



# Choosing your Battles And Building Consensus

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# OBJECTIVES

- Recognize impact of conflict in church and administrative settings
- Identify what may cause such conflict
- Understand how to prevent conflict
- Understand how to resolve conflicts
- Determine how to build consensus



# Paradigm Shifts

- Ends justify the means philosophy
- We are doing the Lord's work
- Membership Better educated/More sophisticated
- Less trusting, forgiving and accepting of church leadership
- Not afraid to challenge or take grievances to courts
- Employees more challenging of authority
- Leadership not afraid to challenge Leadership and authority





# Seven held over canning bishop

## KABAROLE

By Wilson Asimwe

The Bishop of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church of Western Uganda Field (WUF), Samuel Mwebaza, is nursing injuries after a group of Christians attacked and canned him on Tuesday. Mwebaza was dragged out of his office at the WUF headquarters in Fort Portal town at around 1:00pm and canned.

The angry Christians, whom the Police allege were led by Jonathan Kihumuro, accused the bishop of mismanagement of church funds and failing several projects which they had initiated.

It took the intervention of the people around the bishop's offices to rescue him as more Christians advanced towards him with sticks and stones.

Kihumuro, who is being held at Fort Portal central Police station on charges of assaulting the man of God, said several projects, including construction of a church and health centre have stalled due to the mismanagement of funds.

Grace Kabagweri, another member of the SDA church accused the bishop of disrespecting church members.



The entrance leading to the church where Mwebaza was beaten in Fort Portal

"As members of the SDA church in Rwenzori region, we thought it was wise if we could bring back to order our bishop by canning him," Kabagweri said.

She said the church members' intention was not to kill bishop Mwebaza, but rather punish him for the slowed development in the church.

"We tried to advise him for many years, but he did not adhere to our advice for over two years, so we decided to punish him," Kabagweri said.

However, other sources blamed the incident on tribal sentiments. Mwebaza hails from central Uganda.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

The Christians accused the bishop of mismanaging church funds and failing to run several projects which they had initiated.

"It started like drama and we didn't expect the Christians to behave like that; we thought they were shooting a video but all of the sudden they started beating the bishop. We called the Police but they arrived late," Patrick Kasangaki, a businessman in Fort Portal said.

Besides Kihumuro, others arrested are Amos Mugenyi,

Julius Kakwezi, Moses Mutegeki, Bob Kaheebwa and Joshua Kakwezi, all members of the church, according to Lydia Tumushabe, the Rwenzori West regional police spokesperson. The seventh person who was arrested had not been identified by press time. "It was an embarrassment canning a bishop in public. He has reported a case of assault at Fort Portal Central Police Station and we have seven people in custody," Tumushabe said.

She said the Christians stole the bishop's valuables and damaged his laptop during the scuffle.

She added that the Police

## Other incidents of assault

This is not the first time churchgoers in Uganda turn against their prelates. In February 2002, the congregation at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sesame in Kisoro were thrown into a panic when Bishop Ernest Shalita, who was in the process of sitting down, suddenly cried out in pain, clutching the seat of his cassock. Shalita, the then bishop of Muhabura Protestant Diocese, was pricked by needles believed to have been planted in his throne by unscrupulous church members.

Bishop Kityo Luwalira of Namirembe Diocese also survived being beaten when a man, clutching sticks, tried to attack him on the pulpit as he was about to start last year's Easter Sunday service. The bishop was only saved by a bar at the altar, which trapped the man before worshippers overpowered him.

was hunting for other suspects because the group was big. After investigations, they will be arraigned in court to answer charges of assault.

"The bishop is the complainant in this case. He reported the case at Police and we immediately started investigations. We condemn such acts," Tumushabe said.

Stephen Asimwe, the Resident District Commissioner for Kabarole condemned the actions of the Christians.

"That is indiscipline on the side of church members attacking a bishop with sticks and canning him. We shall not entertain that nonsense; all

those who participated in the beating will be hunted down and arrested," he said.

"It was a big embarrassment to the bishop and we have asked the head of the SDA church in Uganda to intervene because they have been embroiled in many wrangles," he explained.

By press time, the bishop could not be traced as his phone was off and his offices in Fort Portal town remained closed.

Mwebaza was the SDA Uganda Union Communications director before he was appointed bishop of WUF in 2017.





# Spare the rod and have a lazy bishop or faithful? Not for the SDA

FRIDAY APRIL 5 2019



Last week, SDA faithful went to the bishop's office, pulled him out and without fear of his royal vestments, whipped the "man of God."

ILLUSTRATION | JOHN NYAGA | NMG

## In Summary

- Having been told by the government that corporal punishment was not permissible in schools and sports training, the Christians of Rwenzori seem to have reasoned that caning of religious leaders was right since they were neither student nor sportsmen.

Uganda is a secular state whose motto is "For God and My Country." But that is not a contradiction. It means that all religions are free.



**Kisii.** MCA calls on leadership to resolve standoff amicably to avoid causing divisions.

# Faithful eject pastor in row over changes

**Faithful in 28 churches claim they are forcibly being moved to a different bishopric.**

By Edwin Nyarangi  
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Trouble is brewing in the local Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church after some members rejected plans to move them to new bishopric.

At least 28 churches in Nduru District, which is under South Kenya Conference, have refused to be moved to the newly created South Gusii Conference headquartered at Kenyenyia.

The churches, mainly in South Mugirango Constituency, have vowed to remain in South Kenya, whose headquarters is in Kisii town.

And on Saturday, members of Esaka SDA church ejected Pastor Rex Ondari, who is in charge of Nduru District, after he announced plans to move them to a new district, Omobera.

This disrupted the service as irate faithful forced Ondari to cut short his speech as he was booed and jeered. Nduru District comprises 28 churches.

Faithful who kicked the pastor out of the church compound said they would not be forced to join a new conference against their wish.

"I have come here to preach the word of God and not fight with worshipers. If they are against moving to the new conference as proposed by the church leadership, I have no option but to leave and report to my boss-

**"I have come here to preach the word of God and not fight with worshipers. If they are against moving to the new conference as proposed by the church leadership, I have no option but to leave and report to my bosses."**

Rex Ondari, a pastor.

es," said Pastor Ondari.

Boikanga MCA Joseph Chweya, who attended the service, called for calm and asked the leadership of South

Kenya Conference and South Gusii Conference to resolve the issue amicably to avoid causing divisions.

"I am calling on the SDAs top leadership to listen to what their members are saying and make a decision that would ensure there are no divisions and fights in the church so we can set a good example to the society," said Mr Chweya.

Sam Manyara, a church elder, said regulations stated that they could not be forced to join a new bishopric against their wish and asked the leadership to respect their decision to remain in South Kenya.

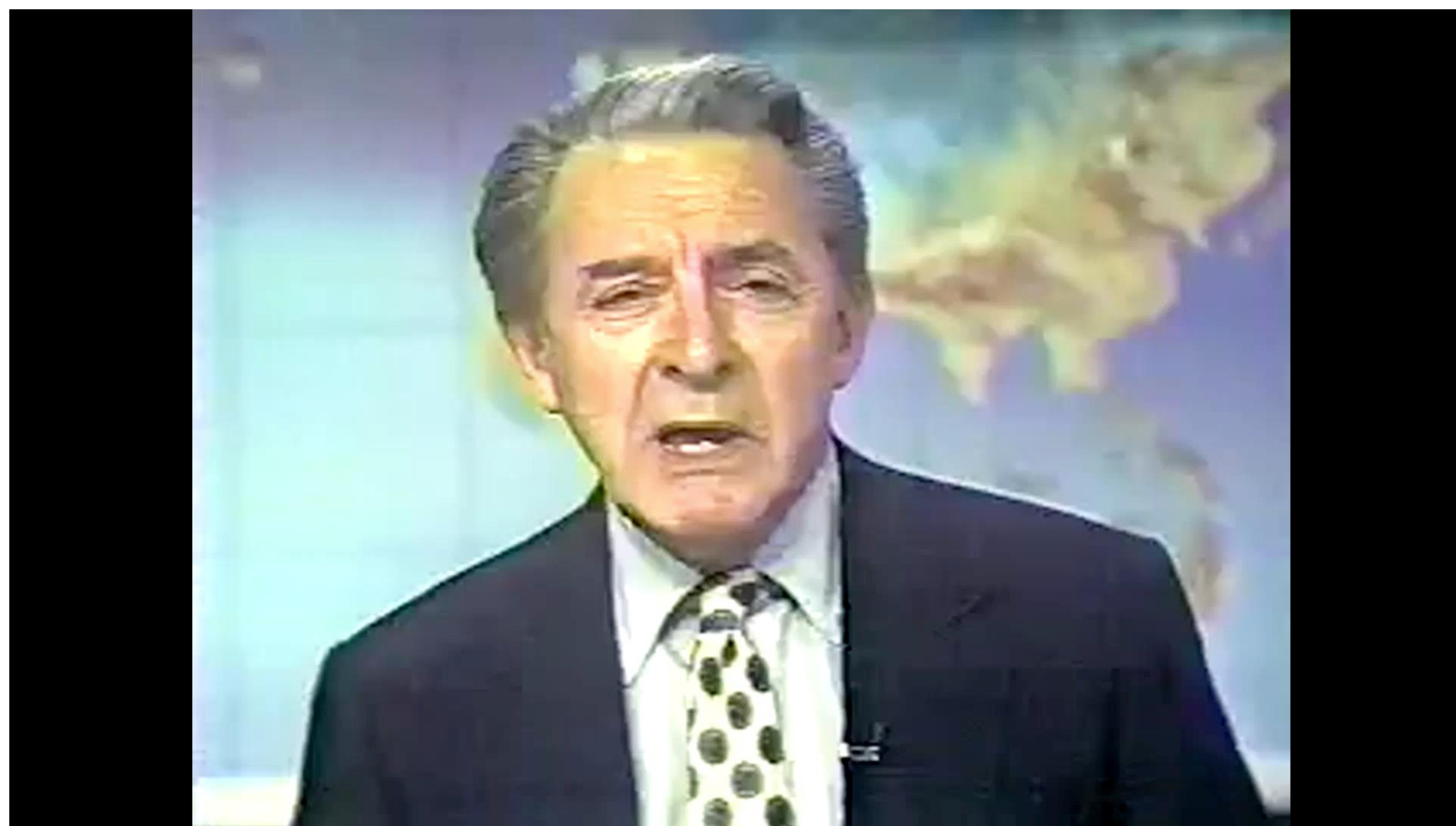
"Members of our 28 churches wanted the leadership to allow us freedom to decide where they want to be," he said.





**What does a good  
pastor do in such  
instances?**







# How do we deal with Conflict?

## Conflict is inevitable



# How to address conflict

- Run away
- Give up
- Fight
- Compromise
- Collaborate





# Questions to ask before picking your battle

- Will I be able to change opinions
- is this my battle to fight
- Is it worth fighting for
- Is it truly important
- Is this battle about my feelings, pride or ego?
- Is it better to walk away
- What happens if I lose this battle



Pick your battles.  
You don't have to show  
up to every argument  
you are invited to.

- Mandy Hale





# What we Know

- Conflict is a naturally occurring phenomenon for human beings
- People don't get involved in conflict situations unless they have some stake in the relationship or outcome or both
- Some people will do anything to avoid conflict
- Some people create or thrive on conflict



# How to build consensus

- Inclusive
- Participatory
- Collaborative
- Agreement Seeking
- Cooperative





# Building Consensus

## Send clear message

- Think before you speak
- Avoid pointing finger
- Be honest
- Avoid superiority viewpoint

## Listen

- Pay attention to what is being said
- Ask questions
- Put yourself in other person's place



# Separate but not independent:

...each level of organization exercises a realm of final authority and responsibility that may have implications for other levels of organization. In a similar manner, each organization is dependent to some extent on the realm of authority (ecclesiastical not legal) exercised by other levels of organization.

(IAD Working Policy B 01 clause 6)





# E.G. White

“If matters of difficulty between brethren were not laid open before others, but frankly spoken of between themselves in the spirit of Christian love, how much evil might be prevented! How many roots of bitterness whereby many are defiled would be destroyed, and how closely and tenderly might the followers of Christ be united in His love!”—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing p59.



# Church Manual

Differences—Every effort should be made to settle differences among church members and contain the controversy within the smallest possible sphere. Reconciliation of differences within the church should, in most cases, be possible without recourse either to a conciliation process provided by the Church or to civil litigation. Page 59





# Do's and Don'ts of Resolving Conflict

Do...

- Understand that conflicts are inevitable.
- Address the conflict quickly.
- Focus on the problem.
- Be open to solutions.
- Acknowledge how other person is feeling.
- Listen actively.



# Continued....

Don't...

- Focus on personality traits that cannot be changed.
- Interrupt.
- Attack.
- Disregard the feelings of the individual.
- Avoid the conflict.
- Allow emotions to take over the conversation.
- Impose personal values or beliefs.





# Conflicts escalate because....

- Fail to address the problems
- Fail to Focus on issues
- Other person feels threatened
- Make it personal



# Litigation

- An area where we need more conflict resolution
- Litigation should be an option of last resort
- Obviously for some it is first resort
- Matthew 18
- You've met and talked, no resolution, now what?





# Court blocks SDA church from declaring eastern president

By Jackie Nambogga

The High Court in Jinja has blocked the board of trustees of the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) in Uganda from declaring the new or any other person as president of the church's Eastern Uganda Field.

A March 12 temporary injunction signed by the deputy registrar, Jesse Byaruhanga, bars the declaration of Pr James Katunzi and or any other as president.

Pr Dr Daniel Mate is the Uganda Union mission president of the SDA churches, while Israel Kafeero is its executive secretary.

The trustees, together with Mate and Kafeero, were dragged to court by the Eastern Uganda Field president, Pr Frederick Ofwono, protesting his removal from office and the consequential replacement by Katunzi.

Katunzi is the pastor of Mbale Central SDA church, which is under the Eastern Uganda Field's jurisdiction.

Ofwono was on November 23, last year removed from his seat before concluding his five-year term, which ends in 2020.

Ofwono, through Kiiza and Company Advocates, petitioned court, arguing that his removal contravened the church's policies.

Byaruhanga said the parties were given three months to sort out their differences.

He said in case they fail to reach a consensus, any of the parties would be free to notify court so that it can proceed with the main suit.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

Pr Frederick Ofwono was on November 23, last year removed from his position before concluding his five-year term, which ends in 2020.

Samuel Musiho, the Eastern Uganda Field secretary, who is opposed to Ofwono's dismissal, named embezzlement or theft of funds and property as some of the grounds for sacking the president.

However, Musiho said there seems to be a personal feud against Ofwono because he was not summoned to defend himself against the allegations.

Ofwono is said to have been removed from office for

failure to manage the church affairs to the top leadership's expectations.

Consequently, Ofwono opted to take legal action seeking a judicial review of the procedures that were applied while sacking him.

However, before court could fix a date for hearing the main suit, Ofwono asked for an injunction restraining anybody from succeeding him.

Despite the injunction, the applicant regretted that Mate was introducing Katunzi as the Eastern Uganda Field president.

In a letter dated April 2 to Mate copied to court, Ofwono cited a workshop of Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) at the Adventist Centre Makerere, where Katunzi was on March 26 introduced as the new president.

ADRA is the church's national humanitarian organisation.

When contacted, Immanuel Ogwal, the church's union communications director, declined to comment about the case. However, he confirmed there was "a vacuum, though the union's executive secretary is overseeing the eastern field now".





**Religion.** New team opens bank accounts for tithes

# SDA splinter group registers new conference

New conference was listed on March 15 and is currently operating from Maendeleo House, Loita Street.

By Geoffrey Mosoku  
gmosoku@standardmedia.co.ke

Wrangles at the Nairobi Central Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) have divided the church as one faction registers a new conference.

Although the SDA church in Nairobi is run administratively by the Central Kenya Conference (CKC), a faction led by some elders has now created the Nairobi Cosmopolitan Conference (NCC).

The NCC was registered on March 15 and is currently operating from temporary offices at Maendeleo House, Loita Street, Nairobi.

Last Saturday, the team behind the new conference held its inaugural Sabbath at the Technical University of Kenya (TUK) and this reduced attendance at Nairobi Central Church by more than half.

## The dispute

- The dispute follows a case filed in February to contest the selection of church officials
- Two elders accuse two pastors of presiding over a flawed process
- The squabbles started late last year when the pastors and elders differed on the names to serve in the nomination committee mandated to pick officials to lead the church this year

hold across Nairobi and Kajiado stations to enlighten and sensitise faithful," said Elder Sammy Masara.

The NCC is run by three directors, who are supported by a caretaker committee comprising 27 people drawn from churches in Nairobi and Kajiado stations.

These leaders are holding office on an interim basis until a formal election is con-

months.

The caretaker committee has already created eight sub-committees, which are working to establish the new Conference.

The caretaker committee has been mandated to put all structures of the NCC in place and prepare for elections of the Conference officials.

Already the team has opened bank accounts, where members have been asked to channel their tithes to instead of paying to CKC.

"The membership of NCC will be both individual and corporate (churches). There will be no geographical limitations. Members and churches will be free to be members of NCC or CKC," a document seen by *The Standard* reads.

The leadership dispute follows a case filed last February to contest the selection of church officials.

In an affidavit sworn by elders Humphrey Nguma Macharia and Gerald Kireki Ongoro on behalf of the other elders, the two accused two







# What Happens When we Fail?

Iglesia Adventisa Del Septimo Dia, El Paso East, A Texas Non-profit Corporation ,  
Alvaro Sauza, SR.. Roswitha Saenz, Alvaro Servellon, Oscar Ibuado, Jorge Ibuado,  
Horacio Escobar and Helga Sauza

## **Plaintiffs**

Southwest Region Conference Association Of Seventh-day, Adventists, Nicholas Herrera, Calvin  
Watkins, Stephen Brooks, Phillip Palmer, The Southwestern Union Conference Corporation Of  
Seventh-day Adventists, Larry Moore, Buford Griffin, Jr., J . Deryl Knutson, North American  
Division Of The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, General Conference  
Corporation Of Seventh-day Adventists, Ted N.C. Wilson, Samuel Green, Terrell McCoy, Nancy  
M. Jones, Daniel R. Jackson,

## **Defendants**





IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF KANAWHA COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA  
K.W., an individual proceeding under an assumed name,

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION, INC., a Maryland corporation, ADVENT HOME LEARNING CENTER, INC. d/b/a ADVENT HOME YOUTH SERVICES, INC., a Tennessee Corporation, BLONDEL SENIOR, in his official capacities. E.A. SUTHERLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, INC., ADVENTIST LAYMEN'S SERVICES & INDUSTRIES. OUTPOST CENTERS INTERNATIONAL. COLUMBIA UNION CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS. INC., a District of Columbia corporation. MOUNTAIN VIEW CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, a West Virginia corporation, MIRACLE MEADOWS SCHOOL, INC., a West Virginia Corporation, SUSAN GAYLE CLARK, TIMOTHY ARRINGTON, THE LAYMAN FOUNDATION, a Tennessee Corporation. v. CHD-728769-1 ASI MISSIONS. INC., a Maryland Corporation. and KINGSLEY WHITSETT. individually. and in his official capacity as President and Board Member of Miracle Meadows School. Inc.. as President of Mountain View Conference of the Seventh Day Adventists Church North America Division. Inc. and as a Ministerial credentialed member of the Columbia Union Conference. a part of the Seventh Day Adventists Church North America Division, Inc., a Maryland corporation,



# IAD Working Policy

## C 20 Mediation and Conciliation Procedures

- Matthew 18
- Solve problems closest to their origin
- Types of claims exempted from procedures
  - Insurance claims, marital differences, custody, estates, debt collection, theological questions, church discipline or reinstatement of membership
- Mediation- Mediator has power over process not outcome
- Conciliation-Steps outlined in policy
- Setting up a Review Committee (appeal)



# Conciliation

- An alternate dispute resolution process
- Also referred to as Mediation
- Parties to a dispute agree to use a conciliator
- Purpose is to resolve differences
- Done by lowering tensions, improving communications and encouraging parties to explore potential solutions
- More likely to preserve goodwill between parties
- Confidential nature of proceedings
- Faster, less costly and more flexible







# Defamation

- Defined as the action of damaging the reputation of someone by slander or libel
- Exposes a person to hatred, ridicule, causes them to be shunned, financially or reputationally injures person or his business
- Liability for repeating defamatory statement
- Fake news
- Defense to defamation?
- Confidentiality obligations
- Social media, blog posts, internet chat rooms





# Be careful what you post online.







# Questions

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