

Christian Producer Responds to Benny Hinn Twitter Lawsuit

Editor's note: Last week we published verbatim a press release from Benny Hinn Ministries regarding their side of dropping a lawsuit against Christian media producer/consultant Phil Cooke, who often writes for Charisma and has a popular blog. Cooke had sent out a tweet the ministry didn't like which prompted the suit. In fairness, here is Cooke's side as he posted in his blog:

"On March 15th, Benny Hinn issued a press release Hinn Dismisses Defamation Suit Against Self-described Media Consultant, Phil Cooke. After Hinn dismissed the case, I was moving on. But, since he decided to keep the story alive by issuing a press release, I felt it was appropriate to respond to those of you asking about it.

On Jan. 12 The World Healing Center Church, Inc (or Benny Hinn according to his release), filed a lawsuit claiming that the following tweet I made (based on a reliable source) was defamatory, fraud, intentional interference with business relationships, etc.: "TV EVANGELIST NEWS: Benny Hinn and Paula White are reportedly engaged. Prayer cloths are rejoicing everywhere." (OK, so I had a little fun with it.) One of the more interesting and I thought odd allegations in Hinn's complaint was that the Twitter post suggests serious sexual misconduct. How does a reported engagement suggest sexual misconduct?

You might have also noticed that, on the 12th, I tweeted an apology to Benny. That post got some pretty funny responses, like, "Uhhh who is this tweeting for Phil Cooke?!?!!" So people noticed something was up. Benny had decided to dismiss the case and had represented in writing "that he is not and never has been engaged to Ms. White."

Of course, since day one, my position was that the lawsuit was frivolous. Other than agreeing not to sue Hinn for bringing the lawsuit to begin with, I made no concessions (no payment, no agreement to be silenced, etc.). In fact, if Benny had just called me and said my source was mistaken, I would have happily tweeted the corrected info. No need to sue. □

There you have it.