

---

## BLENDING FAMILIES

Jim Waldron

The Bethlehem church near Murfreesboro, Tennessee holds a lectureship in November each year. In 2004 one of the speakers was Neal Pollard of Mechanicsville, Virginia. Because of Brother Pollard's biblical strength, his maturity and research skills, Steve Yeatts, the local preacher at Bethlehem, assigned him the subject, "The Challenges Facing Blended Families." After Neal clearly and distinctly showed there are only two reasons why an individual may be married a second time scripturally, he pointed out there are often "blended families" within our local congregations that need love, help and encouragement.

The *blended family* being defined as adults and/or children from broken or disrupted homes being brought together in a restored home.

The lesson was one to touch the very fiber of the spirit of those who have been a part of such families or who have sought to help and encourage those who find themselves in such. A copy of the lesson should be in the hands of preachers and elders all over the country.

As an outreach of their mission work the church will send a copy of the lesson on CD to anyone who wishes to have one. Write to:

Steve Yeatts, Bethlehem Church of Christ,  
2644 Lascassas Pike, Murfreesboro, TN 37130,  
or phone 931-893-2297. No charge.

---

## !! BEWARE !!

Raymond Elliott

**THE JESUS PROPOSAL**, a book by Rubel Shelly and John O. York, was published in the spring of 2003, by Leafwood Publishers in Siloam Springs, AR. Shelly is a preacher for the Woodmont Hills church, Nashville. York is "Associate Professor of Preaching and N.T. at David Lipscomb University" in the same city. The errors taught are too numerous to list in this space, but here are a few:

- 1) Religious divisions caused during the past 220 years were due to culture rather than theological reasons. (Preface)
- 2) The authors are calling for unity among believers based solely upon an "orthodox confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God." (p. 20)
- 3) The church has been wrong in requiring that others have the same understanding regarding instrumental music and baptism in order to be acceptable to God. (p. 43)
- 4) "Denominations are not sinful per se..." (p. 63)
- 5) Diversity of doctrine is not a hindrance to unity. (p. 64)
- 6) The Holy Spirit can work in various denominations as He did in the various congregations in the first century. (p. 77)

1204 Kingston Green Dr., Prattville, AL 36067

# BULLETIN BRIEFS

Vol. 8

January 2005

No. 1

## MILO WARD SPREADS THE GOSPEL

The brother mentioned above turned 73 in June 2004, and although he has had heart and prostate surgery and takes two shots of insulin a day for diabetes, he is not letting age or infirmity slow him down when it comes to teaching the gospel at home and abroad. In April 2003 he wanted a Bible Correspondence Course that he could use to teach from his home. I recommended the one we distribute called, "Introduction To Faith." Milo began in May that year by advertising in a weekly community paper which is distributed free in the area of Knoxville and Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He used his own address and offered the Bible course without charge. In the first twenty months as of this reporting he has averaged twelve students per month (231 total) from the area the paper covers in East Tennessee, but what is wonderful news is that he is also teaching in the Philippines.

That came about through a Christian lady from that country, who now resides in Arkansas, introducing the course to her Christian friend in their native land. That sister in Christ teaches in a government school and she wanted to know if she could let her students take the lessons. The results are that 270 are enrolled and are currently studying the course. Of that number two thirds (180) are Roman Catholics and eleven are Muslims. The husband of our sister in the Philippines is a gospel preacher and he recently reported that two young people obeyed the gospel. Thus brother Milo was, after twenty months, actively teaching more than four hundred persons the gospel both here at home and abroad.

The course, "Introduction To Faith," consists of ten lessons that are what the title implies, an introduction to the faith which is revealed in the New Testament of Jesus. It is designed so that you receive a master copy then make as many copies of lesson one as you see fit. As the need arises for copies two - ten you make whatever number needed - always keeping the Master copy in tact. You may have a copy for use by the members of your local congregation or get one to use personally as brother Ward does.

Write for: **Master Copy of Introduction to Faith BCC**  
to Randall Standefer, P. O. Box 123, Dunlap, TN 37327.

We do not charge. When your copy comes in the mail just pay the amount of postage shown on the outside or make a donation to our printing fund.

## WHY DIDN'T JESUS BECOME A MAGICIAN?

Jesse Fonville

Jesus could have been actor who has ever lived. His life would have been for Him to gather spectators as He would or float in the air! How been for Him to dissolve eyes, or instantly clothe a crowd of 50,000 with new raiment. The people would have loved it and felt good about it.



the greatest magician or Just think how differently been! Little or no opposition, and the praise How easy it would have crowds of eager, excited make Himself disappear dramatic it would have a mountain before their eyes, or instantly clothe a crowd of 50,000 with new raiment. The people would have loved it and felt good about it.

But Jesus could not and would not have become a performer, an actor, or entertainer, even though that would have attracted immense crowds. You see, He came to make people good, not simply feel good. He came to convict the world of **sin**, as He said, “of sin because they do not believe in me” (John 1:9). He came to do **surgery** on dying humanity with the sword of the Spirit (Heb. 4:12), not a butter knife.

He came to rescue us from the power of darkness and sin, not to make us laugh and be satisfied with our fleshly selves and eventually be plunged into everlasting destruction. He carefully avoided the use of tricks, comedy and entertainment as He brought the life-saving message to a lost world.

Christians everywhere ought to be deeply disturbed by current trends toward more and more entertainment, drama and recreational activities instead of Bible study and genuine spiritual training. True worship is not a “spectator/performer” service. Yet, some congregations have adopted theatrical and denominational examples of worship instead of the New Testament pattern. As it is written, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 1:13). In fact, the worship that God seeks makes the worshippers the “performers,” in prescribed (John 4:24, Matt. 7:21) acts of devotion to Him for **He is the audience**.

If you know the book you know that, neither Jesus nor first century Christians made use of magicians, clowns, puppets, or actors as they taught the Word and worshipped God. Authority for their use is completely lacking in the New Testament.

While entertainment may draw crowds and make people feel good, it **will not, and cannot**, save people from their sins! God has chosen the “**preaching of the Gospel**” to save people (1 Corinthians 1:18-21). God’s **power unto salvation** is the gospel, not the doctrines and commandments of men (Romans 1:16; Matthew 15:9). Preaching is to be bold and with authority for it is again written, “exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you” (Titus 2:15).

Sadly, some have left the truth and turned to fables to keep people interested (II Timothy 4:3,4). If the Word is not powerful enough to change people’s lives, bringing them to repentance, then we have nothing else to offer. If the Christ, “**lifted up**” (John 12:32) is not able to draw people from sin, then games and gimmicks certainly will not.

We must be very careful as to the kind of “bait” we use in fishing for the souls of men, that it please God. Of course, it is easier to seek numbers with “gospel rock,” recreation, entertainment, fun, food, gymnasiums, palatial buildings and/or flashy pulpitiars.

If you want to be entertained, go to the worldly churches or to theater; but if you want to be cleansed, justified, and sanctified, then go where God provides it through God fearing preachers and evangelists (Ephesians 5:26; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22-25; cf., Isaiah 58:1). When people “love the Truth,” (II Thess. 2:10-12) they reject as “artificial,” games and gimmicks that play on ones emotions, but do nothing to draw him or her closer to the Lord Jesus, or help him or her to mature spiritually.

Acting involves a certain amount of deception; and children do not need that in religion, which should be the most serious pursuit in life. They need to understand that the Cross was real (an instrument of torture and excruciating death); and the Devil will do anything to capture them; and that living for Christ is **serious business!**

The Holy Spirit long ago observed that people did not want plain simple preaching that told of their sins, for he said, “this is a rebellious people. Lying children, children who will not hear the law of the Lord; who say to the seers, do not see, and to the prophets, do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Isaiah 30:9-10). Is it any wonder therefore that He commanded His preachers to “cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell my people their transgressions” (Isaiah 58:1). The churches do not need actors, but preachers with fire in their bones (Jeremiah 20:7-9).

87 Lee Road 228, Smiths, AL 36877

## RELIGIOUS DEBATES

Alan E. Highers

There was a time when gospel preachers could hardly enter a community without being challenged for a debate: G.C. Brewer told about conducting a meeting in Walker County, Alabama, and being challenged for a debate when he was “a beardless boy.” Foy E. Wallace, Jr. spoke of preachers he heard in his childhood: “They put power in their preaching. They moved men. They did not preach sermonettes. They were not preacherettes.” M.C. Kurfrees mentioned several well-known debates in his time and declared that they were precipitated :by the aggressive, uncompromising, and unyielding fight waged by the faithful and fearless preachers of the time against denominationalism and all other forms of division among the people of God.” Hugo McCord conducted a meeting at Carbon Hill, Alabama, at which a denominational preacher rose in the audience and challenged him for a debate on the question of total depravity. Brother McCord told the man to come back to the meeting the following evening, and they would debate the issue. They did.

Debates have continued and even grown in popularity in the political realm. They occur in presidential campaigns, at television forums, and on the floor of the United States Senate. Religious debates, once very popular, have declined to such an extent that many in the younger generation have never heard such an encounter. There are several reasons for this change in the religious landscape of our country. First, in our post-modern culture, it is not popular to believe that one is right on an issue while others are wrong. Why have a debate if every view is equally acceptable? Second, there are very few representative men among the denominations who would consent to debate. In the past, there were competent men, recognized by their followers, who would readily defend their views in a public discussion. Third, there are fewer men among us who are either prepared or inclined to debate. Fourth, men among us are not honored for defense of the truth in the same manner as in former years. G. C. Brewer, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., N. B. Hardeman, and others were all debaters as well as preachers of the gospel, and the brotherhood respected and honored them for their stand. Fifth, our preaching is not as doctrinal and distinctive as it once was, and denominational representatives are not as likely to be stirred to challenge us. Sixth, our society, in general, is less concerned with what the Bible teaches and, therefore, less likely than before to debate what it says. *Spiritual Sword*, 115 Getwell Road, Memphis, TN 38111, Vol. 36, No. 1, Oct. ‘04.

***The clergy ignores us, therefore we must challenge the false doctrines such as Calvinism and Pre-millennialism on the airwaves and through tracts. Their mouths must be stopped. We must be bold in an expose’ of such. LIFT UP YOUR VOICE (ISA. 58:1)! (JW)***