

Pastor Ray McCauley remarries after bitter divorce

After a bitter divorce last year from his wife of 24 years, well-known charismatic preacher Ray McCauley, senior pastor of Rhema Bible Church in Johannesburg, South Africa, has remarried. About 6,000 guests attended the wedding ceremony where, according to South African media, McCauley's new wife, Zelda Ireland, was cheered by congregants as she walked down the aisle.

Speaking to the South African Sunday Times, McCauley dismissed a newspaper report that had said people in his church were critical about both his lifestyle and "choice of bride—who has been a model and reportedly twice divorced.

"I am looking forward to having a companion again. It's been a long, hard and lonely road, but I hope to be able to get on with my life, serving God and the church," he said.

In an earlier interview with South African magazine You, McCauley's former wife, Lyndie, described her marriage as "emotional torture" with "absolutely unbearable" pressure. She told Charisma: "It's very difficult to live with an angry loses his temper a lot," she said.

When the couple split, Lyndie McCauley moved in with her mother, but her situation did not improve much, she said. "I didn't feel I would be afforded the liberty to recover. So eventually I said, 'We'll just divorce!'"

Charles Nieman, pastor of El Paso, Texas-based Abundant Living Faith Center, performed Ray McCauley's second wedding and had counseled Lyndie McCauley before the divorce. He told Charisma he had told her "at least eight times" she had no biblical grounds for the divorce but that she had said she was going ahead with it anyway.

According to Nieman, despite Ray McCauley's willingness to do anything to save his marriage, which had included counseling and a three-month sabbatical from his church, Lyndie McCauley had not been interested in staying married.

However, Lyndie McCauley claimed that at the same time her husband was promising to attend counseling he was continuing a pattern of emotional abuse, which she said included taking her credit cards, threatening her friends and excommunicating a family who helped her.

"That's not love," she said.

Rhema Bible Church is the largest and most prominent charismatic church in South Africa. Ray McCauley, a graduate of Rhema Bible College in Tulsa, Okla., drew international attention when he successfully integrated the church and made it a showcase of racial diversity in a nation known for its apartheid policies.

-Jeremy Reynolds