

2nd Opinion: A real magic wand

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Our 5-year-old granddaughter shared with her parents her Christmas wish list. Leading off was this simple request: “a REAL magic wand.” She’s serious about this. She also asked for “a real fort.” We’re enjoying watching this exchange from a distance.



Bill Wilson Her parents are coming up with all sorts of ways of helping her understand magic wands may be regular features in fairy tales and imagined stories, but they are in short supply in the real world. Good luck with that.

Actually, I would like to ask for my own REAL magic wand this Christmas. On more than a few occasions, I’ve fantasized about waving a wand over a church member or minister or congregation and making some desperately needed changes the easy way.

If I were to come into possession of such a powerful instrument, I’d wave it across congregations to:

- Change the hearts of church members so they would see their church as a gift to be humbly treasured and shared. Any hint of thinking their congregation exists to serve them would be swallowed up in an overwhelming desire to “seek first the kingdom” (Matthew 6:33).

- Plant in every minister's heart a positive and hopeful spirit that truly believes the life of a minister is the best job in the world.
- Instill an adventurous spirit that puts caution aside and embraces the act of walking by faith as a group.
- Install a core conviction in every single Christ-follower that different is good, and the more a church reflects the diversity of the people around it, the better we will portray what heaven will look like.
- Re-ignite a love for and devotion to Jesus Christ that trumps all things religious, political and cultural. An era of integrity would sweep over our churches.
- Unleash a wave of humility across the church and especially its leaders.
- Cause people to listen more than they talk, as well as pay attention to the needs of the people around them.
- Consume churches with a desire to care for the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick and those in prison. In doing so, we would see our cities and communities through the loving eyes of Christ.
- Cause all God's people to portray him in such a light that every citizen in every community and city would be drawn to the Good News because of their witness. Hope would swell all over the church.
- Abandon our insatiable love of things for the higher calling of loving people.
- Lead God's people to laugh often and with abandon. Joy would be the order of the day at church, at work and at home.
- Cause a sense of peace that passes all understanding to invade the

hearts and minds and homes of God's people.

Isn't this a nice fantasy? The problem is, there really is no magic wand to make these things happen overnight. So, is this just wishful thinking on my part? A Christian fairy tale?

Maybe so, but perhaps it is time for us to look, not for a magic wand, but for the One who lived a life that defied logic, wisdom, convention and all boundaries. Because he did, and because he continues to do so, all our dreams and wishes still can come true.

We so need to allow Jesus to capture our imaginations this Christmas. When he does, count me among those who are waiting breathlessly to see how the miracle of his coming is going to break out in his church. When it happens, it might even look like magic.

Join me in that prayer, won't you?

-Bill Wilson is the founder of the Center for Healthy Churches.