

# McLean Bible Church dispute near end as Fairfax judge tosses dissidents' lawsuit

Action sought to restrict voting in church election to members before disputed 2021 vote



David Platt, former president of the International Mission Board and a current pastor at McLean Bible Church in Virginia, speaks at the Pastor's Conference at the Southern Baptist Convention on Monday, June 10, 2019, in Birmingham, Ala. (Jon Shapley/Houston ...

By [Mark A. Kellner](#) - *The Washington Times* - Monday, June 27, 2022

An attorney for dissident members of [McLean Bible Church](#) vowed to appeal a judge's dismissal of a lawsuit seeking to overturn recent elections of local leaders.

Judge David Bernhard of Fairfax County Circuit Court "dismissed with prejudice as moot" a lawsuit filed by [MBC](#) member Steve Gaskins and several others, after a motion the [church](#) filed saying its recent election of six local elders deprived the complaint of any significance.

"We strongly disagree with the judge's decision, because what we were asking for was a redo of the July 2021 election, with all members in good standing as of that date permitted to vote," said attorney Rick Boyer, who represents the plaintiffs.

“What we got instead was hundreds of new members elected to the church in the interim, all of whom were allowed to participate in the election last month. None of them would have been eligible last July, since they were not members at the time,” he said.

“The plaintiffs will be appealing the dismissal to the Virginia Court of Appeals,” Mr. Boyer said.

The lead pastor, the Rev. David Platt, said in a statement Monday that he was happy to count the matter as closed.

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“By God’s grace, our church family has come together in ways far beyond what I could have imagined to resolve conflict as biblically and peacefully as possible,” Mr. Platt said.

“Amidst a divisive culture around us, members of our church family have clearly stated that they want to move forward together as a thriving, united church bringing hope to the nations, starting here in Washington, D.C.,” he said.

The 61-year-old multi-campus megachurch, which once received President Donald Trump as a Sunday morning visitor, faced a schism last year over the plans to elect new “elders,” as the local leaders are called.

The dissidents said the 2021 voting rules rejected those members who were likely to vote against that year’s slate. They claimed MBC should only allow members in good standing before the June 2021 balloting to vote.

Church officials said a plan adopted last month by an overwhelming majority of members would allow those on the “active roll” of MBC members as of March 1, 2020, to vote.

Mr. Boyer said, “there is no indication that any of those purged members received any notice of the election.”

The [MBC](#) statement said the 2022 slate of elders was “approved by the [church](#) with more than 86% of the vote” and the new board “is now officially serving and leading alongside” Mr. Platt.

The Rev. Wade Burnett, lead pastor for executive leadership at [MBC](#), said he is “incredibly grateful for the courage of our church in staying together and persevering, in pursuing peace in ways that required numerous steps of faith, and for trusting God all the way through to the actual dismissal of the lawsuit.”

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