pray for one another. While I can do all those things online, it’s different when you can do...it’s just better if you can do it face-to-face and there are things that you can do in person that you can’t do online, just like there are things you can do online that you can’t do in person. It’s just a different environment.

So but that doesn’t stop us. While many people may say having an online ministry would be, or having an online church, would be inferior to a face-to-face church or whatever, I would agree
with you. But that’s not going to stop me. I don’t think that…if we were going to wait for the optimal solution for doing church, then we shouldn’t have a New Testament. Because the reality is that is that the apostle Paul used the technology of his day, letter writing, because he could not be face-to-face with the people that he was ministering to. And if we’re going to have that attitude of “well if I…it’s all or nothing, it’s the best or nothing,” well then I think we’re undermining ourselves because you don’t have that example throughout church history. You have people doing whatever they need to do, whether it be circuit-writing preachers up in the north with the Methodists or Paul writing his letters or people doing stuff on the internet, it’s doing what you need to do to obey Jesus when he says “Go in the world. Preach the gospel. Do it and figure it out. It may not be perfect, but you’ve got to figure it out. “

And so there is a huge community of people that are online that we would never be able to reach with any…I don’t care how many sites we do, we don’t have enough money, we don’t have enough leadership, we don’t have enough resources to put a campus in every single city around the globe. But we can get the message out to every single city around the globe and that's precisely what we're doing. So yeah, we would have never considered having a campus in Pakistan or India or South…well now we have one in South Africa. All those things come from this whole thing of online ministry, which has opened up all sorts of possibilities for us globally.

Yeah, so is there any major concentrations of where people are streaming from? Are there a lot of local hits as opposed to global or how do people even get connected online? Do you just do Google searches or? That’s what I’m interested in.

Okay, that’s kind of a mixed question but let me try to answer it. The answer to all of that is ‘yes.’ And let me try to dial in to kind of what you’re saying. The largest concentration of folks that we see today, which is different from what it was even a year or two ago, what we see today, largest concentration are folks that are around the geographic reach of any of our onsite campuses right now. So the hotspot is the KC metro. That said, that’s the highest concentration, but that’s not the highest number. The vast majority of people are outside of the geographic reach of one of our onsite campuses and the vast majority of them are outside the country. They're just all over the place, there’s no real concentration. The biggest concentration, we had like 300 and something from the KC metro area and 250 from Pakistan. That would be probably the closest concentration. I know that there will be…but you’re talking about of 2,500, 300 are from the KC metro area. So basically, we’ve hit…I can’t even think of a country that we haven’t reached over the past three years. It used to be that I put a star on the map on the back of my laptop for every single country that would connect to the online campus. And after a while it just got ridiculous because I…it was just everywhere. So it was just like “okay, whatever.” (Laughter). The last time we had our Easter services we were at 170, no 182 countries, so that’s pretty much all of them.

The concentrations that we see in the Africa region are in Egypt in the Eastern region is in Pakistan next to India. In Eastern Europe would be Serbia and Romania. In South America, Venezuela for some weird reason, I have no idea. Why? Since they're not even an English-speaking country. And then of course in the United States it would be around here. So we get a mix of…it used to be in our first year that we would get a lot of folks that…I want to make sure I phrase this correctly because it kind of depends upon the model of online ministry that you want to do, some churches do an online ministry and all it is, is an online overflow. So they don’t have space here or if people are on business trip or their kid’s sick or snow day or whatever, they use that as a means to stay in tune with what the church is doing…that’s awesome. That’s not what we do. I think there’s a place for that and every church has to evaluate what they can do, what
God’s calling them to do. What God’s called us to do is a little bit more than that. There’s another model of doing online ministry where they see it as a gateway to a brick and mortar. So everything that they do is to try to “you experience it and now come to church,” as the better experience or complete experience, whatever that may be. And if you happen to be connecting and they don’t have a particular location nearby, well then they’ll refer you to one that is. So it is always pushing people toward a brick and mortar and it’s a gateway sort of ministry.

Our ministry model is twofold because it’s kind of morphed over this past year, but it started in the beginning to be an end-to-end online church. So the idea is we have online membership, we do...in a couple of weeks we’re going to have online baptism, online communion. We have online Life Groups and small groups. Everything soup to nuts, that’s our goal. If you cannot be in the church for whatever reason that might be because the reasons are endless...for whatever reason that might be, you can find a place here. So that’s basically the idea. And that is a little bit different, even theologically sometimes that can create issues depending upon what your view of the sacraments is and all that because well it’s just...in our particular context, with our particular set of theology that we have, it’s not an issue. We celebrate communion for example and I’ll just tell them “Just grab what you’ve got.” We’re all going to celebrate it together, they’re going to be in their house somewhere and they might grab a Lifesaver and a Coke. And that is, for them, the Lord’s Supper. Theologically, we don’t have an issue with that, other expressions of church would. So that’s between them and God, that’s how we handle it. I’m not criticizing or whatever, I’m just saying the way we do church allows us to do online ministry from end-to-end where in other contexts that might be more difficult.

How do you do the online baptisms?

This is going to be a fun one because we have...let me just...I’ll share one story with you and I’ll think you’ll get an idea.

Okay.

We had someone here, or at our church, who got on the online campus, couldn’t make it for whatever reason, decided...because we have a little share button you can invite your friends via Facebook. She clicks that button and says, “Hey, come join me...the online campus, blah, blah, blah. Lots of fun, boom.” Goes out everywhere. She happens to have a Facebook friend in Iowa who saw her post, her status update on Facebook and was like “Oh, that’s interesting, click!” She gets into the online campus. She has a medical condition that doesn’t allow her to go to church anywhere, she’s open to it, whatever. She comes to the online campus and hears Dan speak and really ministers to her heart and we have other buttons like if you need a prayer right now, live prayer, and somebody clicks that button and it opens up a private live chat area that we have folks in our context, we call them Prayer Ninjas, that are in there and they’ll pray with you and chat and all that kind of stuff and council all of those things. She clicked on the link and started talking with one our Prayer Ninjas and ended up accepting Christ, which was awesome. Never stepped foot on here, on any of the onsite campuses, was invited by a friend online, comes to an online campus, accepts Christ...just totally does a transformation. God does this work, not us. And it’s not the technology that does the work. The technology’s just simply a tool to minister to people whether it be a telephone, a car, a letter, it doesn’t matter. We’re all (1:05:15) using technology to do this work, it jus matters what millennium or what century you want to choose. In our particular case we’re going to use whatever.
She becomes part of a Life Group, an online Life Group, grows, gets to know a great group of folks and makes the decision after that she wants to become a part of our online community, our church...she wants to be a member. So she goes to our Get Connected class, which we do online, it’s separate from our church service and talk with her that way and she hears about baptism. Coming from a Catholic background she thought, “Well, I’m already baptized.” And that is something where we, again in our theological context, we believe that Jesus was baptized in ascended hope. We’re Southern Baptists, you know where that’s going. So our theological background is such that we believe that the Bible teaches it...people need to after salvation show their faith in believer’s baptism. Which as an infant is very difficult to do, because you don’t know if they’re a believer and while that’s a great thing to do for the family, it’s...most people don’t remember it. That’s kind of how it’s expressed in the Get Connected class. Jolene realizes “Wow, I was christened as an infant, but I’ve never been baptized and I am a believer. This is my next step.” And she has all this community that is around her already and she says, “I want to be baptized.” So I was like “Awesome!” So there are varying ways that that can happen logistically. If you want to see one, you can look it on Youtube. The online baptism that was done...the very first one that was done by Brian Vassel from, at the time, Flamingo Road Baptist Church, and it was done via Skype and it’s Youtube...he’s gotten so much flack for that...holy cow. We would do something similar to that is they’re too far out, that we couldn’t actually drive there...where we could Skype it in, where they could get in a bathtub with a believer, dunk them, and we could see it happen here live. So they’re not...it’s like a two-way communication that way via Skype. Everybody online obviously would see it, so the community in which she is a part of would see her profession of faith and encourage her in that way. Fortunately she lives in Iowa, it’s only about 4 hours away so on the 13th, we’re taking a road trip and we’re getting all of us...there’s about a dozen of us that are getting in the van, everybody...because she wanted it that way. She asked, she said, “Is there any way that you could come and baptize me where I’m at because I can’t really travel because of my physical problem and so it’s going to make it difficult and I don’t know anyone around me that could do the baptism. So can you come?” and I’m like “Yeah.” So we’re going to take a videographer with us and the team, all of these people that she knows by name and have ministered to her over the past year, she’s never met in person, she’s never been here onsite in person yet. And on the 13th, we’ll be able to see each other for the first time, which is going to be so fun! It’s going to be so cool! She wants us to...and what I want to have happen, she’s already rented the shelter and everything... (Jason starts getting teary-eyed)

You don’t have a pastor’s heart do you? Hmm, gee.

(Laughter).

She rented the shelter and there’s like a three-mile lake out there in Union, Iowa are we’re all going to go. We’re going to have a barbeque and what I want to have is all of the people who have, online, been a part of her life be in the water. And I don’t even have to do the baptism I don’t even really care. I can’t be there kind of officiating the thing, but I want Alicia (spelling) to dunk her because she’s the one who led her to Christ. (Jason sheds a tear)

As you can see...he’s pretty cold and heartless. (Laughter).

That is going to be a good story.

Yeah, it's awesome.
That is going to get on video and that is going to get shown here. So you have, theologically you have a public profession of Christ that “I belong to Jesus now and I want everybody to know about it.” So while it might happen in more of a private setting, because of lots of limitations in Iowa, it’s going to go public. My gut tells me it will probably go viral. Because it’s just a great story. End-to-end church, complete church experience. You have someone who didn’t know Jesus, comes to know Jesus, gets baptized, becomes a member of the church, and today, even before she’s baptized and everything, she is a Prayer Ninja. She will council other people and pray with them online, people she’s never met before and she’s awesome at it. She’s really, really good at it.

Now that’s just one story of hundreds and thousands of people who connect online. So you kind of get an idea, when people criticize online ministry and say “Oh that’s not real church.” They have no clue as to what really happens in people’s lives. That’s reality. That's why you never hear me use the term ‘virtual church,’ because there’s nothing virtual about this. You have real people that are making real life change from a real Jesus who transcends location and time and space and all of those things. And so that’s about as real as you can get.

You can have church anywhere, anytime.

Yeah. And so, that's not virtual. So there’s a lot of intentionality behind the philosophy of what we try to do from the very beginning and today what that’s brought us through is these ideas of now, because we have people that are coming to Christ and are using the technology and growing in Christ that this can be a mechanism for us to do new regional campus development in places that we have never considered before. Like the situation that you heard with Sam in Fort Riley. He’s using the infrastructure that we created to create another campus, practically and it’s not going to be done by location because wherever that platoon goes, Westside’s going to go with. So those are the things that really get me fired up because we could and this is, again you’re talking about church structures and all that kind of thing, I think that the…if you look at the arch of church history, with the circuit-writing preachers in the turn of the century in the late 1800s or whatever, morphing that into the mega church which was brought about by just the mobility that we had as a country. Because before the car, there was no mega church because you couldn’t bring that many people together, it just didn’t exist with few exceptions in highly populated urban areas like with Charles Spurgeon in London, and all that kind of stuff, it just didn’t exist. Well now in the 50s and whatever, you have the ability with the interstate system and roads and cars and all those things that happened…technology tools that God used to bring people together, and then now mega church happened, right? Well now we’re getting into a scenario where again, another technological paradigm shift is occurring in the same way where back in the day, the printing press started the Reformation and all that and totally changed church history from a technological change. I believe this technological change that we’re having right now is taking the mega church out into place that it could never go before and merging the multi-site and the online thing together that is going to propel the church into the next century where you will have a distributed church where people may or…you’ll still have large mega churches in suburban areas or whatever, but they will not be bound to just this area. They will be all over the place with pockets of like-minded people peppered all across the globe worshiping Jesus in a unified way that they never did before. So that’s where I see it going. I’m just glad that I can be a part of that, a part of that big arch of history that Jesus is doing when he said, “I will build my church.”

The logistic aspect of it…we upload the stream…actually the stream itself is not the big deal. One of the things we do on the platform side of things is the chat gets translated by Google translate. So even if someone is typing in Swahili, it gets translated into English and it comes
back to us in English. I see all English chat. I type in English, he would see it all in Swahili and would type in Swahili. And so there’s all that stuff that goes back and forth and that’s just a global church kind of a thing. Downside is, everything that happens on the video side is all in English and there are new emerging technologies, like Youtube does closed captioning automatically, even though it kind of stinks, and you can put translate on top of it, which also stinks, but it’s getting there. I think that we could have, in the next few years, the ability for us to have live captioned and translated messages on the video side as well as on the chat side. And then, merging the on and the offline worlds together where this whole concept of second screening, where on TV you got all these hashtags and people are talking about whatever show their watching or whatever where we’d have that same sort of phenomenon happening here with people online that are able to interact with the people...that are onsite being able to interact with people online all at the same time and then ministering to each other as a global church, in real time, live. That would be really, really fun. (Laughter).

Well, I have taken a lot of your guy’s time today, sorry to keep you talking forever. I’ll go ahead and end it here, but I really, really appreciate all the stories and getting to hear about how things are done. It’s been really, really fun.

Yeah, if we can be of future help, let us know. If you get somewhere along in the project and you need…

Put his name in the history book.

Put my name in the history book?

Yeah.

(Laughter).

She’s doing the…this is like Kansas history right here.