

The Latest on Ted Haggard

The week that a new documentary about Ted Haggard is premiering on HBO, more accusations have surfaced of an alleged inappropriate relationship involving the former pastor.

✖ **Jan. 27, 2009** – The pastor of Ted Haggard's former church says he's heartbroken over a former male volunteer's alleged experiences with Haggard.

Brady Boyd, senior pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., said a young man announced his alleged inappropriate relationship with Haggard shortly after Haggard's sex and drug scandal in 2006.

Boyd said the 25-year-old man received "countless hours of prayer and ministry" before deciding to hire an attorney in 2007. The lawyer negotiated with New Life's insurance company for a settlement, which Boyd said was paid through the insurance, not through tithes.

The young man told Boyd a few weeks ago he was thinking of making his story public, because he was disgusted with reports about the new HBO documentary titled *The Trials of Ted Haggard*, which airs Jan. 29.

Boyd said it apparently upset the young man to hear that Haggard was being depicted as a victim in the documentary.

"[The young man] said, Listen, I have a lot of pain in my own life," Boyd recalled. "[But] I told him it is not going to help your healing, or the church's healing, [to go public with your story]." Boyd said he also later told Haggard that other accusers could come forward if he participated in the HBO documentary.

Haggard, who was accused of soliciting a male prostitute and purchasing methamphetamines in November 2006, now sells life

insurance in Colorado to make a living.

He has been involved in a media blitz promoting his new HBO film since earlier this month and is scheduled to appear on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* tomorrow and *Larry King Live* on Thursday.

On Monday, Boyd defended his church against questions raised in the media that New Life paid for the young man's silence. He pointed out the most common provision in any out-of-court settlement is that "you don't speak about the terms." "That is Lawyer 101," Boyd said. "It wasn't hush money."

New Life reported trying to help, apparently providing the young man with pastoral care, professional counseling and financial assistance. "We did this with the hope that he would experience healing and move forward with purpose in his life," Boyd said. "He's a young man who still needs a lot of help. I feel sad for him. I feel sad that he came to a church looking for help, but actually suffered more pain and hurt. Anytime that happens that's a black eye to the church."

The young man said he was to be paid \$179,000 by New Life through 2009 for college education and counseling, the AP reported.

Even if New Life has the legal right to take action against the young man for going public and allegedly breaking the terms of their settlement, Boyd said the church has no desire to do so. "We're not in this for a fight. We're trying to bring healing to everybody," he said. "So we're not going to do that."

In an e-mail sent to supporters last Friday, Boyd said New Life has received reports of numerous "incidents of inappropriate behavior" since Haggard's moral failings were made public in 2006. "In each case, we have tried our very best to do the right thing," he wrote. "Our concern has been and continues to be for every person affected. We renew our

invitation today for anyone who believes he or she has been hurt to please come forward.”

On Monday, the young man told News Channel 13 in Colorado Springs that he began attending New Life after allegedly being kicked out of Moody Bible Institute for admitting that he struggled with homosexuality. He eventually became a volunteer pastor’s assistant at the church and said Haggard invited him on a trip to Cripple Creek, Colo., in the summer of 2006. While in the hotel room, he said he felt paralyzed as Haggard began acting sexually inappropriate.

The young man also alleged that Haggard sent him thousands of “weird” text messages, sometimes in the middle of the night, describing various sexual experiences he was having. “It was like he had two personalities,” he said. “It was like here is this 50-year-old pastor who is the ultimate man of God and then this 16-year old horny boy who couldn’t keep himself together.”

Boyd said the young man joined New Life Church for “pastoral help and friendship.” “Our church is known for reaching Millennials and the next generation and he saw that and really wanted to be a part of something like that and get some help for his life and discover God.

“Instead, he was harmed,” Boyd said. “I hate that. I regret that. It breaks my heart.”

Haggard told News Channel 13 that there was no physical contact with the young man, but that he “regretted” his “irresponsible behavior.”

Boyd said he does not know whether the young man’s relationship with Haggard was physical or to what degree it was consensual. “What we do know is that it was an inappropriate relationship between a pastor and a volunteer to the church,” he said. “We had enough evidence from text

messaging and other things that we really had no choice but to [settle].”

In last night’s broadcast on News Channel 13, the young man accused New Life of really not caring about his wellbeing, and also of not treating Haggard with sufficient caution. “I really felt the church staff did what they could to get me to move to a different city, to get me to stop going to the church, to make these promises to do whatever they could to help, but their main focus was to cover it up,” he said. “They think Ted Haggard is not a harm to this community, and I really think they’re wrong. They’re dead wrong.”

Before word of *The Trials of Ted Haggard* began garnering publicity recently, Haggard remained mostly out of the public eye since being dismissed from his former church in 2006. One notable exception was in November, when he appeared in the pulpit of a longtime friend from Illinois. At the time, leaders involved in Haggard’s original restoration process said they disagreed with his decision to preach at the church.

Leaders of New Life Church, which Haggard founded in 1984, deemed Haggard’s spiritual restoration “incomplete” earlier last year. Boyd has since said Haggard and his family are completely released from “any legal constraint from the church” and free to move on with their lives.

In the HBO 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 2006 scandal, that he claimed to be “completely heterosexual.”

In a recent interview with Dan Gilgoff, religion reporter for *U.S. News & World Report*, Haggard said he is not only sorry for hurting his former church members and friends, but that he also apologizes to the gay community for the hurt he caused

them.

“I think I’m much more compassionate and understanding and contrite than I was then because in the process of the scandal the volume of hate mail I’ve received [was] incredible, from the right and the left,” he said. “And so now I understand more what a homosexual feels like being subject to religious ridicule, and it makes me very compassionate, and I don’t think I had that degree of compassion before.”

On Sunday, Boyd told his New Life congregation that he and other church leaders have shouldered the knowledge of the young man’s allegations to protect congregants. “For the last two years, we’ve carried the burden, the weight of this information to protect you,” he said. “We’ve been diligent, faithful, pastoral ... we’ve carried the weight of it, hoping that the church could move forward ... so that healing, real spiritual healing could happen.

“From my pastor’s heart to you: I am sorry that this wound has been reopened for many of you. I am very sorry,” he said. “I want to tell you, I’m praying for you. I’m praying that we can be healed.

“When we look back over these past two years, one of the things we are absolutely confident of is the faithfulness of God.” **—Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**