

Eddie Long's Divorce: Social Media Users' Mixed Reactions

It's been a year full of scandal for Bishop Eddie Long. In May he settled a lawsuit with four men who claimed sexual misconduct; he settled another lawsuit in September regarding a real estate venture; and he was sued in October for his alleged role in a Ponzi scheme. The bishop is in the headlines again as his wife, Vanessa, filed for divorce last week.

The media has had a field day with the latest controversy, and Long was No. 5 on Google's trend list Monday morning. But how is the public handling the news? Reactions on social media sites range from angry to supportive.

Long founded New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in 1987, and announced Sunday he will be taking a sabbatical. Members and supporters of Long's Lithonia, Ga., church have been the most sympathetic to his family's situation.

Anthony McKissic wrote on the church's Facebook page: "Bishop keep fighting for your family. God is a healer. You are an awesome man of God. They can attack your character and you may have given them the opportunity to do so BUT what they cannot attack is your anointing. It is strong and you have made a lasting effect on my life. Keep doing what you do Bishop!"

Robin Free encouraged the couple via social networking. "May God comfort you both and minister to you during this time," she wrote. "And while God ministers to you privately, I will continue to keep the Long family lifted in prayer!"

Regarding Long's announcement that he is taking time away from New Birth to focus on his family, Eddie Ramirez wrote: "I seen the heaviness in your countenance as you made the announcement. As a pastor, my prayers are with you. Remember though, no matter the outcome, this too shall pass."

Twitter is also ablaze with postings of articles about the couple's divorce and his sabbatical. Commentary on the matter ranges from hurtful and shocked to understanding. While some believe Vanessa Long's request for divorce is justified, others call for prayer.

Twitter user @bebedenim posted: "Um prayin' for you & your fam. I dont know everything but I do know that your human & hurt like anybody else."

Despite the negativity in the media and social networking, Long appears ready to fight for his marriage. "Vanessa is, and has always been, a loving, dedicated and committed wife and mother," Bishop Long said in a statement Friday night. "My love for her is deep and unwavering. It remains our sincere desire to continue working together in seeking God's will in these circumstances."

The couple was married in 1990. They have three children together and one from Long's previous marriage.

Jennifer LeClaire contributed to this report.