

UNLEASHING

YOUR GOD-GIVEN

DREAMS



STEVE MUNSEY



CLARION CALL MARKETING

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I would like to dedicate this book to Melodye, my wonderful wife. It was through her untiring efforts that this book came together. She is such an important part of my life and our ministry. She is not only my dearest friend and companion, but she makes me better in every area of my life, and I'm grateful beyond words.



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FOREWORD



DO YOU HAVE A DREAM FOR THE FUTURE? Have you considered what lies ahead and how you can do all that God has planned for you?

I've heard it said that the future belongs to those who dare to dream, and historically, some of the greatest accomplishments have come about as the result of someone's dream.

Unleashing Your God-Given Dreams presents an exciting study on how your dreams can help you discover the Father's plan for your life. Inspirational and informative, this book contains powerful principles from His Word, along with personal experiences and insights that will help you identify and act on your God-inspired dreams.

The message presented on the following pages of this book is reflected in the life of my dear friend Steve Munsey. He is a man of God who has discovered from personal experience how to unleash the power of the dream seeds in his own life. I know that the life experiences he shares, combined with his understanding of the Scriptures, will encourage you in your walk with the Lord, and help you discover God's plan for your life.

If your dreams and aspirations have not become a reality yet, don't despair. Keep reading, because this book is for you!

Dare to follow your God-given dreams, and begin to experience the full potential of God's plan for your life. Starting today, step out of the ordinary into the extraordinary life that God has in store for you!

—BENNY HINN

INTRODUCTION



*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD,
thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

—JEREMIAH 29:11

FUTURE VIEW

I WAS ELEVEN YEARS OLD and excited, to put it mildly. We were going on a trip, and the end of the journey would be a surprise. What could be better? How was I to know it would change my life forever?

With my father's busy pastorate in Chicago's Indiana suburb of Hammond, our life was happily tied into our church. Moving from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, my parents, Frank and Ruth Munsey, had started Family Christian Center in November of 1953, a church with no members, building, or money. In time, the fellowship began growing and becoming a successful, effective church, but there hadn't been a lot of time for "outside" activities, such as television, movies, and sports.

That's why I was so energized. Charles, a good friend of my parents, had planned to take his family, including his wife and five children, to a special event. They invited our family to go along. My dad couldn't, but my mom, two brothers, and sister accepted the invitation with glee. The trip was 550 miles, but the scenery zipped by as we sang, talked, slept, and tried to imagine what the surprise would be. We went south from Hammond, crossed over into Missouri in St. Louis, then continued motoring south through Springfield and into the beautiful Ozark Mountains. We kept going through a little town named Branson, and my imagination raced.

Ironically, I almost didn't get to experience the surprise we came to see. When we pulled into the gravel parking area in the middle of a clearing in the trees, I jumped out of the vehicle and ran out in the direct path of a Jeep roaring toward us. Thankfully, the driver, complete with rustic cowboy hat and beard, saw me just in time.

"He's going to hit me!"

The cowboy blew his horn and yelled at me as he slammed on his brakes. I froze, and it seemed as if everything around me moved into slow motion. I could hear the tires sliding across the loose gravel. I could smell the hot radiator and engine oil. Finally, the Jeep came to a halt a few feet away from me, and I felt Charles's hand on my shoulder. Suddenly, even though my heart was pounding, I sensed everything was going to be okay.

The cowboy stood up in the open-top Jeep, looked directly at me and shouted, "Howdy, partner! Welcome to *Shepherd of the Hills*." He gestured behind the Jeep to trailers with rail-type seating.

"Get in one of the wagons, son," he grinned. "I'm fixin' to give you and all you folks a ride down this hill like you never had before."

After what happened, I didn't need to be told twice. I moved quickly to the wagons. When everybody else was seated, he started up the Jeep and pulled the wagons behind him. He took off, and everyone held on, alternately laughing and grimacing. Down

through a tunnel of trees we went. We quickly left the sunlight for the forest. I was so keyed up that I kept praying, "Jesus, please don't let anything bad happen." I wanted to see whatever *Shepherd of the Hills* was. Suddenly we stopped in a covered wooden shed that resembled a historic covered bridge.

Almost immediately we were met by ladies wearing long dresses and bonnets. They handed us brochures.

"Welcome to our amphitheater where you will enjoy the outdoor production *Shepherd of the Hills*," a kindly woman said. "Please move into the theater and find your seats."

I recall stepping into a dirt-floored seating area. In front of me was an old wooden shed that housed a sawmill that appeared to be powered by a huge engine so massive it looked like something that would be used in a railroad locomotive.

I remember when we were getting seated, Charles asked, "Does anyone want popcorn?" I didn't say a word. I know it probably sounds naïve in a day when eleven-year-olds are surrounded by video games, surround-sound theaters, and digitally animated computer programs, but I was so overwhelmed by the moment that I honestly couldn't respond to him. Anyway, I would have been too excited to eat popcorn.

The sun was going down when a narrator's voice boomed out about what we were going to see. I was on the edge of my chair. I needed to go to the bathroom, but I never moved. I didn't want to miss a thing.

Suddenly, horses and wagons and donkeys and sheep appeared before us, all over that outdoor stage. Guns were going off, people fell out of trees, someone set fire to the house. Big flames of blazing, red-hot fire were burning the house. The audience could feel the heat. More guns were fired; horses raced through the set right before my eyes!

Right then, one of the actors came over to where we were seated

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and said, "Folks, we need some help! Please help us get the fire out!"

I didn't know if it was part of the drama or not. My eyes were bugging out of my head. It seemed everyone was yelling. I jumped up to help. Suddenly I heard a gun discharge. I felt something hit my shoulder!

"I'm dying!" I thought.

Then I discovered Dad's friend Charles once again had his hand on my shoulder, pressing it with a tight grip to hold me in place while we watched the actors put out the fire and restore order.

"Okay, folks, you can go back to your seats. We've got it under control." The big, loud voice emanated from the same man who had almost hit me with his Jeep. He still sported a cowboy hat and beard. He was one of the actors. He looked at me with that same stare I saw when I thought he was going to run over me with the Jeep. He said, "We couldn't have done it without you, partner! You saved the house of the *Shepherd of the Hills*!"

I looked right back at him. With my eleven-year-old voice overlaid with a Chicago accent, I yelled back, "You're welcome, buddy!"

The rest of the night is a timeless blur that touched me to the core, even when I remember it today. This play was the story Harold Bell Wright wrote in 1907 after the ailing minister-author traveled to the Ozarks for health reasons, then lived among the people as he regained his strength and began pouring his heart into a manuscript that would become one of the most widely read books in publishing

history. The book depicts the beauty of the Ozarks and the spiritual meaning found in a life lived in simplicity. The story centers on “the Shepherd,” a man from the city who chose to live and share his life with the simple country folk of Mutton Hollow.

From the panorama filled with guns, blood, horses, fight scenes, and rough-riding Baldknobbers emerges a tender love story and message of forgiveness. Everything was simply larger than life. And I was completely drawn into the drama. It ended, all too soon, with a touching gospel song.

The words of Harold Bell Wright would reverberate through my mind and heart for years to come:

Here and there among men, there are those who pause in the hurried rush to listen to the call of a life that is more real. He who sees too much is cursed for a dreamer, a fanatic, or a fool by the mad mob, who having eyes, see not, ears and hear not, and refuse to understand.

What I felt that night impacted me so deeply that, even then, I knew I had seen a glimpse into my future. I didn’t understand those thoughts completely. I was too young, I thought, to try to explain what I was feeling inside to my mom, brothers, or sister.

I knew from that moment that no matter what I did in life, whether I ministered or pastored a church, or whatever I did, I would use what I saw that night. I would tell stories through drama. I would attempt to touch others as powerfully as I had been stirred.

FAST FORWARD

No one, certainly not me, could have known that God would allow me to use performing arts to minister all over the United States and internationally. Our church services appear nationally through the

largest Christian television networks. God has given me the opportunity to minister from some of the nation's best pulpits.

Outside the Family Christian Center in Munster, Indiana, where I pastor today, stands a life-sized model of the Last Supper. Inside, six thousand people attend services each week featuring dramatized sermons, theatrical stage productions and powerful musical presentations. Our most recent expansion includes a gymnasium and auditorium, high-tech classrooms, computer lab, rock-climbing wall, video arcade, restaurant, karaoke stage and cafe, theater dressing rooms, and expanded worship areas.

Our annual Christmas productions have become must-see, sold-out events each year, with people attending from all over the Midwest. *Scrooge the Musical*, presented nightly through much of December, allows people to journey back in time with Ebenezer Scrooge to Christmas Eve 1843 in old London. This moving story of a miraculous change, complete with special effects and breathtaking stunts, entertains young and old with beautiful costumes, live music, and lots of laughter.

For more than two decades since I wrote *Jesus of Nazareth*, this action-packed, two-and-a-half-hour outdoor Passion play has been presented under the starlit summer skies of the Puyallup Amphitheater, located not far from Seattle on forty acres. The life of our Savior unfolds on an amazing football-field-sized set of Old Jerusalem, complete with a man-made, eight-foot-deep pond and a river running behind the set "buildings." There is seating for four thousand in this amphitheater, and nearly one thousand people volunteer their time and efforts to stage the production each year. Today it is one of the top ten Passion plays in America, and over one million people have attended.

We also present the production on the only indoor set of Old Jerusalem in the nation, located in the church in Munster. This set, 175 feet wide and 35 feet tall, features a built-in pool in the stage,

Golgotha's Hill with the cross of Jesus Christ, and a very lifelike cave depicting the tomb where Jesus was lain. Nearly one thousand people involve themselves in the staging of *Jesus of Nazareth* every March and April.

Hotel Hallelujah, a play I wrote many years ago for our church, features the most popular music and celebrity look-alikes of the past few decades, complete with pyrotechnics, dancing, motorcycles, cars, singing, and people flying in from all sides of the auditorium. Today it is performed regularly in some of the nation's most adventuresome, anointed churches. Reports of thousands of people coming to the Savior pour in after each production.

GOD'S DESIGN

Please understand, I'm not bragging about the opportunities that have come to me. Hardly! I'm more amazed (and humbled) than anyone! Frankly, everything came together in a moment of destiny that night near Branson while I experienced the *Shepherd of the Hills* production, and I suddenly realized why I had been born and what I wanted to do with the rest of my years.

Granted, God's wonderful design for your life may not be revealed to you in the Missouri Ozarks, as it was in my life, and you may not feel called to write and produce multimedia productions, yet the blueprint placed inside you by the Creator is vital to understanding who you are and what you are supposed to do.

I believe everyone has those moments when we are allowed to peer into the future. I can't explain them, but in the following pages of the book, I want to share how you can recognize how God desires to show what He wants you to do. More importantly, I'd like to build on those defining moments to help you understand your dreams, to get the resources you need to achieve your God-given goals.

One can only assume that just by reading a book with this title,

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you undoubtedly desire a better life, no matter where you are right now or what you are doing. Good news! The Father wants something even greater for you: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). In fact, what He wants for you is so wonderful that it will take a lifetime, and even eternity, to discover it all. Imagine that!

Are you ready to glimpse into your future? Do you want to know more about turning your dreams into action steps? Are you ready for a miracle-filled life? How about supersizing your dreams? Most importantly, are you ready to move purposefully toward life’s great finish line?

Let’s get started . . .



There is hope in your future, says the LORD.

—JEREMIAH 31:17

CHAPTER 1



SEEING YOUR FUTURE

Be assured, it's not possible for human beings to be empty vessels. No person who has ever lived has been an unbeliever, despite what they may argue. Everyone believes in something. It might be God or not God, manifest greed for money or power, a career or a friend, science, a principle—some thing. Whatever it is we place before ourselves is what we run toward.

—WALTER ANDERSON¹

BILL AND GLORIA GAITHER are arguably the greatest Christian lyricists of the past hundred years. That's not just my opinion, for in 2000 they were honored as Gospel Songwriters of the Century by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the first award of its kind in the 86-year-old history of ASCAP.

I've admired Gaither music since the days when "He Touched Me," "Because He Lives," "Thanks to Calvary" and "The King Is Coming" became common (if it's possible to use that word in connection with these classics) in churches and concerts all over the

1. Walter Anderson, *The Greatest Risk of All* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), 238.