

Ted Haggard Says He's 'Miserable' in New Film

An HBO documentary that airs next month follows the disgraced evangelical pastor to Arizona, after he was dismissed from his former church in Colorado amid a drug and sex scandal.



[] Former pastor Ted Haggard admits in a new HBO documentary titled *The Trials of Ted Haggard* that he was guilty of sexual immorality in the past, but that he's unhappy with some of the consequences he, his wife, Gayle, and his five children have had to face since he was caught in the scandal two years ago.

"We've been exiled permanently from the state of Colorado," he told filmmaker Alexandra Pelosi in 2007. "We're miserable."

Haggard, who was accused of soliciting a male prostitute and purchasing methamphetamines in November 2006, moved his family back to Colorado Springs earlier this year and is selling life insurance to make a living.

Next month, he will help promote the new HBO documentary.

Before *The Trials of Ted Haggard* began making publicity, Haggard remained mostly out of the public eye since being dismissed from his former church in 2006.

One notable exception was when he spoke last month in the pulpit of a longtime friend—the pastor of Open Bible Fellowship in Morrison, Ill. After that appearance leaders involved in Haggard's original restoration process quickly told *Charisma* that they strongly **disagreed with his decision to speak at the church.**

In addition, Haggard's spiritual restoration was deemed "incomplete" earlier this year by leaders from New Life Church, which Haggard founded in Colorado Springs, Colo., in

1984.

Brady Boyd, senior pastor of New Life Church, told *Charisma* the church has freed its former pastor from any further obligation. "We have released Ted and Gayle from their separation agreement with New Life Church," he said. "They are free to move forward with their lives in any way they choose without any legal constraint from the church. We wish Ted, Gayle and their family only the best in the future."

In the film, Haggard acknowledges that he violated church rules and "shouldn't have done that," but questions the wisdom of the church leaders who banished him for being, as Pelosi suggests, "bad for business."

"I think if they would've been chess players instead of checker players they would've realized that I am their business—somebody struggling with sin," Haggard says in the 42-minute documentary, which airs Jan. 29.

Pelosi, daughter of U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, befriended Haggard in 2005 when he was still New Life's pastor and head of the 30 million-member National Association of Evangelicals. She gathered footage for a documentary called *Friends of God*, which focused on evangelicalism's power in Washington politics.

For her latest project, Pelosi interviewed Haggard during the year and a half after the 2006 scandal, filming him selling insurance door-to-door and following him on his first-ever secular job interview—a counseling position at the University of Phoenix. "If they don't google me, I'll get the job," he tells her.

Haggard appears in the documentary at times contrite, at other times as if victimized by the church establishment. He explains to Pelosi that homosexuality is seen as worse than murder in some Christian circles. "If you google me you'd think I'm Adolf Hitler," he says.

He says his homosexual urges stemmed from same-sex sex play in the seventh grade and that “it all blew up” when he turned 50.

More recently, at Open Bible Fellowship last month Haggard said his same-sex temptation might have resulted from a sexual experience he had as a 7-year-old with a male worker employed by his father.

Haggard's wife, Gayle, tells Pelosi that before the scandal broke she considered herself a happy woman, completely unaware of the depth of her husband's internal struggle.

She says she stayed with her husband after the scandal because she loved him and believed their marriage was worth fighting for. “I knew that to restore honor to our children, the best thing I could do was restore honor to him,” she says.

In the film, Haggard identifies himself as an evangelical Christian, who “from time to time struggles with same-sex attraction.” He denies a comment, widely circulated in the media after the scandal, that he claimed to be “completely heterosexual.”

Haggard says that just because he still struggles with same-sex attraction doesn't mean he's abandoned his traditional views on marriage and family. “I still believe this,” Haggard says, “even though I'm a sinner and even though I'm weak, that God's best plan for human beings is for man and woman to unite together.” **-Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**