

Wizardly Wilf

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By Rev Wilf Stanbury

Paul: I asked Wilf to write down the story behind his love of magic and performing tricks. We should have had our Café Church last Sunday afternoon, when Wilf had been asked to entertain us with some magic. Obviously, this wasn't able to take place, so it's good to hear the background while we're waiting to enjoy Wilf's tricks at some point in the future...

The question has been asked, "how did you get into magic?" I could say it started way back when as a young boy my father would do a trick with a penny, which he made to disappear, and then made it appear from behind my ear. But my real interest in magic began much later, in the early part of this century, while in my last church.

At this time, I held a family service once every month, when I used puppets, and various other aids to tell the Gospel story in ways to hold the interest of the children.

At one of our ministers' fraternal meetings, I was relating to one of my colleagues, Alex Russell, the things I did at these family services, when he asked if I ever used magic.

He said that if I were interested, he would teach me some tricks I could use, but to take advantage of this I would need to join The Fellowship of Christian Magicians. This was required because there was, and still is, an expectation that those who perform these tricks do not divulge the secrets behind the tricks. The reasoning here is that obviously the overall effect is lost but also many magicians are professionals and their livelihood is at risk.

Once a week I would meet up with Alex, practise and then try the tricks out at our family services, by and large they worked, but as some of you know, some seemed not to work out as they should. This is not the fault of the trick; the blame usually lies with the performer!

I'm aware that, for some, the idea of magic in church is suspect, but this is mainly due to a misunderstanding of the term "magic", which in this context has nothing to do with evil or the black arts, but illusion and fun. In church those of us who use this medium do so to challenge people's thinking where the Good News of Jesus is concerned and to bring before a congregation of both old and young an element of amazement and wonder.



(Image from [Fellowship Of Christian Magicians](#))