



LONG LEAVES PULPIT!



Rev. Eddie L. Long Jr. said Sunday he would "step away" from preaching for awhile.

Long's Wife Decides To Seek a Divorce

After Saying She'd Filed, Another Statement Says She'd Withdraw Petition, but That Changed

By JAMES S. TURIN
Special to the Chronicle

ATLANTA—The reconciliation of Vanessa and Eddie L. Long Jr. didn't make it through the day, as the wife of the charismatic pastor of the New Birth Missionary Baptist has decided against withdrawing her petition for divorce filed late Thursday afternoon.

"Mrs. Long continues to hope that this matter may be resolved expeditiously, harmoniously and fairly, however, she has determined that dismissal of her divorce petition is not appropriate at this time," Michael W. Tyler, one of Mrs. Long's lawyers, said in a prepared statement.

"To avoid any undue confusion, Mrs. Long's future statements, if any, will be issued through her attorneys," he said.

A spokesman for the Kilpatrick Townsend law firm (of which Mr. Tyler is a partner) refused further comment.

Vanessa Long released three statements to the media Friday. First she announced she was seeking to end her 21-year marriage following "a great deal of deliberation and prayer."

Then, around lunchtime, in a statement sent through New Birth's public relations firm, Mrs. Long is quoted as saying, upon further "prayerful reflection," she was withdrawing the divorce petition.

"I love my husband," she said in the second press release. "I believe in him and admire his strength and courage."

Mrs. Long said her decision to seek a divorce was driven by "years of attacks in the media that frustrated and overwhelmed me."

She and her husband "mutually agreed to find healing," Mrs.



Vanessa Long, the wife of Rev. Eddie L. Long Jr., here being kissed by her husband, filed for divorce last week. Long said.

Six hours later, her attorneys announced she was proceeding with the divorce "consistent with her original [statement] made this morning."

In the divorce filing, Mrs. Long, 53, said her marriage to the New Birth pastor was "irretrievably broken" and there was "no hope of reconciliation."

The couple has been in a "state of separation," according to the petition.

"Vanessa is, and has always been, a loving, dedicated and committed wife and mother," Rev. 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

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A Homosexual Scandal Dogs A Baptist Minister

By JANET L. MARSH
Special to the Chronicle

LITHONIA, Ga.—At the height of his influence, Rev. Eddie L. "Bishop" Long Jr. would pack tens of thousands into his megachurch in the suburbs of Atlanta.

With his flamboyant, Zoot suits, a passion for Bentleys, and dramatic style of preaching, he quickly climbed the list of the nation's most prominent charismatic televangelists.

He built the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, which stretches to Kenya and other countries, on a strong message of conservative Christianity that included promises of prosperity and attacks on homosexuality.

Crumbling

But life inside "Bishop" Long's home has been crumbling of late, and on Sunday, members of his dwindling congregation heard news for which they had been bracing for months.

Their leader (His title of "Bishop" is, apparently, self-bestowed), who in May settled with five young men, who accused him of homosexual coercion and abuse, and who has fought a series of other legal battles, said he was temporarily "stepping away" from the pulpit at New Birth Baptist.

He said he wanted to try to save his marriage.

Divorce

The announcement came after his wife, Vanessa Long, 53, first said last week she was going to divorce Rev. Long, but, then, another statement was issued by the church quoting her as saying she would withdraw the divorce petition.

Hours later, however, Mrs. Long's lawyers said she did, in fact, intend to end their marriage of 21 years.

The Longs have four children.



Before the Scandal

Revs. Eddie L. Long Jr. and Bernice King in a photo taken at the funeral services for Coretta Scott King (the widow of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.). The services were held at the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, four years before a homosexual scandal involving Rev. Long broke in 2010.

"Vanessa and I are working together in seeking God's will in our current circumstances," Rev. Long, 58, said in a statement issued by the church.

'Family'

During worship services on Sunday morning, he told members that he was still their pastor and would continue to provide spiritual direction, but that he needed time to take care of "some family business."

Some members attending services pledged support and said they would stay until his return.

"He needs to be with his family," said Marilyn Arnold, a business manager. "It's hard on his family. When he comes back, we'll be here."

But not everyone remains a believer.

Valencia Miller, a property manager in Lithonia, said she left the church after the young men who accused the Baptist minister of sexual impropriety came forward.

"A lot of us left," she said in an interview on Sunday. "I mean, a whole lot."

'Long Must Go!'

Like others, she hopes that Rev. Long turns this temporary break into a permanent one. Since the sex scandal broke, picketers have paraded at the church with signs saying things like, "Long Must Go!"

"The church needs a cleansing," Mrs. Miller said. "I'm real disappointed. He was a man we all looked up to."

Rev. Long took over the congregation in 1987 when it had a few hundred members.

As he took over the church, he dismissed the congregation's board of deacons, it was reported.

Rev. Long went on to build a following of 25,000, according to the church's Website, and

reached millions more on television.

One Atlanta television station reported that an examination of church records revealed that, before the sex scandal, New Birth Baptist took in \$20 million/year, and Rev. Long received a salary of \$1 million/year.

Settled

Just after Easter, Bishop Long settled a lawsuit in which young men claimed the pastor offered gifts, trips, and emotional and spiritual guidance that, eventually, led to homosexual relations when they were teenage boys.

One of the young men, (continued on page A3)

Perry to Be Presented Honorary Doctorate

Publisher Given Nod at Commencement Ceremonies of Mid-America Christian

By JOHN W. SIMMS
Special to the Chronicle



Russell M. Perry

The publisher of *The Black Chronicle* will be presented an honorary doctor of humane letters degree during commencement ceremonies scheduled this weekend by Mid-America Christian University.

The ceremonies will begin at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 10, at the Gaulke Activity Center, 3500 SW 119th St.

Lieut. Gov. Todd Lamb will give the commencement address to the 132 graduates.

The newspaper publisher is president of Perry Publishing & Broadcasting, which owns *The Black Chronicle*, as well as 16 AM and FM radio stations located in Oklahoma, Georgia and South Carolina.

Perry Publishing & Broadcasting also sponsors a cable television entertainment show, "The Urban Outlet," which airs throughout the state, and owns a broadcast tower company.

Mr. Perry holds controlling interest in the First Security Bank of Oklahoma City.

He served as secretary of commerce in the administration of Gov. Frank Keating, and has served on an advisory committee of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.



Herman Cain speaking to about 250 in Oklahoma City at a Oklahoma Republican Party fundraiser on Monday. (Photo/David McDaniel/The Oklahoman)

Cain to Continue Fight To Reform Washington

Speaks Here After Campaign Is 'Suspended'

By W. ORLANDO PIERCE
Special to the Chronicle

Herman Cain, the now former Republican presidential candidate since he "suspended" his campaign on Saturday, said on a visit to Oklahoma City, he will continue fighting.

Mr. Cain was in Oklahoma City on Monday to help raise funds for the Oklahoma Republican Party.

State Republicans gave three standing ovations to the erstwhile presidential candidate, who "suspended" his campaign Saturday after facing ever-surmounting allegations of sexual harassment.

(An official of the Oklahoma Republican Party said Mr. Cain had made a commitment to attend the Oklahoma City fundraiser long before he halted his campaign.)

After the sexual harassment allegations began to surface, Mr. Cain had dropped considerably in the polls, having been tagged a frontrunner for a time.

He was polled as low as 8 percent the week before Saturday's an-

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