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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As a matter of fact, accounting is not very new in the history of men. Anywhere and whenever economic activities have progressed beyond the most elementary conditions of service and production, the accounting system have appeared. As far back as 4500BC, accounts system have been found, hence Greek, Romans, Egyptians, early European and medieval accounting records are in existence. In fact man have used accounting recording at any stage of his development according to their needs.

Accounting environment has undergone vast changes in the past and an accelerating rate of change is in prospect for the future. As at today what is been accepted as accounting would have been recognized as such fifty years ago, as such, one may safely predict that in fifty or more year time, the subject will bear little resemblance to what it is today. Accounting from the view point of American Accounting Association (AAA, 1996) they defined it thus: "is the process of identifying, measuring and communicating economic information to permit informed judgment and decision by the users of information". Well according to the Bible, "church" is defined as "the body," which Christ is the head. Therefore, church is assembly of citizens that acknowledge Jesus Christ as their supreme ruler. Church as an organization possessed the characteristics of non-profit making. B.N Okezie, FCA (2000) Defined non-profit making organization as those that possess following characteristics:

"Non-profit making organization thereby non-trading and non-service rendered except to their members and having their major source of funding through subscription from such members.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the churches, though non-profit maximization but this churches realized revenue as they meet for fellowship through tithes, offering, donations, persuasions etc, this revenue as a matter of facts, have to be properly accounted for, hence the members may wish to know if this revenue are properly utilized by the management. On this note, there is that need for accountability by the management hence nature demands that anyone who is given work to perform must be accountable to it. According to Kohe's Dictionary for accountants, 6th edition, he defined accountability as "the obligation of an employee, agent, or other person to supply a satisfactory report after periodic of action or of failure to act following delegate authority". Accountability in this perspective is stewardship. As a matter of fact, stewardship accounting has its origin in the function which accounting serve from the earliest time in the history of our society. Essentially, accountability can not be achieved without involving orderly recording of the organization financial and non-financial transactions, and this agrees with the accounting term "fairness". "Adequacy and propriety" in other words, the ability of financial statement to convey in ambiguous and adequate information.

The word stewardship have been considered so important that St. Luke Gospel chapter 16 verse 2, said "and he called him and said unto him, how is it that I hear this? Give an account of the steward for thou sayest beno longer steward".

Therefore, if accountability and fairness is to be achieved in any organization which includes church as a focus of this research, there must be an adequate and constant accounting system.

At this point, we consider the word accounting system, according to Eric L Kohler, he defined accounting system as: "The classification of account, form, procedures and control by which assets, liabilities, revenues, expenses and the result of transactions generally are recorded and controlled".

On this note, this research aim of examining the accountability in churches. To know when they have general accepted accounting principle different from the one used by profit making organizations.

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