

Isaac Hunter's Suicide Note Discovered in Wake of Affair, Domestic Violence Allegations

In the week following Isaac Hunter's resignation as senior pastor of Summit Church, the *Orlando Sentinel* reports that Hunter was in a downward spiral of violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicidal thoughts, according to a domestic violence petition filed Friday.

"I currently fear for my life and the lives of our three children," Rhonda Hunter wrote in a petition for a temporary restraining order against her husband. "Isaac is unstable and has demonstrated erratic behavior, alcohol abuse, and fits of rage."

Circuit Judge Roger J. McDonald granted Rhonda Hunter's petition the same day it was submitted. The order bars Isaac Hunter, 35, from the couple's home in Winter Park, Fla., his church, his children's schools and his wife's workplace.

Isaac Hunter admitted to an extramarital affair and resigned from his post as senior pastor at Summit Church in Orlando, Fla., on Nov. 26, one day after his 13th wedding anniversary. Hunter is the middle child of prominent evangelist Joel C. Hunter, senior pastor of Northland, A Church Distributed, in Longwood, Fla., and spiritual adviser to President Barack Obama.

According to the *Sentinel*, Rhonda Hunter, 35, spelled out acts of violence and abuse that began in February 2011 and culminated when Isaac left their house on Nov. 25 with two guns. He called three days later, asking to see his three children "one last time."

"I am afraid that his 'one last time' will result in the death

of our children—going out in a blaze of glory,” Rhonda Hunter wrote in her petition.

The couple has two daughters and a son, ages 11, 9 and 5.

According to court documents, Hunter’s family also found an undated suicide note on his computer with instructions to Summit Church on what should be done “If I die,” written before his 35th birthday on April 26.

“I would very much like to be remembered as a person who loved his children, his parents, his brothers, and his best friends—well, while I could,” Hunter wrote. “I fear I will love them better in my absence. As I have become what I never wished to be, a burden on those I love the most.”

Isaac Hunter founded Summit Church in 2002. It has since become one of the fastest-growing churches in Central Florida with five locations and an estimated 5,000 worshippers. The church grew out of a ministry the younger Hunter started at his father’s megachurch.

During his sermon at Northland this weekend, Joel Hunter addressed the situation.

“This sermon comes on the heels of the worst week of our family’s life,” Joel Hunter said. “When we got the word that our son, Isaac, had left his family and pastorate for sin, we only had the evidence that hell was involved.”

While Hunter is typically animated during his sermons, he stuck to a podium and read from his notes, getting choked up while discussing his family.

“Our family loves each other, will continue to love each other, especially guarding Rhonda and the children, and we are committed that hell won’t have a final victory,” he continued, with applause from the audience.

In a statement last week, John Parker, who is now serving as

lead pastor of the church, said, "If you are wondering what to do, please **pray** for the Hunter family during this time, help to protect the space around them, and avoid gossip as much as humanly possible."

Rhonda Hunter, in her petition, submitted photos of bruises on her arms she said her husband had inflicted during an argument at their home on Feb. 13, 2011. She claims Isaac kicked in a locked door, held her down on a bed by the arms and shouted obscenities at her.

While staying with friends a month later, Rhonda Hunter said Isaac became abusive after drinking a lot of wine and told her, "I have no way out of this marriage." She wrote that she slept with the bedroom door locked that night, with her phone nearby so she could call for help.

"Weapons are something he has complete access to and knows how to use them well," she wrote.

She also said she had to call Parker, who was Summit's associate pastor at the time, to the house after her husband insulted and threatened her during a night of heavy drinking.

Despite these incidents, the event that led Rhonda Hunter to file for a domestic violence restraining order occurred on Nov. 25 when she returned home with her two daughters to find Isaac passed out and their 5-year-old son unattended.

Rhonda wrote that Isaac left the house with two guns and ammunition, following an obscenity-laced argument. Court documents show that family members later found bottles of pills, syringes and vials of liquid among his possessions.

"I have witnessed Isaac falling down stairs, falling in a tub, vomiting all over our bathroom, incapable of taking care of our children, making multiple verbal threats, physical violence and leaving our house while driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs," Rhonda wrote.

A hearing, which will decide whether the temporary order should be made permanent, is set for 8:30 a.m. on Dec. 13. Isaac Hunter will also have a chance to respond to his wife's accusations at that time.