

Permission to Dream Again: Granted

Have we reached the end of pastoral visioning by dreaming of what should be? Does a church leader in 2016, surrounded by marketplace professionals seeking a strategic plan, ***even have permission to dream anymore?*** Is a less-than-precise path to a God-honoring future unacceptable to staff members looking for immediate action initiatives?

Is it safe for pastors to dream about a future day, ***or should we continue to just keep the focus on the Sunday to Sunday mechanics of ministry and making budget?***

Unless you were on a mission trip or under a rock last week, it was hard to miss the incessant media buzz about the 1.5 BILLION dollar lottery. Hundreds of thousands of people bought more than 635 million \$2 tickets in the hopes of the immediate acquisition of a life of extraordinary wealth.

And what made last week's Powerball drawing even more interesting is that I know of quite a few pastors, some of them prominent and actively justifying it –[see Perry Noble's post here](#), who were even drawn in to play the lottery. I'm sure many pastors who played the lottery instead chose to navigate what would inevitably be a hard question of "Why are you gambling Pastor?" with what would in the end be a *rather easy conversation with their congregation...* provided that they won: ***"Yes, I played... Here's my tithe"***

But here is what was really going on behind the scenes with most people who played the lottery last week.

The most fun in playing a giga-jackpot lottery is the dreaming.

What would you do... Rather what couldn't you do with more than one and one-half billion dollars? Just look at all these zeros! **\$1,500,000,000.**

Even though I never bought a ticket, I still channeled my inner [John Nash](#) with many nights of pre-sleep mental mathematical operations. I will readily admit, it was fun to dream about how I could giveaway hundreds of millions of dollars.

100 million each to NAMB and the IMB... because that moment of handing David Platt a giant check from lottery winnings would be epic... and there *would be* a giant check.

10 million to every church I have ever worked for, or attended. Let the heated deacons meeting commence!

1 million dollar education funds for my kids, my nephews and every child of a first second or third cousin... With the stipulation that it's an SEC school and anywhere but Auburn.

Buying that hilltop acreage in Wilson County that call out to me for our family homestead every time we drive past.

And a beach house at Seaside, a Colorado mountain lodge AND a Chicago loft apartment.

You see, for those who did not ruin their family finances on a statistical near-impossibility last week, the lottery incited something written deep into our creation... The powerful ability to dream of a better day. To think long what could be beyond what actually

is.

The problem with the lottery, one of many to be sure, is that *every one of those dreams are disconnected from an ever achievable reality.*

But for many pastors, the opposite struggle is real: ***the need for an achievable reality disconnects many from ever dreaming.***

Today's pressures mount for many ministry: Pressure to perform. To make budget before the big missions offering saves the day. To have a cool hairstyle like that guy in Nashville. To reveal bulging biceps as you open the Bible. To increase attendance faster than last year. Or even to once and for all relocate the church.

The pressures of Sunday often mute the dreaming of one day.

Will Mancini recently addressed the subject of pastoral dreaming, thinking long about the future, [in this blog post](#)... It's even in the name of his new book: [God Dreams](#).

And for any in ministry, ***it was the capacity to imagine a better future, to picture God's redemptive movement, to see beyond what is to what could be that got us us here to begin with.*** Everyone called according to God's purpose does so with a Great Commission Dream branded on our mind and buried in our heart. The everyday-on-call mechanics of ministry and the overlooked-in-seminary reality of leadership serve to squelch our permission to dream as we did at that first moment surrender.

It is a great irony that we would commemorate perhaps the most famous dreamer in American history the week after we celebrate perhaps the biggest lottery jackpot of all time. **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. should forever remind us that the capacity to dream and align people toward a better day may be the greatest human capacity of all.**

So here's to dreaming again...

Here's to proudly using work hours to think long about Gods call and not have anything tangible to show for it.

Here's to making time to truly vacation with your family because you've been spending time walking under open skies as a part of your day-to-day leadership.

Here's to thinking out loud with a leadership team about something that may require more than one staff meeting to plan and just a few weeks to execute.

Here's to being able to say *"I don't know yet"* on how to get something Gospel-sized accomplished.

Here's to what God used to get into this calling in the first place.

Here's to the permission to dream again.

> [Read more from Bryan.](#)