

People

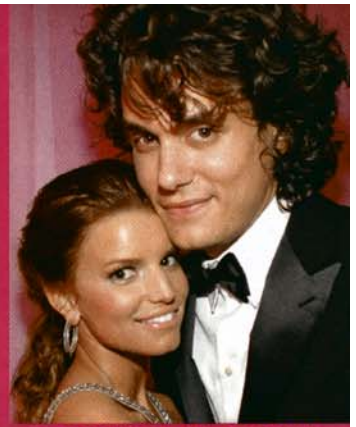
FEBRUARY 26, 2007

**Anna Nicole's
MYSTERIOUS DEATH**

BATTLE OVER HER BABY

- WHO'S DANNIELYNN'S DAD?
- ANNA'S LAST DAYS
- THE INHERITANCE FIGHT

Anna Nicole and daughter
Dannielynn on
November 25, 2006



JESSICA & JOHN
Heat Up!



**BEST GRAMMY
DRESSES**
Carrie Underwood

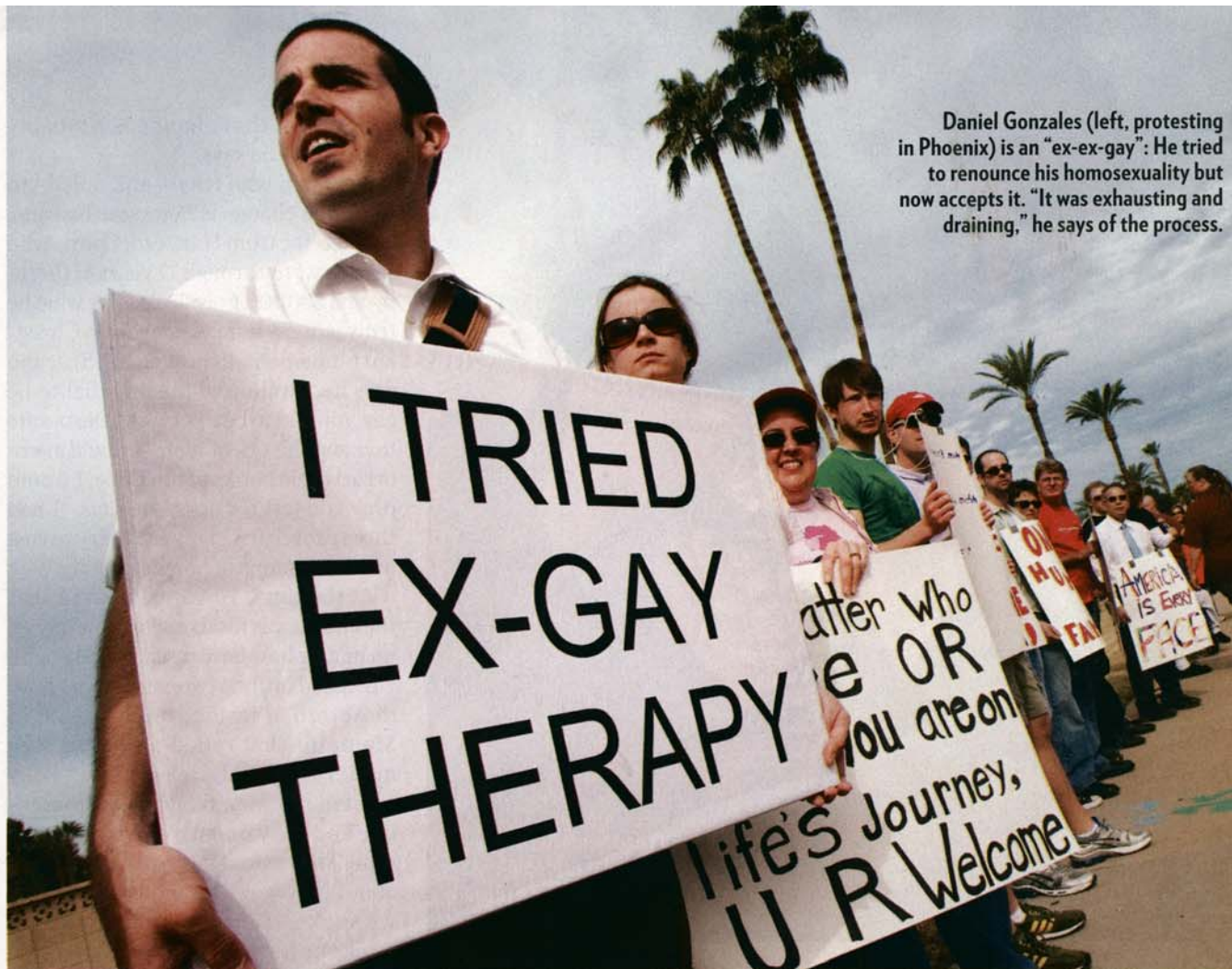


**JEN'S BIRTHDAY
PARTY**
Vince Shows Up!

\$3.49US \$4.79CAN



www.people.com (AOL Keyword: People)



Daniel Gonzales (left, protesting in Phoenix) is an "ex-ex-gay": He tried to renounce his homosexuality but now accepts it. "It was exhausting and draining," he says of the process.

CAN THERAPY TURN GAYS STRAIGHT?

The case of pastor Ted Haggard sparks a debate

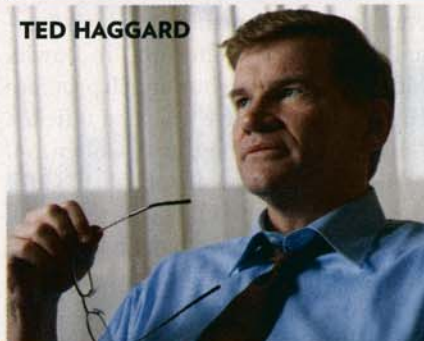
Ted Haggard believes in the power of prayer—and he says his have been answered. Last November, as pastor of the 14,000-member New Life Church in Colorado Springs and the married father of four, Haggard, 50, confessed to having a sexual relationship with a male prostitute and was fired from his post. But earlier this month he sent an e-mail to several members of his former flock stating that, after three weeks of intensive psychological therapy with his wife, Gayle, 49, he is on the road to recovery. "Jesus is starting to

put me back together," he wrote. "He is completely heterosexual," Tim Ralph, a pastor friend, told the *Denver Post*.

Can therapy change your sexual desires—and so quickly? Haggard's statements have reignited debate over the "ex-gay" movement and "reparative therapy"—offered by private therapists and evangelical groups like Exodus and Love Won Out (see box)—and whether they actually work. Even those who believe in the fundamental premise that homosexuality is a choice (a notion rejected by the American Psy-

“Completely heterosexual”
—FELLOW PASTOR TIM RALPH

TED HAGGARD



The pastor (in '05) plans to move to the Midwest and get a degree in psychology.

ERIK STEINBERGEN/NEW LIFE CHURCH/AP



"I tried to make the gay life work and it just didn't," says Richard Cohen (with wife Jae Sook and son Alfred).

chiatric Association and most mainstream scientists) still question the speed of Haggard's "cure." Though the Colorado pastor has not divulged details of his treatment, Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D., president of the National Association for the Therapy and Treatment of Homosexuality in Encino, Calif., says complete conversions occur in perhaps a third of his patients and require weekly sessions for two years. Even then, says Nicolosi, many will continue to have homosexual thoughts and urges.

Richard A. Cohen, a married man who once dated men and now conducts "sexual reorientation therapy" in Bowie, Md., also questions how much progress Haggard could have made so quickly. "Healing is a journey," says Cohen, 54. "This is not for the faint of heart." Until the age of 34, when he had a dream of being married to a woman and having a family, Cohen says he lived as a gay man. After years of therapy, though, he determined his attraction to men stemmed in part from a "conflicted" relationship with his dad, a forceful former Marine,

and boyhood sexual abuse by a family friend that Cohen kept secret until he was an adult. A breakthrough came in 1987 when he struck up his first truly emotional—yet nonsexual—relationship with a straight male. "He held me while I grieved and heaved, [talking about] what it felt like to be abused," says Cohen. "When I released that pain, my homosexuality left my body."

The American Psychiatric Association, representing 35,000 physicians, has issued two position papers rejecting reparative therapy, or any other treatment, as a means of altering homosexual orientation. "It's not a scientific movement," APA fellow Jack Drescher, M.D., says, "it's a giant infomercial." One study often cited in the ex-gay world, conducted by Columbia University psychiatrist Robert Spitzer in 2001, identified 200 subjects who claimed to have transitioned from homosexual to heterosexual and maintained the change for five years. But Spitzer says his findings have been misinterpreted: "They never mention my

conclusion that change is probably quite rare," he says.

One man who tried—and failed—to make the change is Peterson Toscano, 42, an actor from Hartford, Conn., who says he went through 17 years of therapy, and \$30,000, only to discover what he truly is: a gay man. A convert to Christian fundamentalism at age 17, Toscano says he "swallowed the line that to be gay, you had to be a pervert." Desperate to change his orientation, "I would memorize whole books of the Bible, I would pray and fast for days," he says. "I had three exorcisms in my life to try to cast out the demons of homosexuality."

At the time, Toscano believed that the choice was his to make: to be gay or, no matter how hard it seemed, straight. He signed up for a two-year stay at Love in Action, a residential program in Memphis that relied on the 12-step model and Bible teachings. "They wanted the men to act more masculine and the women to act more feminine. They would talk to us all the time about how we stood, how we sat, how we spoke." Finally, in 1999, he took stock one last time. "My life had gotten worse. I was depressed and more hopeless," says Toscano, now a practicing Quaker. "My brain dropped back into my head. It was like, 'What are you doing? This is insane.'"

Vickie Bane in Denver

WHAT IS REPARATIVE THERAPY?

Psychologist Joseph Nicolosi views homosexuality as a "gender identification problem" that can be treated with reparative therapy, also offered by groups like Exodus, Love Won Out and JONAH (for Jewish men and women). All use similar methods such as nonsexual bonding with members of the same sex and repeating affirmations ("You're masculine") to help clients fulfill emotional needs stemming from hurtful relationships with parents. Mainstream mental health professionals reject such therapy as unnecessary and ineffective.