

Summit Church Pastor John Parker Says He Didn't Know About Isaac Hunter's Problems

Summit Church lead pastor John Parker told his congregation Wednesday he had no idea about his friend Isaac Hunter's yearlong affair with a former staff member until Hunter voluntarily resigned Nov. 26.

Parker also denied knowing Hunter had a serious drinking problem or that he was violent toward his wife, Rhonda Hunter, who filed a domestic-violence petition Nov. 30. Hunter denied the allegations this week.

Parker admitted to the congregation that his blindness to see his friend's self-destruction was a failure of leadership. "I don't expect you to trust me," he said, while asking for forgiveness.

"There was another life going on, and I was being fooled," he told Summit Church members in Orlando, Fla.

Isaac Hunter admitted to an extramarital affair and resigned from his post as senior pastor at Summit Church in Orlando, Fla., on Nov. 26. 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.

Isaac 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.

In her domestic-violence petition, Rhonda Hunter wrote of an

incident in which she called Parker to the house after her husband insulted and threatened her during a night of heavy drinking.

“He was getting so verbally abusive that I left the home for my safety. Our 3 children were asleep at the time, so I immediately called John Parker and requested him to come to the home,” she wrote. “John agreed to come keep the children safe since I expected Isaac would pass out from too much alcohol.”

In his address to the congregation, Parker said Isaac assured him that night was a singular incident and not a recurring problem. A statement distributed to church member said Isaac reassured Parker and other church officials that he did not have a drinking problem and agreed to counseling.

The statement also stated that Isaac admitted to having marital problems in January 2011, but Parker did not know about the affair—which Hunter has no intention of ending—until Hunter’s resignation last week.

“We believed he was in a season of weakness and pain,” the statement said. “But we did not know he was actively engaged in pursuing regular patterns of sinful character.”

Parker said in a letter to the congregation last week, “I am hurting—for my friend, for the pain he has caused others and himself, for our staff, for the church, and even for myself. In midst of the hurt, I am so grateful for this community. God has done so much good in this place, and my great hope is that He will continue to have Summit Church be a place where lost and hurting people find hope and love.”

The church created a document, dated Dec. 5, “as a first step to making sure you have all the information that is known to us,” they tweeted.