

Stephen Strang: How Reinhard Bonnke Plundered Hell (And Saw a Dead Man Raised to Life)

Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke was well-known for his expression about plundering hell to populate heaven. Literally millions of people accepted Christ as a result of Bonnke's preaching. Many of those souls are in heaven to welcome this evangelist who passed away on Dec. 7.

There have already been many tributes to this great man. But I would like to share my recollection of my interaction with Bonnke over the years and how I believe his life impacted the kingdom of God. I go more in-depth about my thoughts about Bonnke in my podcast, which you can listen to by clicking [here](#).

I believe Bonnke was one of the great men of our generation, particularly in the Pentecostal and charismatic movement. Bonnke was German but was well-known for his evangelistic work in Africa. The first time I heard about him, I was attending a Pentecostal conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in the early 1980s. There were flyers all over about this German evangelist who was having huge outdoor rallies in Kenya.

That was the first time I ever heard his name. He was probably in his 40s at the time. (He died at the age of 79.)

The moment I actually met Bonnke came in January 1989 in Brazil. My wife, Joy, and I had flown down to Brazil for a crusade with Charles and Francis Hunter. We ended up staying at the same hotel as Bonnke and his wife, Anni.

We had a wonderful time visiting with the Bonnkes. Soon after,

Bonnke began hosting fire crusades in the United States and other parts of the world. He actually invited me to speak during one of the breakout sessions in the early 1990s. I have to admit, I was a little overwhelmed by the experience.

In the 1990s was also when Bonnke moved his ministry headquarters to the United States. A lot of his donor base was already over here, and due to the strict tax laws in Germany, the move made sense.

Of course, we reported on him many times in *Charisma* magazine. He had a huge tent in Africa that was destroyed in a horrible storm and many in the news were reporting on it. But God turned that hard situation around for good. Bonnke ended up hosting huge outdoor rallies that continued to grow in size.

The crowds soon grew too large to hold in a tent anyway. So the storm was, in that sense, a blessing in disguise. In 2000, I was invited to go to one of his crusades in Nigeria. I remember seeing with my own eyes a million people gathered to hear that man of God preach.

I remember thinking, *I'm seeing it, but I'm not sure I believe my own eyes.* But it was true.

Bonnke, of course, preached an amazing gospel message—as only he could. It was a very moving experience, one of the most memorable moments of my life.

Soon afterward, Bonnke decided to move his headquarters to Orlando, Florida, which is where I live. But before he officially made that move, he asked the Lord to show him in a dramatic way if it was really His will that CfaN move to Orlando.

About that same time, a dead man was actually brought to an evangelistic meeting Bonnke was holding in Africa. Bonnke didn't even really pray for him, but the dead man came back to life. I realize that statement sounds extreme, but the event

was fairly well-documented and was never really criticized. I believe God truly raised that man from the dead.

Bonnke took that dramatic moment as a confirmation from the Lord.

And that's how Bonnke lived. He lived to preach the gospel. He lived to win souls into the kingdom because he didn't want anyone to go to hell. And he firmly believed that the power of the Holy Spirit was strong enough to win more souls than man's affectations ever could.

I'm grateful God blessed this earth with Reinhard Bonnke's life for 79 years. I pray the Lord raises up more men and women like him—people who are zealous for the things of God and won't let anything stand in their way.

Listen to my podcast to hear more incredible stories about Bonnke!