

Editorial: ‘Risk something big for something good’

January 9, 2015

A *Dallas Morning News* headline popped off the computer screen: [“Why Jason Garrett is allowing the Cowboys to take risks.”](#)

(Ironically, of course, I realize the risk of writing an editorial based upon the Dallas Cowboys head coach’s newly emboldened tactics: Many Texans don’t like the Cowboys. Also, I’m writing this before the Cowboys play the Packers for the first time in the postseason since the 1967 “Ice Bowl.” Garrett could call a risky play that doesn’t work, and the Cowboys could lose at Lambeau Field, once again. But a loss still wouldn’t undermine the fact Garrett’s team has won more games this year, even as he’s called more risky plays.)



Editor Marv KnoxThe article, written by *Morning News* staff writer David Moore, illustrated Garrett’s risky/successful streak by highlighting the pivotal play in the Cowboys’ come-from-behind playoff victory over the Detroit Lions:

“The Cowboys trailed by three points with six minutes left against the Lions. On fourth-and-six from the Detroit 42-yard line, quarterback Tony Romo hit tight end Jason Witten for a 21-yard gain.

“Six plays later, the Cowboys scored a touchdown that would hold up for

their first postseason victory in five years.

“‘It shows he believes in us,’ Romo said.

“Too often in these situations, a coach makes a decision not to lose rather than to win.”

This scenario and Moore’s observations resonate beyond the football field and the locker room. They ring true in our communities and in our congregations.

Playing to win rather than not to lose

Too often churches—and denominations, to be honest—falter because they play not to lose rather than play to win.

We do less than God expects. We love less than others need. We care less than our hearts desire.

We take the safe route. We’re content to settle. We’re unwilling to risk.

Romo identified his coach’s new-found boldness: “... he believes in us.” Princeton-grad Garrett is smart, but he didn’t start calling passes on fourth-and-six and onside kicks in the middle of games because he read a book on sports statistics. He started running risky plays because he paid close attention to his players. He observed their stamina, their character, their will. He liked what he saw. He believed in them. And throughout the season, they reciprocated that trust.

Christians, of all people, ought to be able to understand this principle.

We worship and serve a God who deserves absolute trust. God’s faithfulness is unfathomable, because it’s built upon God’s infinite, unconditional love. Of course, that does not mean everything happens the way we want it to and we never experience disappointment. But saints

across the ages confirm God's love and faithfulness endure, no matter what happens.

Risk for the Kingdom's sake

So, we should be willing to take risks for the sake of God's kingdom. You and your church can figure out what they are. A new worship service designed especially for unreached people in your community. Perhaps a needed ministry that never will "pay" for itself. Maybe entrusting leadership positions to young adults. Possibly something you've never even dreamed, but you need to pray for the vision and courage to dream it.

We must take risks, because the world and our communities are changing so rapidly, we never will meet their needs if we're not bold, aggressive, risky. Every week, we face real-world fourth-and-six situations. We can't help all the hurting people and proclaim the gospel to all the lost and don't-even-know-they're-lost people if we can't tolerate risk.

One of the great benedictions, usually attributed to William Sloane Coffin, offers this prayer, which wraps blessing and wisdom around risk:

May the Lord bless you

and keep you.

May God's face

shine upon you and

be gracious unto you.

May God give you the grace

never to sell yourself short;

grace to risk something big

for something good;
grace to remember that the
world is too dangerous
for anything but truth and
too small for anything but love.
So, may God take your minds
and think through them;
may God take your lips
and speak through them;
may God take your hearts
and set them on fire.

May it ever be so.