



Disgraced Haggard Ousted For "Immoral Sexual Conduct"

By [Kevin Wayne](#)

Political influential Evangelist known for his anti-gay beliefs says I am a "deceiver and a liar"

Colorado Springs, CO - Disgraced evangelist Ted Haggard, an outspoken opponent of gay marriage, initially denied having sex with a male prostitute but on Sunday apologized to his followers for what he called his "sexual immortality."

"I am guilty of sexual immorality, I am a deceiver and a liar. There is a part of my life that is so repulsive and dark and I've been warring against it my entire adult life", Haggard said in a letter that was read to his New Life Church in Colorado Springs by a church overseer.

According to the *Denver Post*, Haggard told church members not to be angry at his accuser, instead urging them to thank God for him.

Haggard was fired from the megachurch he founded on Saturday after an oversight board concluded Haggard committed "sexually immoral conduct." The *Post* reported the oversight board consulted with several evangelical leaders, including James Dobson of Focus on the Family.

Named by Time Magazine as one of the "25 most influential evangelicals in America", Haggard headed the 30 million-member National Association of Evangelicals, known for its homophobia and anti-gay politics, and was a political consultant to the Bush White House until he stepped down on Thursday after the gay sex scandal was revealed.

During an interview aired on a Denver radio station Wednesday, Mike Jones, 49, alleges that Haggard paid him to have sex nearly every month for three years. Jones claims he last had sex with Haggard in August and that Haggard made contact through an Internet website for male escorts.

Jones also said Haggard snorted the drug methamphetamine before their sexual encounters, to heighten his experience.

Until Sunday, Haggard, a married father of five, had publicly denied any sexual contact. Haggard admitted Friday that he bought methamphetamine and received a massage from the Jones.

Conservatives in Colorado, including the political influential Dobson, initially said the timing of the allegations was suspicious since voters in Colorado and seven other U.S. states vote Tuesday on amendments banning gay marriage.

Haggard has been very influential with Evangelicals and the Christian Right and was credited with encouraging Christians to vote for President George Bush in 2004.

On the heels of the Mark Foley scandal, these allegations come at a poor time for the Christian Right as they fight for "family values."

For the Republicans, who are fighting to retain control of Congress in next Tuesday's midterm vote, Haggard's resignation is at the very least an unwelcome distraction.