



## Haggard says he's cured, is 'completely heterosexual'

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DENVER — A leading evangelist who admitted to “sexual immorality” following allegations of sex with a male prostitute is convinced he is “completely heterosexual,” said one of four ministers who oversaw three weeks of intensive counseling with the disgraced minister.

The Rev. Ted Haggard, a vocal opponent of gay marriage, also said his sexual contact with men was limited to the former male prostitute who came forward with sexual allegations, the Rev. Tim Ralph of Larkspur told The Denver Post for a story in the Tuesday, Feb. 6 edition.

“He is completely heterosexual,” Ralph said. “That is something he discovered. It was the acting-out situations where things took place. It wasn't a constant thing.”

Haggard resigned as president of the National Association of Evangelicals last year after allegations of sexual misconduct surfaced. He was also forced out from the 14,000 New Life Church that he founded years ago in his basement after Jones alleged Haggard paid him for sex and sometimes used methamphetamine when they were together.

Haggard, who is married, has publicly admitted to “sexual immorality.”

The scandal disappointed Christian conservatives, whom President George W. Bush and other Republicans had counted on heavily in the run-up to the national legislative elections last November, which Democrats subsequently won.

Ralph said the board spoke with people close to Haggard while investigating his claim that his only extramarital sexual contact happened with Mike Jones. The board found no evidence to the contrary.

“If we're going to be proved wrong, somebody else is going to come forward, and that usually happens really quickly,” he said. “We're into this thing over 90 days and it hasn't happened.”

But Jones, in a statement distributed by the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**, questioned Haggard's quick conversion.

“It's hard for me to believe that he's 'recovered' in three weeks when he'd been having oral sex with me for over three years,” Jones said.

In that same statement, Matt Foreman, executive director of the Task Force, called on Haggard to stop avoiding responsibility for his actions.

“Haggard should be seeking forgiveness for the way he used the Bible to bash gay people, the way he warped and damaged young people in his 'Jesus Camps,' the way he shamelessly mixed religion and politics for personal and partisan gain and for defaming Mike Jones,” Foreman said.

“Instead, he's doing what all these preachers do when they get caught with their pants down — they make themselves the victims of a personal failing,” Foreman added.

Haggard said in an e-mail Sunday, Feb. 4, his first communication in three months to church members, that he and his wife, Gayle, plan to pursue master's degrees in psychology. The e-mail

said the family has not decided where to move but that they were considering Missouri and Iowa.

Another oversight board member, the Rev. Mike Ware of Westminster, said the group recommended the move out of town and the Haggards agreed.

"This is a good place for Ted," Ware said. "It's hard to heal in Colorado Springs right now. It's like an open wound. He needs to get somewhere he can get the wound healed."

It was also the oversight board that strongly urged Haggard to go into secular work.