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Sexual Harassment Suit Against Tenn. Megachurch Dismissed



(Photo courtesy Mt. Zion Baptist)

Mount Zion Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee.

By [Michael Gryboski](#)

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A judge has decided to dismiss a multimillion dollar civil lawsuit against a Tennessee megachurch that was accused by a former member of sexual harassment.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Nashville, which has about 20,000 members, had the case dismissed with prejudice, which means that it cannot be appealed.

Judge Thomas Brothers of the Sixth Circuit Court for the 20th Judicial District of Tennessee decided the suit on Thursday.

Lawrence A. Washington, an elder at Mount Zion Baptist, told The Christian Post that he was "pleased" that the church and its bishop, Joseph Warren Walker III could move on.

"Judge Brothers in his ruling clearly gave full and thoughtful consideration to the claims, and our defenses to them, and ruled they couldn't proceed or be sustained," said Washington. "Now all the accusations against the bishop and the original allegations against Mt. Zion have been dismissed. Our faith has sustained us, and the life of our church remains strong."

In a statement given to local media, Bishop Walker expressed his thankfulness about the Judge Brothers' decision to dismiss without prejudice.

"I am grateful to the Lord and grateful to the judge for the ruling that properly dismisses these allegations against me and my beloved Mt. Zion church," said Walker.

"After all the negative publicity as the other side appeared determined to try, and re-try, all of this in the media, it is obviously gratifying that the case against me has been dismissed with prejudice, meaning that it is over."

Back in February, four women who were members of Mt. Zion filed suit, claiming that they sexually harassed and exploited during some counseling sessions held by the church.

Valencia Batson, one of the four women filing suit, told local media that she did not contact the police Source URL : <http://www.christianpost.com/news/sexual-harassment-suit-against-tenn-megachurch-dismissed-86673/> about these events out of fear of retribution. Batson were represented by attorney Connie Allison.

"It's wrong. It's not the right thing to be happening, especially in a place like a church ... A spiritual leader and guide is a person you trust. It's a truth that should not be misused," said Batson to NewsChannel 5 of Nashville.

Allison declined to comment to The Christian Post due to the ongoing litigation surrounding Mount Zion and Batson.

Batson and the others were not the first individuals to bring a suit against Mt. Zion Baptist regarding dubious activities. In an earlier suit, former church member Corey Corbin made similar claims against the church. In November, Corbin dropped his complaint.