

Filed  
Superior Court of California,  
Sacramento  
01/12/2024  
sroufej  
By \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy  
23CV012006

1 **MAYALL HURLEY, P.C.**  
A Professional Corporation  
2 112 S. Church Street  
Lodi, CA 95240  
3 Telephone: (209) 477-3833  
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4 **MARK E. BERRY, ESQ.**  
CA State Bar No. 155091

5 Attorneys for Defendant,  
6 **GOSPEL MISSIONARY UNION dba AVANT**  
**MINISTRIES, a MISSOURI CORPORATION**

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9 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**  
10 **COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO**

11 JOHN NDJ DOE, an individual; JOHN NWZ )  
DOE, and individual; JOHN NWM DOE, an )  
12 individual, JOHN NHJ DOE, and individual; )  
JOHN NHA DOE, an individual; JOHN NBP )  
13 DOE, an individual; KOHN NBC DOE, an )  
individual; JOHN NFD DOE, and individual; )  
14 JOH NWJ DOE, an individual; JOHN NSM )  
DOE, an individual; JOHN NOZ DOE, an )  
15 individual; JOHN NAA DOE, an individual; )  
JOHN NKJ DOE, an individual; JOHN NIA )  
16 DOE, and individual )

Case No.: 23CV012006

**DEFENDANT GOSPEL MISSIONARY  
UNION'S ANSWER TO COMPLAINT**

**BY FAX**

17 Plaintiffs,

18 vs.

19 CHURCH OF THE NAZARNE, a California )  
Corporation; SUSANVILLE CHURCH OF )  
20 THE NAZARENE, a California Corporation; )  
SACRAMENTO DISTRICT ADVISORY )  
21 BOARD, CHURCH OF THE NAZARNE, a )  
California Corporation; CORNERSTRONE )  
22 CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, an unknown entity; )  
POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY, a )  
23 California Corporation; TIMBERLINE )  
MINISTRIES, INC., a Colorado Nonprofit )  
24 Corporation; GOSPEL MISSIONARY UNION )  
dba AVANT MINISTRIES, a Missouri )  
25 Corporation; THIS SIDE OUT MINISTRIES, )  
an unknown entity; MOUNTAIN LIFELIGHT, )  
26 INC., a California Corporation; LASSEN )  
AMBULANCE, L.P., a California Limited )  
27 Partnership; MOUNTAIN E.M.S., INC., a )  
California Corporation; and MOUNTAIN )

1 LIFELIGHT OF NEVADA, L.L.C., a Nevada )  
2 Limited Liability Company; BRADLEY EARL )  
3 REGER, an individual; JOSEPH STURGEON, )  
4 an individual JOANNE STURGEON, an )  
5 individual; HAL MEADOWS, M.D., an )  
6 individual; STEVE SCOTT, an individual; )  
7 RICHARD COOK, an individual; SHARON )  
8 COOK, an individual; PIETRO DESANTIS, an )  
9 individual; and DOES 1 through 100. )  
10  
11 Defendants. )

12 Defendant, GOSPEL MISSIONARY UNION dba AVANT MINISTRIES, a MISSOURI  
13 CORPORATION, answers the plaintiffs' Complaint as follows:

14 This answering defendant denies each and every, all and singularly, generally and  
15 severally the allegations contained in said Complaint, and each and every part thereof; denies that  
16 the plaintiffs were damaged in the various sums alleged or in any other sum or sums whatsoever  
17 as a result of any conduct on the part of this defendant.

18 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
19 defendant alleges:

20 That the plaintiffs did not exercise ordinary care, caution or prudence in the premises to  
21 avoid the incident described in said Complaint, and the resulting injuries and damages sustained  
22 by plaintiffs, if any; and that said incident and the resulting injuries and damages sustained by  
23 plaintiffs, if any, were proximately caused and contributed to by the fault, carelessness and  
24 negligence of said plaintiffs in the premises.

25 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
26 defendant alleges:

27 That in addition to plaintiffs, there were persons, firms, businesses and/or entities other  
28 than this answering defendant which were negligent in and about the matters and things alleged  
in plaintiffs' Complaint, and said negligence of others proximately caused or contributed to the  
injuries and damages sustained by plaintiffs, if any.

1 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
2 defendant alleges:

3 That the plaintiffs, by the exercise of reasonable effort, could have mitigated and reduced  
4 the amount of claimed damages; however, plaintiffs did not, and failed to exercise such  
5 reasonable efforts at mitigation, all to defendant's detriment.

6 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
7 defendant alleges:

8 That plaintiffs' Complaint, and each of the alleged causes of action contained therein, fail  
9 to state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action against this answering defendant.

10 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
11 defendant alleges:

12 Any injuries and damages that the plaintiffs may have sustained, either as alleged in the  
13 Complaint or at all, were the result of intervening and superseding action on the part of persons or  
14 entities other than this Defendant.

15 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
16 defendant alleges:

17 That the Complaint herein is barred by the relevant statute of limitations, including but  
18 not limited to Code of Civil Procedure sections 335, et seq; including, but not limited, to 338;  
19 340; 340.1; 340.15; 343.

20 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
21 defendant alleges:

22 The plaintiffs are not entitled to treble damages as to this defendant because at no time did  
23 this defendant have any knowledge of the alleged underlying criminal acts of third parties and did  
24 not in any way engage in activity that would be deemed complicit in the closting of the alleged  
25 criminal sexual abuse of the plaintiffs.

26 AS AND FOR A FURTHER, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DEFENSE, this answering  
27 defendant alleges:

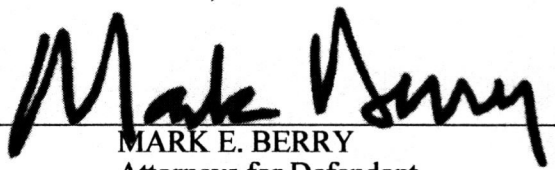
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The plaintiffs do not have either subject matter or personal jurisdiction over this defendant.

WHEREFORE, defendant prays that plaintiffs take nothing by reason of the Complaint, that the defendant has judgment for costs incurred herein, and for such other and further relief as may be proper in this case.

DATED: 1/11/24

MAYALL HURLEY, P.C.

By   
MARK E. BERRY  
Attorneys for Defendant,  
GOSPEL MISSIONARY UNION  
dba AVANT MINISTRIES, a  
MISSOURI CORPORATION

3 **PROOF OF SERVICE**

4 I, the undersigned, declare under penalty of perjury that the following facts are true and  
5 correct.

6 I am a citizen of the United States, over the age of 18 years, and not a party to, or  
7 interested in the within titled action. I am an employee of MAYALL HURLEY, P.C., 112 S.  
8 Church Street, Lodi, CA 95240.

9 I served the following documents on all interested parties in said cause by delivering a  
10 true copy as follows:

11 **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL AND DEPOSIT OF FEES**

12 **ANSWER TO COMPLAINT**

13 **CROSS-COMPLAINT FOR INDEMNITY**

14  **(By Mail)** Said document will be deposited for collection and mailing in the ordinary  
15 course of business on the date specified below, by placing a true copy thereof enclosed in  
16 a sealed envelope with postage thereon full prepaid for first class mail in the United States  
17 in the City of Stockton, County of San Joaquin, State of California.

18  **(By Hand)** I placed a true copy thereof enclosed in a sealed envelope. I caused such  
19 envelope to be delivered to the offices of the addressee.

20  **(By Overnight Delivery)** I sent a true copy thereof enclosed in a sealed envelope to be  
21 delivered by Overnight next day delivery in accordance with CCP Section 1013(c).

22  **(By Facsimile)** I sent a true copy thereof via telephone facsimile transmission to the  
23 following number(s) and a hard copy to follow by mail.

24  **(By Electronic Mail, e-mail)** Based on a Court order or an agreement of the parties to  
25 accept service by email or electronic transmission, I caused the document(s) to be sent from  
26 email address [jlevenstein@mavallaw.com](mailto:jlevenstein@mavallaw.com) to the persons at the email addresses listed in  
27 the Service List. I did not receive, within a reasonable time after the transmission, any  
28 electronic message or other indication that the transmission was unsuccessful.

Each envelope (if applicable) was addressed as follows:

**SEE SERVICE LIST**

I certify and declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that  
the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on January 11, 20242024 at Lodi, California.

*Jessica Levenstein*  
Jessica Levenstein

**SERVICE LIST**

Morgan A. Stewart, Esq. Jenny Louro, Esq. Manly, Stewart & Finaldi 19100 Von Karman Ave., Suite 800 Irvine, CA 92612 <a href="mailto:mstewart@manlystewart.com">mstewart@manlystewart.com</a> <a href="mailto:jlouro@manlystewart.com">jlouro@manlystewart.com</a>	<i>Attorneys for Plaintiffs</i>
Daniel B. Beck, Esq. Beck Law P.C. 228 Windsor River Road, #236 Windsor, CA 95492 <a href="mailto:danbeck@becklaw.net">danbeck@becklaw.net</a>	<i>Attorneys for Plaintiffs,</i>

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