

Why Benny Hinn's Second Wedding Matters More

I attended Benny and Suzanne Hinn's first wedding in 1979, so it was an emotional experience to attend their second wedding on Sunday at the Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Fla.

I've known Suzanne since she was 14 and Benny since he first came to the U.S. from Canada around age 25. I was involved in their courtship when Benny asked me to send Suzanne some flowers to make amends when they broke up once—because I was in Orlando and he was in Canada. (This was before the days of 1-800-Flowers.) I even hosted Benny's bachelor party in 1979. So I have a unique perspective as a long-time friend of the family.

Over the years, Benny has been on the cover of *Charisma* twice, including in 1978 when he was largely unknown in the U.S., and I've published a couple of his books.

I've also had my differences with Benny publicly as well as privately. But I want to go on the record that I love Benny and Suzanne, and I believe their reconciliation is significant not only for them personally and their family, but to the entire Body of Christ. In a day when divorce is becoming common among Christians (and when even some Christians divorce and continue in ministry as if nothing's wrong), maybe this will now be a trend in the other direction—toward reconciliation and less divorce among Christians.

[Click here](#) to read my report from Monday in which I quote Jack Hayford, Roy Harthern and Reinhard Bonnke and what they said about the significance of the Hinns' reunion—that millions would be affected by the example they set.

As a family friend, I've been aware of the strains that led to the Hinns' divorce. Apparently, there was no infidelity. Two

people just had major differences and drifted apart. Benny has admitted he put the ministry ahead of his family. One thing led to another. Suzanne shares blame on not reacting right to the issues that developed over the years—issues many other wives have had to deal with.

But for the grace of God, any of us could be in that place.

When the divorce was announced, I went to Benny privately and urged him—as I’ve urged other Christian leaders facing tough times in their marriages—to stick it out and work it out. It wouldn’t be right to say more. But I knew up close how dead that marriage was. Indeed they were legally divorced for a year and a half and were separated for some time before that.

The wedding was magnificent, as you might expect. Benny Hinn always does things in a big way! In fact, the rings were so impressive that Pastor Hayford, who officiated, jokingly said he was tempted to find out how much he could get by pawning them. That let those of us who couldn’t see them know how nice they were.

Since I’ve known the Hinn children from the time they were born and watched them grow up, I was choked up as I saw them walk in the wedding procession. Later, a beautiful slideshow of the family included pictures of Benny and Suzanne as children and as they met and courted. There were photos of the first wedding, which I attended, and of the four Hinn children as they grew up and were married and had grandchildren. The images were accompanied by “The Prayer”—one of my favorite songs—by Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion.

It ended with a huge “letter” from the children shown on screen that said in part: “Dad and Mom, today is not only a testimony of God’s faithfulness but a day of rejoicing. We love you so much; we can’t begin to express how happy we are to see you rededicating your love to each other again. May your love grow deeper every day.”

I'm a seasoned journalist. I've done or seen it all. Yet I noticed a tear streaming down my face. To me, it was one of the most touching moments of the wedding.

Equally moving was when Benny invited the grandchildren to join him and Suzanne onstage near the end. As his oldest grandson, Theo Koulianos, stood in front of him, Benny told how Theo had asked him at Thanksgiving in 2011 (when he was 6) when his grandfather was getting back together with "Nana." Theo told his grandfather he was praying Jesus would get his grandparents back together.

"God answered that little boy's prayer," Hinn said as the crowd cheered.

Indeed, God answered his prayer and the prayers of many Christians asking God for a breakthrough in marriages all over the world. Marriage is under attack as never before. And sadly, many Christian leaders who should be leading the way not only aren't speaking up, but their own marriages are in disarray.

The three men who performed the ceremony all have long, stable marriages themselves. Jack Hayford has been married 58 years, Roy Harthern has been married 62 years and Reinhard Bonnke has been married 49 years.

I admire Benny and Suzanne for being willing to make the changes necessary to reverse the relationship problems that led to the divorce. Change is never easy, especially when you are in the public eye as they are.

They both seemed very happy on Sunday—and they deserve to be happy. There are many pressures on them and others like them in the ministry. I hope the rest of their marriage is like a honeymoon compared to what they've lived through.

I personally believe this will send a signal to many of Hinn's supporters who dropped supporting his ministry when the

divorce happened. But even more, the fact that Benny did the right thing spiritually by reconciling indicates that he is in a place where God can use him in amazing ways.

But it also makes the stakes higher. If the Hinns were to split up again, it could also mean the death knell of his ministry.

Let's pray for Benny and Suzanne and rally around them as the body of Christ. Let's believe that the prophecy Reinhard Bonnke said will come true—that millions of marriages will be healed as a result of this miracle of restoration.

"This is too wonderful," Bonnke told the crowd. "I see a river of the Balm of Gilead flowing to millions of broken marriages."

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