

Benny Hinn Denied Entrance to UK

Healing evangelist Benny Hinn was denied entry into the United Kingdom over the weekend because he failed to comply with new immigration rules introduced in November.

Hinn was scheduled to speak during a three-day Fire Conference and Miracle Service at the ExCeL London. But Border Agency officials turned him back because he had failed to bring a valid sponsorship certificate from his church.

Hinn, who arrived by private jet, flew on to Paris and unsuccessfully attempted to regain entry to Britain via Luton, the *Daily Telegraph* reported.

"When I landed in the United Kingdom, I was informed that under British law, there is now a recently passed regulation called a Tier 5 Concession, which meant that I could not enter the country to preach without a visa," Hinn told supporters in a statement on his website. "Attorneys sought to work out this challenge, and the officials treated me very well, yet in the end, the result was that I could not participate in the conference or Miracle Service in person."

Bishop John Francis, pastor of Ruach Ministries in London, stepped in to preach each service, and Hinn addressed the crowd through a live video feed. Hinn's ministry said attendance was high at each meeting despite Hinn's absence, and several people reported miraculous healings.

Under new immigration rules intended to combat extremism, all religious workers must obtain a valid certificate of sponsorship before they arrive in the U.K. One of the purposes of the new system is to prevent those who preach religious hate from entering the country, the *Daily Telegraph* reported.

A Border Agency spokesman told the newspaper the rules "are applied objectively and clearly set out for travelers."

Hinn said U.K. attorneys representing the ministry did not properly interpret the new law.

"I ask the people who attended the services to forgive me for not having known prior to my arrival that such a law existed in the United Kingdom," Hinn said. "Even though neither I nor my staff was informed of this regulation, we are still responsible in the sight of God to obey the laws of men. I promise you, my partners-and I promise you before God-this will not happen again."

Hinn said he plans to return to the U.K. and is already making arrangements to secure the necessary visas, which he said must be obtained at the British Embassy in the U.S.

He said he will obey the regulation and "do that which is right in the sight of God and men; then once again, I will return to the United Kingdom without hindrance or difficulties next time."