

REINHARD BONNKE

A Tribute by Ekkehard Hornburg



When I think of Reinhard Bonnke, I think of Jesus. He always lifted up Jesus, never himself. He put Jesus at the centre, not himself. He was free from himself and Jesus became visible through him. That is what people felt about him when they met him. There was someone greater than Reinhard Bonnke. A donkey carried Jesus to Jerusalem. Reinhard Bonnke carried Jesus. Wherever he went, Jesus went. He no longer lived, but Jesus lived in him.

Reinhard Bonnke was like the burning bush out of which God spoke, and his close relationship with the Holy Spirit was the key to his ministry. In the book *Holy Spirit: Are We Flammable or Fireproof?* he writes about this. It was not success or money that drove him but the Holy Spirit. He wanted to become a soul millionaire and he did multiple times over. He plundered hell and populated heaven. Reinhard Bonnke loved the word of God, and the Holy Spirit made Jesus ever greater to him. When we met him for the last time in Hamburg, he said he reads and studies the Bible for four to five hours every day. The word of God lived in him and he lived in the word of God. Reinhard Bonnke was a man of prayer. He got up early to spend time with God. I remember a time when every day, early in the morning, he would pray at the mission centre and anyone who wanted to could join him. Prayer was as essential to him as breathing.

I once heard him say that it was not the mass gatherings that gave him fulfilment but his relationship with Jesus. Reinhard Bonnke loved Jesus above all and he loved people. He had faith in God and faith in people.

He knew no fear, only the fear of God. He was a man of great faith, great love and great kindness. I know no one who was more generous than he was. His gospel was pure, passionate and simple. He lived what he preached. He was humble and did not draw attention to himself. He always gave Jesus all the honour. He was immune to praise and immune to criticism. At the beginning of his ministry, when he sometimes preached to five people, he was asked: *"What are you doing wrong, that so few people come to your services?"* He answered, *"I don't know."* Years later he was asked: *"What are you doing that so many people come to your services?"* and he answered: *"I don't know."*

Reinhard Bonnke was the "real deal", as they say. He was genuine through and through. The better you knew him, the more you came to appreciate and love him. I thank God that I had the chance to get to know him and to work for several years in his ministry. Reinhard Bonnke was the spearhead and pioneer of a whole new generation of evangelists. He often said, *"If Jesus can use me, a nobody, then he can use anyone."* He also believed that the greatest harvest of souls in the world was imminent. His life is an example of what God can do with someone who surrenders himself completely to Jesus and follows the Holy Spirit without compromise and without fear.

"The greatest outpouring, the greatest anointing of God's power ever known, is coming upon us. Past revivals will seem as nothing when Pentecost breaks upon the entire church."

Reinhard Bonnke

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