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**CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND THE LAW:- A CASE STUDY OF
SOME CHURCHES OF THE OGBOMOSO BAPTIST CONFERENCE.**

M. Div

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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ABSTRACT

The researcher having been of the first view that there is supposed to be some relationship between church administration and the law in some churches of the Ogbomoso Baptist Conference took time to investigate some hindrances in the way of effective and efficient application of law in the administration of the said churches. A self designed questionnaire was used to collect data from 500 randomly selected respondents from 10 different churches in Ogbomoso Baptist Conference. The research shows some of the hindrances as including:

1. Illiteracy
- (2) Lack of will or commitment
- (3) Unequal treatment
- (4) Lack of enlightenment or education on law related matters in church administration
- (5) Influence of partisan Politics
- (6) Influence of new generation Churches
- (7) Lack of legal advice or Adviser
- (8) Moribund Church constitutions.

The researcher then proposed some recommendation to all stakeholders in church administration with a view to overcoming the above hindrances so that law can be used effectively and efficiently in the administration of our churches to achieve the goal and purpose of the church.

B. RECOMMENDATION:

1. That every Baptist church should retain a legal adviser who will be able to advise the church on the legal needs in its administration from time to time. This becomes more necessary because ignorance of the law will not be a valid excuse if the church is guilty of failing to abide by its legal responsibilities,⁶ because the language of the law is *IGNORANTIA LEGIS NON EXCUSAT* (ignorance of the law is no excuse).
2. There should be a standing church constitution and bylaw committee, which should be responsible for advising from time to time on the operation or implementation of the constitution as well as review of same. Legal experts (if any) within the membership of the church can be coopted into the committee. It is observed from this research that most of the constitutions of the churches considered are due for review because apart from their provision on tenets of faith and condition for membership and committees of the church, they have tenuous provision or no provision on vital issues like elaborate procedure for internal dispute resolution.
3. The churches should organize, sponsor or participate in retreats, seminars or workshops on law related subjects like marriage, will, guardianship or adoption of children, property matters, operation of church constitutions, incorporation or registration of churches etc.
4. The churches should have better provisions on condition of services of their permanent workers particularly the Pastor, his appointment termination and relationship with the church should be well defined legally. A provision like "the appointment of the pastor shall cause when the church or the Pastor deems it fits"⁸ can be abused to expel a pastor who

refuses to be a pawn in the hand of the executive committee of the church.

5. The members of our churches should allow the Holy Spirit and Christly love to rule and reign in our churches, so that there can be concord and harmony in which situation will and commitment to the law operate in the administration of churches will be revitalized. So that there will due observance of the provisions of the constitution of our churches instead of tyrannical or authoritarian departure from the provisions of same.

6. Pastor, church workers as well as members should take personal steps to educate themselves on the rudiments of law as it relates to church administration. Our seminaries and Bible or Pastor Schools should integrate rudiments of law into their syllabi.

7. Our Baptist Churches should intensify their efforts on adult education programmes so as to eradicate or limit the frontiers of illiteracy in the church. Law has more success of achieving the desired goal or result in a literate society or community than in an illiterate one and the same goes for the church.

8. There should not be sacred cows in the church. Double standard of application of law should never be practised. There should be equality before the law or equal application of law to all categories of persons in the church. In a situation where the provision of the constitution of the church in relation to discipline of members is applied on a member of the church but circumvented in respect of another member because of the

latter's position does not augur well for effectiveness and efficiency of the law in church administration.

9. While one cannot say that Christians should not participate in politics, one wishes to recommend that church members be wary of the introduction of bitterness, acrimony, destructive criticism and other ungodly tendencies that characterized partisan politics into the affairs of the church as same can hinder the upholding of the rule of law or the effective and efficient application of law in the administration of the churches.

10. Baptist should maintain and improve upon their distinctiveness and not borrow any junk idea from new generation churches where there is loose administrative set up and where some of the church leaders or Pastors are law unto themselves.

Finally it is hoped that this little effort projected in this research shall be found useful both for application and for further studies by all who are concerned with the matching of the administration of our churches with the-realities of our time.