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## **Leadership Dynamics on Peaceful Transitions of Power During Elections in African Inland Church, Soy Sub-County, Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the influence of leadership dynamics on the peaceful transition of power in the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Soy sub-county, Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya. The study looks at how leadership dynamics affect the transfer of elective power in the church. The following objectives guide the study: to evaluate biblical and theological foundations of leadership dynamics, to explore leadership dynamics that influences peaceful transitions of power in the AIC, to evaluate provisions in the church constitution on leadership dynamics in peaceful transitions of power in the AIC, and to find measures to enhance peaceful transitions of power in the AIC. The study was confined to AIC churches in Soy sub-county, Uasin-Gishu County. Servant leadership and conflict resolution theories are used to explain leadership dynamics and peaceful governance. The target population was 6400 and the sampling size was 238. A descriptive research design was used. Purposive and stratified sampling were used to select participants. Data collection instruments included

questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative data was analysed using SPSS Version 21.0. The data was analysed, organised, and presented thematically according to the study's objectives. The study reveals that the church experience conflicts during the election of leaders and power transitions due to dynamisms in leadership. The researcher recommends that church leadership adopt a biblically acceptable model of leadership.

## **Introduction**

Leadership within the church is inherently dynamic, as it operates within spiritual, organisational, and social contexts that are constantly evolving. Given that change is inevitable, effective church leadership must respond appropriately to transitions while remaining grounded in scriptural principles. Leadership approaches such as servant leadership emphasise humility, stewardship, and accountability. These are essential in guiding churches through periods of change. However, despite these ideals, leadership transitions within churches often generate conflict, raising concerns about how leadership dynamics influence the peaceful transfer of power.

### ***Historical Foundations of Church Leadership and Transition***

The dynamics of leadership in the church can be traced back to the early Christian community in Jerusalem. Even before the death of Jesus Christ, his disciples struggled over questions of succession and authority, highlighting that leadership transition has long been a contested issue. Early church leadership evolved through different forms, including charismatic leaders, familial leaders related to Jesus, and appointed leaders (Brown, 1993). Over time, appointed leadership became dominant, particularly during the post-apostolic period.

As the church developed, leadership structures became more institutionalised, with bishops emerging as central figures of authority. These leaders were regarded as custodians of doctrine and played key roles in maintaining unity and discipline within the church. However, the concentration of power in such offices also led to tensions and resistance, as evidenced during the Protestant Reformation, when reformers such as Martin Luther challenged the authority of the papacy. These historical developments demonstrate that leadership

transitions in the church have often been accompanied by conflict, particularly where governance structures are unclear or contested.

### ***Leadership Succession and Conflict in Churches***

Leadership succession remains a critical challenge in many church organisations. The absence of structured succession mechanisms often leads to uncertainty, competition, and conflict. The concept of leadership succession planning emphasises the importance of preparing for leadership transitions through deliberate and systematic processes. However, in many church contexts, such planning is either inadequate or absent.

Scholars such as Gangel and Canine (2000) note that conflict in churches frequently manifests through disagreements, unresolved disputes, and interpersonal tensions among members. Similarly, Halverstadt (1991) argues that conflicts are more likely to escalate in environments where power is unaccountable or unevenly distributed. These dynamics suggest that leadership styles and governance systems play a significant role in shaping whether transitions are peaceful or conflictual. Effective conflict management, grounded in principles of conflict resolution, is therefore essential in ensuring stability during leadership changes.

### ***Leadership Dynamics in the African Church Context***

In the African context, church leadership is influenced by a combination of cultural, historical, and institutional factors. Kalemba and Albert (2014) identify several contributors to weak leadership in African communities including colonial legacies, inadequate training, lack of ethical role models, and inappropriate applications of spirituality. These factors affect not only leadership effectiveness but also the management of transitions.

Studies in Uganda and Tanzania have highlighted challenges related to limited theological education and inconsistencies in leadership practice. In Uganda, insufficient formal training among pastors has contributed to doctrinal weaknesses and poor leadership decisions. In Tanzania, Williams (2009) emphasises the relevance of transformational leadership, a model that inspires followers to higher levels of commitment and growth. However, despite its potential, there is limited evidence that how such leadership models function during actual leadership transitions within African churches.

These findings indicate that while various leadership models exist, their application in facilitating peaceful transitions of power within African church contexts remains inadequately explored.

### ***Church Leadership Conflicts in Kenya***

In Kenya, leadership conflicts within churches are widespread and often linked to succession disputes. Reports indicate that many denominations experience internal wrangles over leadership positions and resource control. Organisations such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya have highlighted the prevalence of such disputes across both mainline and Pentecostal churches.

Empirical studies reveal the nature of these conflicts. Gikungu (2007), in his study of church governance in Kenya, identifies leadership disputes as a significant challenge affecting church growth and unity. Similarly, Magondu (2012) categorises conflicts in the Kenyan Catholic Church as substantive, interpersonal, and informational disputes. While these studies demonstrate that although conflict management strategies such as mediation, communication, and reconciliation are employed, they tend to focus on resolving conflicts after they occur rather than preventing conflicts during leadership transitions.

### ***Leadership Transition and Conflict in the Africa Inland Church***

The Africa Inland Church (AIC) has experienced notable leadership conflicts, particularly during periods of transition. Disputes arising from leadership elections have led to divisions, the formation of factions, and disruptions at both national and local levels. In some instances, these conflicts have escalated into legal battles and physical confrontations, affecting church unity and growth.

Such occurrences highlight the critical role of leadership dynamics including governance structures, electoral processes, and power distribution in determining the nature of leadership transitions. The recurrence of conflicts at both national and grassroots levels suggests that existing leadership frameworks may not adequately support peaceful transitions of power.

## **Research Gap**

Although considerable literature exists on church leadership, conflict, and governance, limited attention has been given to how leadership dynamics specifically influence peaceful transitions of power within AICs. Most studies focus on conflict management after disputes arise, rather than on the leadership practices and structures that can prevent conflict and ensure smooth successions.

Furthermore, while research has explored leadership challenges in African churches more broadly, there has been an insufficient focus on the specific context of the AIC and similar institutions. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by examining how leadership dynamics shape peaceful transitions of power in the AIC in Soy sub-county, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

## **Methodology**

To gather data and adequately characterise the research topic, a descriptive study design was employed. Three research instruments were used to collect data: (1) questionnaires for the church members, (2) in-depth interviews of clergy, and (3) focused group discussion with church leaders. The church members' quantitative responses to a semi-structured questionnaire were gathered. Questionnaires were returned from twenty churchgoers from each of seven congregations for a total number of respondents of 140. In-depth interviews were scheduled with all of the clergy in the seven congregations, who were purposively selected because they are custodians of church traditions and doctrines. Accordingly, a total of 14 clerics participated in the study. For the focus group discussions, seven groups of twelve persons each were organised, one in each congregation. The groups include such church leaders as: the chairpersons, secretaries, and treasurers of the church council and its three main departments—men, women, and youth. Thus, a total of 84 people participated in the focus group discussions.

The test-retest approach was employed by the researcher to determine the instrument's dependability. To assess the reliability of the main data collected, the researcher gave questionnaires. After gathering the data, a cross-examination was conducted to ensure its quality and completeness and to spot any incorrect responses, misspelled words, or blank areas. In order to analyse

quantitative data, SPSS Version 21.0, a statistical tool for social sciences, was used. Qualitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis according to the study's goals and theme.

## **Research Findings and Discussions**

### ***Biblical and theological foundations on church leadership dynamics***

On the question of whether the Bible guides us on church leadership, 39.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 43% agreed, while 9% were neutral, 6% disagreed and 2.6% strongly disagreed. A large majority of church members are aware of biblical teachings on leadership. This was also true of clergy, as reflected in their interview responses:

‘Leadership is God-given and whenever leaders are chosen they should purpose to serve God not their personal gratification.’

‘Leaders should also recognise their spiritual gifts under the call to serve God. They should honour and submit to God’s authority.’

‘Leadership is sovereign, it is God who sets up leaders and despise them according to Daniel 2:21: “[God] changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom and knowledge to the discerning” (NIV).’

‘Character matters in leadership. Therefore, believers should elect people of good integrity who will rule with fairness and justice, who are hospitable, courageous, and who lead by example. Titus 1:6-9 states that “an elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife ... not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy, and discipline” (NIV).’

‘Leader should be proud of what they are doing and work diligently. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might’, meaning that a leader should use every opportunity given well, because at the end he or she will give an account.’

‘Leader should rely on the mind of Christ because the mind of Christ can give discernment in spiritual matters. Therefore, we should rely on God’s guidance when electing church leaders.’

During the focused group discussions, respondents added that, ‘Leadership is sacrificing to serve others, avoiding selfishness, and prioritising oneself.’ ‘Leadership serves the interest of others, as Philippians 2:3 says: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves” (NIV).’

‘Leaders should stick in doing what is right despite opposition. They must by all means avoid doing what is evil. Leaders should also show humility, because Jesus taught his disciples that those who humble themselves are the greater’ (see Matthew 20:25-28).

‘Leaders should adopt the servant leadership model where they are servants, not masters. They should also be like shepherds who takes care of and watches over the people with whom they have been entrusted. In his first letter, Peter writes: “Be shepherds of God’s flock that are under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because yo are willing, as God wants you to be” (NIV).’

‘John Maxwell says that Jesus contrasted his servant leadership approach with the self-seeking and autocratic leadership style of others when his disciples James and John asked him to grant them the privilege of sitting on his right and left as rulers in his kingdom. Instead, Jesus said that those who express humility are greatest in the kingdom of God.’

### ***Adherence to biblical teachings during election of leaders***

When asked if they follow biblical guidance when electing leaders, the majority of respondents (69.7%) said that they do. Only 30.3% of respondents admitted that they do not follow biblical guidance. Interview respondents added that they always seek God’s guidance through prayers so that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit to choose the right leaders. They mentioned the need to check the character and maturity of one’s faith, because a leader should portray maturity at all times. Others stated that when voting is done fairly without coercing anyone, it brings about peaceful transitions of power and

good leadership in the church. But that those who fail to follow biblical teachings on leadership, who apply secular ways of campaigning, such as giving bribes, and who talk ill of others create splinter groups in the church. Some of these leaders are led by selfish ambitions, hidden motives, and discrimination, which ends up in chaos for the church.

In the focused group discussions, leaders mentioned the following biblical teachings that should guide elections: 'Choosing leaders who are selfless and value others above, as Philippians 2:3 says: "Do nothing out of selfish ambitions" (NIV).' 'Leaders should not fear but put their trust in God because Isaiah 41:10 says, "do not fear, for I am with you" (NIV), meaning God is the source of strength.' 'We need leaders who are self-disciplined to keep their ego in check and not making decisions with our own self-interest. If we struggle with self-discipline in leadership we can find God's help, for 2 Timothy 1:7 says that "the Spirit God gave us does not makes timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline" (NIV).'

'The Bible teaches leaders taught not to become weary in doing good, but instead to be steadfast and persevere, holding hope and pushing through the difficult times' (see Galatians 6:9)

'Wisdom in leadership is paramount. Just as we believe leadership comes from God, wisdom also comes from God and will enable one operate in justice. Psalms 37:30 says that "the mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak what is just" (NIV).'

'Paul Chappell says that when it comes to selecting and mentoring ministry leaders there seem to be two extremes. Some churches never train leaders because they don't have a vision for the equipping work of the ministry contrary to what is in Ephesians 4:11-12. Other churches are so desperate for help that there is no vetting process of serving in leadership at all.'

'The church stands by the guidelines in Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. These two passages give us the qualifications of God's leader.'

'Napari Isaiah said that leadership disagreements can be lessened or resolved if people are prepared to accept the Holy Spirit to guide and direct their behaviour. It is up to each individual to find a way to align their interests with

what the Bible says. Pastors and leaders, especially those who want to rise to the top of the church leadership, should be sure their ambitions align with Scripture's teachings on leadership.'

### ***Teachings on leadership before an election***

The study found that the church does not offer teachings on leadership before elections. 52.27% of respondents said that there were no teachings on leadership, whereas 47.73% said that there are some teachings, particularly sermons on leadership that are preached when elections are due. This means that even if the church offers training, sermons and teachings on leadership are not enough and not efficient.

In the focused group discussions, had mixed reactions. One respondent said that they hear little church leadership in most sermons, even when elections are near. Another agreed, noting that they have never attended any seminar teaching on leadership. A third respondent alleged that some leaders who lobby for positions in the church when elections are close. Nevertheless, there were others who said that the church does offer teachings on leadership. For example, one respondent said that the church always announce the vacant seats and asks members to pray for new leadership. Another respondent described how the church organises days for special prayers prior to elections.

In the in-depth interviews, respondents claimed that the church gives clear guidelines on what to consider in choosing church leadership as indicated in the church constitution. They said that the church organises seminars to teach on the qualities of a good leader. But, contrary to these responses, others lamented on lack of awareness among church members about church requirements for becoming leaders and few teachings on matters related to leadership in the church.

Awojobi (2011) underscores the need for every church to have comprehensive guidelines about how people get into leadership positions and about what is expected of leaders in the church, because a blind man cannot lead another blind man. Both of them will fall into a pit.

## ***Factors on leadership dynamics that influence peaceful transitions of power in the church***

The research uncovered many factors that influence whether transitions of power in the church will be peaceful or not. These factors include money and other church resources, mentioned by 36.6% of respondents; selfish ambitions, selfish desires, and a desire for personal gratification, mentioned by 29.55% of respondents. 13.64% of respondents named the status quo as a factor, while 8.33% mentioned a desire for fame. 7.58% said that all of these factors contribute to conflict. And, finally, 4.55% of respondents identified a thirst for power as a leading factor.

In the in-depth interviews, when walkabout factors that influence whether transitions of power will be peaceful, respondents offered the following comments:

‘Many people struggle for power through church leadership for material gain, money and other assets of the church. The Bible warns Christians not to be lovers of money or material things. Such things will drive them away from being effective leaders in the church.’

Another, reflecting how selfish ambitions, selfish desires, and a desire for personal gratification are primarily factors, noted that ‘When you are a leader in the church, society will respect you, and when you look for other positions outside church, you will be preferred.’ This statement shows how some leaders want to use church leadership for their personal gains, rather than for serving God as intended.

A lack of transparency in the election of leaders has also contributed to conflict in the church. Some churches fail to follow the constitutional provisions of the church on how to conduct elections. Instead, they do things their own way. But when ballot counting is done secretly and results not announced immediately, the results will not be trusted by many.

Another factor is a lack of adequate training for church members and their leaders. When leaders are not trained on their areas of jurisdiction and church members are not trained on what to consider in the election of church leaders, expectations are not clear. A large number of respondents said that they are

not trained on what to consider during the election of leaders prior to the election exercise. As a result, they proceed based on their own judgement. This contributes to poor leadership. When leaders do not receive any leadership training, it brings about leadership incompetence. Whenever a leader is not matured spiritually, he or she can create conflicts. Mature people are able to agree and disagree without distress. They value the different views of others and also appreciate the diversity of spiritual gifts.

Pride and arrogance also create conflicts in leadership. Participants in the in-depth interviews noted that the absence of humility, which is one of the greatest character traits of a good leader, has created conflict in churches today. There are leaders who are after fame. They want to become famous through the position they hold in church for their personal gain. But this may not meet the will of God, and thus it affects the growth of the church.

Status quo as another factor that has created conflict. Those leaders who accept the status quo believe that the current situation is good and does not need to be improved. Therefore, there will be no change expected from such a leader. A final factor is the thirst to power where leaders struggle for power, becoming more concerned about who is the right man, rather than what is right. Leaders who are thirsty for power are basically loving themselves more than others. All of these factors contribute in one way or another to conflict, disrupting the smooth running and peaceful co-existence in churches.

### ***Effects of leadership conflict on the church***

The study confirmed that as a result of conflict, the growth of the church is affected. The number of followers will reduce drastically. When the numbers are low, the church will eventually have poor infrastructure development and poor spiritual growth. It will never grow in all dimensions. Creating division in the church and forming splinter groups, negatively affects the church. The church, which is known as body of Christ, should be united. Instead, it will have separate groups inside the church. Or people will pull away from their main churches and opt to join other churches, or move as a group and start their own church.

These conflicts can cause other believers to lose their faith completely and stop going to church. Conflict can create hatred among the members. They no

longer greet one another, because of misunderstandings and ideological differences. The great commandment, to love one another, will no longer exist in the church. Instead, conflict brings an increase in gossip and misunderstandings between church members, even to the extent of physical fights. Mistrust among church members and church leaders grows. Some respondents noted court cases used to settle church disputes, which risk exposing the church to the public. All of these consequences conflict derail the church from its core mandate of being salt and light in the world and of winning lives to Christ.

The church's development is slowed and gospel initiatives gradually lose their spiritual potency. Masamba (2013) states that a pastor's leadership style affects the growth of the church. Every area of the church is impacted, including leadership conflict situations. The church may experience financial drift, because many individuals depart during times of conflict and turmoil. This can prevent souls from being gained to the kingdom of God.

According to Awojobi (2011), several churches have been shut down because the leadership only observed events without making a meaningful contribution. The result was despair and hopelessness that made members wander from church to church, seeking a place to identify themselves. Others became disappointed and lost their faith altogether.

Leaders must engage in conflict resolution. One respondent noted that leaders should be role models in the midst of conflict, able to manage and guide their family and the church, as well as role models in character in order to manage the church.

### ***Measures to enhance peaceful transitions of power during elections of leaders in the church***

The study sought to discover measures that can enhance peaceful transitions of power in the church. The first measure identified was the nature of elections: whether they were peaceful or not. The questionnaires revealed that 58.3% of church members believes that elections are conducted peacefully in their churches, while 41.7% of respondents said that elections are not conducted peacefully in their churches.

In the in-depth interviews, participants observed that the elections of leaders are conducted peacefully because the church announces in advance the vacancies and urges members to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that leaders that will be chosen will be ones guided by God. Other participants noted that there is strict adherence to the church constitution, such as the appointment of a returning officer to oversee the elections. Elections are done secretly and the ballots are counted aloud so that members can hear the results themselves. When the ballots are not counted aloud, the results are announced immediately to avoid any suspicion of an adjustment in the results. In addition, interviewees emphasised the importance of teaching about leadership prior to an election as a major reason why elections are conducted peacefully

In the focus group discussions, participants alleged that in churches where elections are not peaceful, the following factors are influential: There is lack of adequate training of church members on the guidelines for the election, which can create chaos during the election. There is a lack of transparency during the election whereby members lack confidence in the announced results. Failure to avail the constitution to church members was also noted as a major contributing factor to chaos during elections. One of the respondents said that he witnessed members insulting and fighting one another after one of them lost an election for chairman and that he had also experienced church members quitting the church because they lost an election to a leadership position in the church.

### ***Resolving conflicts in the church***

In terms of how to resolve conflict in the church, 50% of interview respondents indicated that conflicts are best solved through mediations and reconciliation. 37.12% believed that conflicts are better solved through prayers, and 12.88% said that conflicts can be solved well in the courts.

In the in-depth interviews, interviewees said that reconciliation is the best way of resolving issues because it consolidates peace and breaks the circle of violence. Reconciliation gives the two parties a chance to be heard, and motivates the parties to reach a solution that encourages justice. Another measure mentioned to resolve church conflict was mediation, since a neutral third party is involved who can assist the parties to understand each other and

identify solutions. The Bible encourages solving problems amicably with a spirit of meekness, keeping watch over oneself lest one also be tempted (Galatians 6:1).

Using a mediator as a third party in a dispute is also part of conflict resolution theory (Coleman 2014). Enlist the help of a neutral third party who is trained in mediation can help those in conflict reach an agreement. The role of the mediator is not to impose a solution on the parties, but rather to assist them in exploring the interests that underlie their disagreements. The mediator should work with both parties individually and together to find a mutually agreeable, non-binding, sustainable solution.

Focus group discussions reiterated that it is wise to resolve our conflicts by ourselves rather than taking them to the courts. Participants referred to 1 Corinthians 6:1: 'If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgement instead of before the Lord's people?' (NIV).

Others participants highlighted prayer as a weapon to resolve our differences, noting that Jesus advised his disciples to be persistent in prayers in order to overcome all the challenges. Jesus' command to forgiving one was also mentioned as another solution to conflict. But some suggested that 'if the church has failed to solve the conflict, then it's better we seek justice from the courts.' Others proposed putting aside differences in order to work toward superior goals as a means of promoting organisational commitment and fostering a spirit of tolerance and patience.

### ***Measures taken by the church to enhance peaceful transition of power***

In terms of measures that the church takes to enhance peaceful transfers of power, 32.58% of the respondents purported that prayer is the key solution to attain peaceful transition. 28.03% supported biblical teachings being followed during the election of church leaders. 23.48 % named training and educating the believers on the qualification of leaders based on the church constitution and biblical teachings as an important measure. 15.91% talked of forming a conflict resolution committee to handle conflicts whenever they arise.

In the in-depth interviews, some supported prayer as a key solution in enhancing peaceful transition of power. Through prayer and fasting, believers seek for God's guidance before elections. One cleric noted that before Jesus appointed his disciples, he had to seek guidance from God by praying. Therefore, prayer enables the church to make effective decisions since the Spirit of God will guide the church.

Another respondent emphasised adherence to the Bible's teachings on the qualities of a good leader. When leaders of good character are elected, there will be a peaceful transition of power. Another respondent also highlighted the importance of training and educating the believers on the qualification of leaders based on the church constitution and biblical teachings, because that will them to elect leaders of integrity who fear God. Another interviewee added that in order to enhance peaceful transitions of power, there is a need for enhancing transparency during elections. Another said that there is also a need to form committees to deal with conflicts when they arise. These committees should be able to handle matters before they escalate to higher levels, thus enhancing peaceful transitions of power.

The focus groups came up with the following measures to enhance peaceful transitions of power: avail the constitution to church members so that they can read in themselves, especially on the guidelines for electing leaders; having the church organise workshops, seminars, and sermons that emphasise biblical teachings on leadership; use mediation and reconciliation whenever there are disagreements on any issue so that issue are resolved amicably and peacefully. The groups also said that the church should teach its members that church leadership does not warrant a salary, but rather is a service to God, so that members vying for leadership positions would not be motivated by monetary values. One group members summed up discussion by insisting that all measures applied should be accompanied by humility and love, which are important Christian virtues in serving God.

The study's findings resonate with Magondu (2012), who says that many issues can be resolved in within the church, without going public. The Bible advises taking one or two others to address someone when a personal conversation is fruitless. By involving more witnesses, without making the situation public, a settlement is possible without making the issue obvious to everyone

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Church leadership is undergoing a lot of dynamics and needs urgent attention. Society is changing drastically, but church leadership should not modify church doctrines to meet the secular changes. Only positive changes that are not contrary to biblical teachings should be adopted. There is a need for a biblical approach to leadership to be embraced and emphasised in the churches. This will not only solve issues of leadership in the church, but will also bring wholeness in leadership, which is God's ultimate purpose for any form of leadership. Church leaders should remain servants of God, not masters. Because leadership is ordained by God, selfish gain and personal gratification should not be part of the character of a leader in the church.

To encourage peaceful transitions of power in the church, church leadership should provide effective leadership to members. Whenever disagreement arises, leadership should find a way of resolving the issue amicably and peacefully in order to protect the mandate of the church to be salt and light in the world. Clergy should lead the congregation according to biblical teachings so that the church should not be conformed to the world but be transformed by the word of God.

Congregation need to be taught about the dynamics of church leadership so that they will be able to choose leaders well from well informed positions. The church faithful should be proactive in hold leaders accountable, making sure that they apply biblical teachings in their leadership endeavours.

Though this study focused on the African Inland Church in Uasin Gishua, its findings may help others churches know how to deal with drastic changes in our society that affect church leadership. All churches are encouraged to strictly follow biblical teachings so as to protect the mandate of the church. Additional research in other denominations and regions, particularly on leadership dynamics and transitions of powers, may confirm and will enhance this study's findings.

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