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ABSTRACT

This essay is an attempt to uncover the legal provisions and theological principles which churches must abide with if they want to have spiritually and legally approved business investments. The reason for choosing this theme is based on the observation that more and more churches are investing in commercial businesses.

To achieve this purpose, the researcher examined the theological implications of revealed biblical principles and legal provisions for business investments in Nigeria. The work studied the existing church investment patterns and proffer biblically, theologically and legally sound counsel on issues pertaining to church investments in Nigeria.

Having examined both the Old and the New Testaments biblical literatures on Investment principles and laws, The synthesis of the study is that God is highly interested in acquisition, multiplication and disbursement of financial resources for and in His church. Therefore the scripture encourages multiplication and wise use of available resources for future disbursement and greater usefulness under divine instructions. Examining legal literature, the researcher discovered that the law as it is now does not discriminate at all against church investing.

Field research was done. The methodology employed included the analyses of business investments patterns of selected Nigerian Baptist Convention churches. Out of sixteen areas of investments the sampled churches invested mainly in the educational sector. Also the churches' awareness of legal provision on business investments and their patronage of legal institutions were below average. The conclusion is that every church must be aware of legal provision, be knowledgeable in investment methods and economic management, and seek the face of God before

embarking on any business investment in the name of Jesus Christ the Head of the church.

5.1 CONCLUSION

We shall conclude this research by first restating some truths.

The God Almighty is the maker of heaven and earth and the fullness therein.

He created all good things for the blessings of His children.

The Lord Jesus commissioned the church to carry out the Great Commission.

He has given the Church various financial resources needed to carry out this Great Commission.

The primary source of income for the church is the believers' tithes, offerings and sacrificial giving.

From our findings we can draw the following conclusions:

As at now most churches still depend largely on income from the tithes and offerings.

As at now most churches invest mainly in the educational sector: having nursery, primary, secondary schools and Higher Institutions.

As at now the laws of Nigeria is not against any church investing in legitimate businesses.

The scriptures clearly states that the offering brought to God's house should be hallowed and used in an holy manner.

Therefore while the bible is not against the church investing the funds of the Lord in legitimate businesses the consent and will of the Lord must be sort on each proposal and before any investment is done.

The church leadership and membership must engage in deeper knowledge of scripture,

The church leadership and membership must be engaged in deeper understanding of legal procedures.

1. The church leadership and membership must be engaged in deeper study of economic and investment processes.
2. The church leadership and membership must engage in deeper walk with God to know His Laws and do His will in all matters including investment practices.

In the light of findings I want to make the following recommendations:

i. To the churches:

Churches should return to deep biblical faith-based on revelations from the word of God.

Churches should make seeking the will of God a priority in all things.

Churches should specifically seek the will of God on any investment before they carry it out.

The church should not see investment as a money making venture mainly but as a means to receive resources to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The church should be ably represented in the executive government, judicial, and legislative processes.

ii. To the Denominational Leadership:

Each denomination should revisit their doctrinal stand on investments and the law.

Each denomination leaders should be learned on the biblical stand on investments.

Each denominational should be knowledgeable in the art of investments and law.

iii. To Pastors

Each pastor must develop a personal intimate relationship with God such that they can discern the will of God at each point in time.

Each pastor must develop a personal intricate relationship with Jesus, live a life of absolute obedience and develop such integrity that the church members will believe and honor their views and recommendations.

Pastors should be knowledgeable in the art of investments and in requirements of law.

iv. To Theological Institutions

Theological institutions should revisit, and redesign their curriculum to meet the spiritual and financial challenges of post-modern ministry.

Theological institutions should introduce courses in the areas of :

*Faith

*Receiving Divine Resources for Ministry.

*Biblical Guidelines for Financial Investments.

*Tapping into Divine Resources etc.

Theological institutions should introduce courses in the areas of

* Financial Management,

* Administration and

* Investments Portfolio Management

These streams of knowledge from the bible and empirical social research should be synergized together under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to form a solid knowledge base.

v. To Investment Committee Members

See your responsibility as service unto the Lord.

Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Submit your professional knowledge, acumen and skills to the directives of the Holy Spirit.

Be faithful in your dealings. Do not see this as an opportunity to enrich yourself rather see it as opportunity to enrich the church of Jesus so that there will be food in the house of God.

vi. To The Executive Arm Of Government

1. Those who serve as Chairmen of Local Governments, Governors, and President should fear the Lord and honor the Church of Jesus Christ.
2. They should not approve of laws and decrees that will hinder the church from carrying out her legitimate duties and enjoying her legitimate rights.

vii. To The Legislature

1. the legislative arm of Government must do their best to pass laws that will fortify the economic development of the nation.
2. they should make laws that will encourage freedom of religion.
3. they should pass laws that will not hinder the economic strength of the church.
4. The church should be ably represented in the legislative process by training, identifying with and encouraging believers who have callings in such areas.

viii. To The Lawyers And Judiciary

1. The church should be ably represented in the judiciary by training, encouraging and identifying with believers who have calling in such related profession.
2. The lawyers and judiciary should dispense justice with accuracy, equity, truth, and speed so that business people can regain confidence in the judicial processes and carry out their businesses in truth knowing that the judiciary is there to sort out the truth if they encounter any enemy of the truth.
3. Christian lawyers and judges should ably represent the interest of the church in truth in judicial processes.