

A portrait of Erika E. Cole, Esq., a Black woman with short, curly hair, wearing a dark blazer over a red top. She is smiling and sitting on a wooden bench in what appears to be a church sanctuary.

# ERIKA E. COLE, ESQ.

## THE CHURCH ATTORNEY®

### CAPABILITIES OVERVIEW

Known as The Church Attorney®, Erika E. Cole, Esq. has built a national brand and reputation for being an authority on Church Law matters. Whether she is helping clients avoid legal pitfalls in launching multiple campuses or assisting church planting organizations, The Church Attorney has a heart to serve. Erika has become the top choice for helping to advise Pastors and Leaders with the latest legal advice and solutions for becoming and staying compliant.

She is the go-to person on Church Law and legal advice for the next generation of Churches, including topics such as:

- Legal advice for Church Planting | How to Represent your Church in the Media
- Revising governing documents, policies and procedures to reflect today's legal environment
- Tax-Exempt Applications for 501(c)(3) status | Handling an Unexpected Legal Crisis | Legal Audits | Church contracts
- Buying or Selling church property | Church construction, loans and facility issues | Church Legal Trends
- Properly structuring a church run school, daycare, senior center

The Church Attorney should be your partner. Make sure your Church has the right person on its team to help ensure your success – don't wait for a crisis.

#### WHAT SUCCESSFUL CHURCHES DO DIFFERENTLY

- They hire professionals and don't outsource every job to a volunteer. They make sure that they are staffed with skilled people who understand their role and bring a level of expertise to that area.
- They have legal counsel on their team and that person has a seat at the table from day one – not just after a crisis arises.
- They are proactive in putting policies and procedures in place to ensure that their church runs like a well-oiled machine from day one.
- They are IRS compliant.

#### WHY YOUR CHURCH NEEDS THE CHURCH ATTORNEY®

- Erika E. Cole, Esq. has a proven track record of coming alongside a church team to address legal matters to move from vision to fruition.
- Many of the most significant choices a church can make include a legal component: hiring staff, buying property, organizing a church board, etc.
- A network of skilled professionals (from CPAs to Executive Consultants) who can support your church's growing success
- Almost 20 years of experience specific to Church Law- you get the benefit of her extensive experience.

## Services includes:

### LEGAL AUDITS

We ensure that your church has the foundational elements in place and is functioning properly and healthily. We will identify the gaps and concerns, provide a written report with necessary next steps, and work with you to bring your church or organization into legal compliance. We will identify legal gaps before the IRS does.

### TAX EXEMPT APPLICATION FOR 501 (C) (3) STATUS

Throughout her career, The Church Attorney has helped ministries of various sizes and denominations obtain their tax-exempt status. Her in-depth knowledge of IRS requirements has helped her navigate and support her clients through the complicated maze of federal and state regulations with a 100% success rate.

#### Governance Services include ensuring that:

- Church is in good standing.
- Articles of Incorporation to make sure they are reflective of current laws, and are complete, clear and consistent & compliant.
- Bylaws are in place, current, complete, clear, consistent, being utilized in practice, reflects the church's beliefs especially if conflicting with state law.
- Church Board is operational, and composition of the board compliant with Bylaws and federal laws.
- Board Meeting Minutes & Resolutions are appropriately recorded and maintained.
- Trade names in use are registered.
- Membership rolls are current while members' data remains confidential.

### ADVICE REGARDING BANK FINANCING AND CONSTRUCTION LOANS

The decision to renovate your current space, move to a larger location or build the church of your dreams can be a complicated one. The Church Attorney brings years of advising congregations with great success. Erika will take the time to understand your organization's mission and vision, and to help you navigate the complex legal process.

### DRAFT AND REVIEW OF CHURCH CHARTERS

Answering "the call" is the first step. Calling The Church Attorney is the next step. As one of only a few attorneys in the nation who exclusively practices Church Law, she has guided churches, from every size and denomination to obtain their charters to start their church on sound, legal and compliant ground.

### TRAINING FOR CHURCH BOARDS

We believe that serving on the Church Board is a sacred commitment; however, commitment alone does not equate to success. Establishing a properly functioning governing body is an integral part of your church's foundation. It is imperative to ensure that each participant have a thorough understanding of their role, responsibilities, and commitments at the on-set of their term. The Church Attorney will work with your Church Board to ensure that they are equipped with proper instruction and guidance; solidifying a position to spearhead a successful organization.

If you are looking for someone who is dedicated to helping advise your church, you couldn't place your confidence and trust in more competent hands than Erika E. Cole, Esq., The Church Attorney.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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