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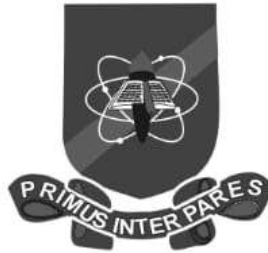
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EDITORIAL

It is with great pleasure and gratitude to Allah (SAW) that on behalf of the Editorial Board, I am presenting the 7th volume, December 2021 edition of Voyages Journal of Religious Studies, a publication of the Department of Religious Studies, Gombe State University. This edition of the publication has in it a number of articles from reputable scholars within the world of academia across disciplines.

Some of the issues covered in this volume center on Qur'an, ethics and morals, Islamic education, Da'wah activities, cultural values, pandemic in the teachings of Islam, Ulumul Hadith, peaceful coexistence and an examination of some biblical verses on stewardship as it applies to the Nigerian context.

My sincere gratitude goes to the authors who contributed their wealth of knowledge. I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the editorial consultants and the editorial board who work tirelessly to see the success of this edition. Thank you.

Lastly, we give a tribute to our former Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Umaru Dahiru, may Allah have mercy on him and grant him Jannah. Amin.

Dr. Fatima Abubakar,

Head, Department of Religious Studies,
Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria.

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Strengthening *Da'wah* and Coordination of Activities among Muslim Organizations for a Better Nigeria: A Strategic Approach

Luqman L. Adedeji¹ and Ahmed A. Adedeji²

Abstract

Despite over 800 years of introduction of the da'wah and Islamic activities to Nigeria, the effects on the development of the nation and the people have fallen short of expectation. The economy, polity and social systems of the country are in pathological disarray. The objective of the da'wah and the Islamic activities is to promote peaceful coexistence, good governance, equity and social justice, and international best practices for protection of human rights, dignity and values for advancing humanity towards his Creator in the most profitable manner. The poor situation in Nigeria and living standards of Nigerians which has persisted for over 50 years, calls for urgent review of the potential transformational role the da'wah and activities of Muslim organizations and leadership must play. We propose in this article a strategy that could engage the Muslim community in Nigeria positively participates in the emancipation of the nation from corruption, social injustice, poor governance and other ills debarring its progress using da'wah activities of the Muslim organizations within coordinated leadership of the Sultan, the Nigeria most referred leader of the Muslims. The paper, through an analytical method, recommends establishment of Da'wah Assembly of Representatives (DAR) as an organizational model, for management of the affairs of the Muslims with guiding cardinal framework to interface with government and contribute to national development.

Keywords: *Da'wah*, Coordination, Activities, Muslim organizations, Strategic approach.

Introduction

Islam has been known to many for ages and the role it played in the transformation of nations is not contestable. Numerous evidence and historical facts are available to support the positive contribution of this religion of the Muslims to education (Al-Ilori 30), business transactions, communal coexistence and refined social system, infrastructure expansion and innovations, technological advances, social equity and justice, human right advocacy, polity and return of man to essence of life- worship of his Creator, Allah.

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The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad ibn Abdullah (peace be on him) established clear paths to achieving this glorious historical achievement for the religion as ordained by God. It was a path chosen for him by God that he uses *da'wah*- a scientific tool synchronously engaging actions of calling, demonstrating, attracting, guiding and presenting the way of God to mankind irrespective of race, color, status and affiliations and admonishing him to consciousness of his Creator and His worship. Wherever the *da'wah* tool is taken and the skills are established in the personalities of two or more Muslims, an organized way of living is formed (Altalib 20). Often time, this leads to establishment of Muslim organizations (a second tool) that is used to support the management of affairs of the Muslims and contribute positively to the growth of the communities in which they live. These two tools were effectively used to create a state of orderliness and freedom from corruption-a menace affecting the world order today and promoting violation of rights of all living creatures.

Although, some writers from the west and east alike wrote distorting information about Islam, new emerging evidence is catching up to expose their ignorance or deliberate attempts to blacklist Islam and the Muslims. In Nigeria, like any other parts of the world, Muslims have deployed the tool of *da'wah* and have formed Islamic organization (Adetona 15), but to diverse ends. The roles played by these tools as ordained and as practiced by the Prophet (peace be on him) are not reflected in the today's world of Nigerians. The *da'wah* was misconstrued and the Muslim organizations are misguided to different and sometimes conflicting goals, such that there exists confusion in the land and chattering of what could have been cohesive team to advance the course of better living standards for Nigerians, irrespective of religion, status, tribes and regional affiliations.

This lack of appropriate deployment of the tools has contributed to the ineffective economic, social and political development in Nigeria for over forty years (Gbadamosi 12). The situation is still unabated and characterized by social injustice, joblessness, poor education and education without focus for national purpose, economic disempowerment, political confusion, corruption and attitudinal bankruptcy. Except for recognized efforts of right-minded political ideologues, the situation in Nigeria could have been catastrophic. With the new efforts to re direct that nation to the right course of development, to give a new life of happiness and prosperity to Nigerians, the Muslim community in the country and its leadership must refocus to assist the nation with effective use of the tools of *Da'wah* and Islamic Organizations and to the benefit of all citizens. In this perspective article, we analyze this option and feasible strategies that may be employed to positively engage the *da'wah* and Muslim organizations for effective contribution to development and good governance in the country, under a formidable leadership of the Sultanate.

Re-Organizing the Community for Effective *Da'wah* Works

It is evident that the community of Muslims is organized. In the history, Islam is a religion transcending geographical and racial boundaries and the Muslims live under one leadership. The

Muslim state or Islamic State was the first commonwealth that brought people of different diversity together under one constitution and therefore the members are subjected to same rule, law and culture. The Prophet (peace be on him) has ordered that if two or three Muslims embark on a journey, they should appoint an *Amir*, a leader. He emphasized that a group without a leader will be led by *Shaytan* (Muhammad 25). Thus, leadership is crucial to success of Muslims life and other affairs including economy, social and political activities are thereafter better organized.

Given the situation in Nigeria, it seems right to almost conclude that such leadership is missing for Muslims living in the country. Although it is generally acknowledged that the Sultan of Sokoto is the Head of the Muslims in Nigeria, a worrisome question is that is this true practically; may be political. Many organizations have selected their leaders in-house and listen only to them. The not less than 100 Islamic organizations and community mosque associations house millions of Nigerians and go about their businesses purposefully differently. This is not unexpected though, but the strength in this organizational style has not been optimized for a significant contribution of the Muslim community in Nigeria to national development and good governance for all. The organizations are today filled with many intellectually sound and disciplined Muslims who civilized in their conducts and have potentials to contribute to the development of the nation, Nigeria.

However, directional leadership in this respect to harness the potential for common good of the country is missing. These organization, in the name of *da'wah*, organize high profile camping programs, lectures, seminars-local and international, health seminars and medical camps, humanitarian activities but with each one not talking to another for optimization of resources. The absence of cooperation has resulted in huge investment with little returns (Gulen 5). A huge amount of money is spent while efforts are duplicated or multiplied unnecessarily.

Assuming an average of N100 million is spent annually by big Muslim organizations, and N3 million by smaller ones; a total of N2.2 billion will be the economic strength of estimated 10 big Muslim organizations and 400 small ones in the country. If this resource were to be appropriated for organized Islamic work or *da'wah*, a section of the problem confronting the country could be half solved in a year or two, creating jobs for millions and systematically taking them out of deep poverty. This is *da'wah* at community level practice, solving the needs of the people and creating platform for good governance. The efforts of the government will in this way be supported. When such funds are properly utilized and people in the country could see trust, discharge of duties without allegation of corruption; then we have set standards to teach the whole nation the dignity of being a Muslim and Islam as a *Deen* of positive human values. Invariably, the resources of the members of these different organizations can be effectively deployed to serve Allah by practically and diligently solving socio-economic and political challenges facing the nation.

This approach to *da'wah* is highly needed today than before in Nigeria. Leader of the Muslims in Nigeria and the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Nigeria (SCIAN) under his leadership, the Muslim Societies and Muslim community There must therefore be a point of cooperation that has proper administrative structure for management of the affairs of the Muslims with guiding cardinal framework to interface with government and contribute to national development (Opeloye 14). It is for this reason that we propose *Da'wah* Assembly of Representatives (DAR) as an organizational model for consideration of the Sultan- the accredited based organizations.

Without altering or removing existing structure of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Nigeria (SCIAN) made of *Ulama* and the *Imams* of States and other personalities, “*Da'wah* Assembly of Representatives”- DAR - will be an assembly of elected members from the pool of Muslim societies and community-based organizations by state to form a SCIAN-*Da'wah* Assembly of Representatives. The assembly will be charged to always review the state of the nation, its economy, polity, social issues, science and technology matters, development concerns, and others, and propose actionable solutions for presentation to the Federal Government. The modality to elect a DAR member from states may be done using a *Shura* comprising of the Imam of the State as the head and *Umarah* of the existing and Cooperate Affairs Commission’s (CAC) registered organization to select from nominees from the state who may not necessarily belong to a particular organization but qualified to represent the community having at least a membership of a registered mosque in the state with attestation from a recognized Imam, known to the Council of *Ulama* in the state.

The *Da'wah* Assembly Representatives will be a strong *shura* council to the Sultan and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Nigeria. When issues of religious sensitivity are on table, the existing council of *Ulama* that has been working with the Sultan will be responsible while administrative and organizational matters of the Muslims and the role that should be played to contribute to the development of Nigeria nation will be attended to by the *Da'wah* Assembly Representatives.

Strengthening *Da'wah* through Human Personality

The Trans Sahara trade brought many in Nigeria in contact with the Muslims from Arab land on their first encounter (Doi 30). Just like it was in the time of the Prophet (peace be on him), the Caliphs and at least two generations after them, the spread of Islam or acceptability was through enviable character and outstanding qualities of the bearer of the faith (Mawdudi 47). Muhammad ibn Abdullah (peace be on him) won many hearts based on his character, disposition toward people and events, his charming behavior, his kindness, love for all, trustworthiness, smiling look that radiate affections to all living creatures, high level discipline and good quality of life. He transferred this in an unmatched manner to his companion and made them the unique Qur’anic generation. For these lofty and unique qualities, according to Hisket, many communities invited

Muslim leaders of the time to come to their aid in respect of governance and handed over to them their leadership; all they wanted was a civilized life that abhors inhuman treatments and oppression they suffered under their own corrupt leaders (35).

The Nigerians who accepted Islam at the very early time were wise men and intelligent members of the communities, mostly reputable individuals and successful businessmen such as Balogun Kuku of Ijebuland, Pa Adebisi Idiikan, Hon. Adegoke Adelabu in Ibadan and a host of others. These people accepted the faith based on character of persons they interacted with from among the Muslim traders from Sahel desert on trades. The good conduct or behavior, discipline and respectful qualities that strike the heart of any human being, are being witnessed in Muslims and the Muslim organizations. There are abundant examples, but most are short impacting as misbehavior of many other Muslims blot out or pull down the reputation of good conduct laid by others over time.

One of the authors had experienced at Ladipo (a popular market for spare parts in Lagos state, Nigeria) in the year 2000, such exciting and remarkable accolades for Muslims. He wanted to buy spare part and the Seller, a non-Muslim man from Igboland, spotted the sticker in the car which signifies that he is a member of Nasrullah al-Fatih (NASFAT) Society of Nigeria and was ready to trade with him with honor, saying: “*I will give you for that price because NASFAT people are honest and don't tell lies.*” This is how many Muslims and members of various Muslim organizations currently existing in the different part of the Nigeria are perceived. It suggests the potential wave of conduct reform that the Muslim community can wielder if due cultural harmonization of Islamic teachings and practices can be respected by all Muslims in the country. It is possible for the community to induce good behavior all over and be agent of reform that reposition Nigerians in better stead of civilization.

A major concern, therefore, is why these qualities and behaviors known of Muslims have not translated into a massive induction of other people of different religions and tribes in the country into good conduct, civilized co-existence and governance. Often after Muslim organizations start their Islamic activities, the first activists reformed well but later entrants become weak. There should be a paradigm shift and all hands must be on deck to reflect Islamic culture and be good ambassadors of Islam in their different areas of endeavors. This is the first way to strengthen *da'wah*. An adage says, ‘charity begins at home’.

***Da'wah* through Establishment of Institutions**

Establishments that on regular basis attend to basic need of people are very important to their development. Islam did not separate these institutions from religious life of daily worship. This is the meaning of comprehensiveness of Islam. Thus, if *Da'wah* message will flow to all and sundry, these Institutions are important. The glorious Qur'an mentioned the *Da'wah* through evidence that can be seen with naked eyes as recorded in Suratu Yusuf [12:108] (Daryadabi 448) is talking about establishment of institutions, such as educational, healthcare, businesses,

vocational, financial, (banking, microfinance) and a host of others that can be visible and beneficial to mankind. This should be the trend because of its vintage advantage. This brings *da'wah* to the doorstep of those who ordinarily would not have the opportunity to get the verbal *da'wah* /admonition.

The benefit of Islamic financial alternative was not appreciated until JAIZ bank noninterest products were rolled out to the public. The *Sukuk* bond also presented Islam in positive way as against the negative images of the past. Christians have continued to applaud the Federal Government of Nigeria over the bond as remarkable source of financing projects.

Few examples from Organizations

If there is anything that has moved NASFAT to the committee of enviable progressive organization, it is the establishment of Fountain University. This kind of *Da'wah* is referred to in Qur'an 12 as cited earlier. The Christian students could see Islam in a different manner devoid of indoctrination. The staff as well will appreciate Islam for providing them with sustenance. The students at the university are now developing interest in Islamic mode of dressing without being forced. This is a practical *da'wah* which verbal preaching would not achieve. These examples are also common with organizations from the North, West and East part of Nigeria. There are individuals and organizations that have established University, as we see with Crescent University from Islamic Movement for Africa, Abeokuta, Al-Hikma University in Kwara, and many secondary schools of repute, such as Vanguard Academy, Odosengolu, Bab-es-salam Charity Home, Lagos, Nigeria Tulip International Colleges, World Assembly of Muslim Youth Schools, Nile University, Abuja, Nizamiyah Hospital, Abuja and a host of others.

***Da'wah* through Institutions**

For a case reference, Fountain University shows that the Muslims are not doing badly Saheed & Adedeji 3). It has also taught the lesson that *Da'wah* can be strengthened by establishing more institutions that will create jobs and generate income for the society, as well as individuals who are Muslims and non-Muslims. It would be a means to enlighten other if at least 10% of the workforce is reserved for non-Muslims as a policy. The visitors of the Prophet [peace be on him] from NAJRAN who were accommodated in a portion of his Madinah Mosque (Haykal 97) is a good example. The choice of the name for many more institutions that will be created should be done with due regards to all users and provocative name should be avoided. The institutions meant here should include but not limited to health, education, industry, agriculture and media.

Effective Coordination

This is an important aspect of re organizing *da'wah* in the nation. Missionary within the context of this topic relates to promoting Islam. The focus of Islamic organizations is based on promotion of Islam. Hence, there is the need not to see only the Islamic scholars (Alfas) as missionaries but accept that administrative organs of these organizations are part and parcel of missionaries. This

clarification is necessary as to understand and expand on the scope of activities and relaying Islam to others in the best form of presentation.

The Mission boards of organizations must set the criteria for engaging their members with capability to lead activities that bring their members close to Allah and His remembrance always. Even Imams in the community mosques in the country with a very good voice coupled with sound Islamic knowledge. Apart from these Imams, many professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers and so on should also be trained to be very spiritual, respecting Islamic values and essentially be able to combine their professions with Islamic scholarship.

Challenges

Some of the challenges that may confront Muslim organization to contribute human personal of high regards and Islamic values for enlightening people about Allah and their duties will include but not limited to proper education and training in the pristine Islamic ways. There is need to discuss the education of the next generation of Muslim in the country to be able to play their God given role in the development of the nation. It is more important that such is well designed to have that generation be able to live in harmony and peace in a multiethnic society and with all Christians in the country. The experience of the last century and early 21st century where Muslims and Christian see one another as opposing forces must come to an end (Balogun 35) and the drivers to peace will be from the well-educated and enlightened Muslims who will be better civilized and choose less confrontation to achieve peaceful coexistence without losing their faith (Gbadamosi 20). This will be *da'wah* in real action.

Conclusion

The paper contends that Islam has played clear roles in several Muslim nations and touched all aspects of human endeavors. This was made possible through *da'wah*, a scientific tool synchronously engaging actions of calling that was chosen for Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) by his God. The distorting information being circulated by some writers, notwithstanding, emerging facts have vindicated Islam as a progressive religion, Meanwhile, lack of proper understanding of *da'wah* by Muslim organizations has caused limitation in the potentials of *da'wah*. Hence, the paper proposed establishment of *Da'wah* Assembly Representatives (DAR), under the leadership of the Sultan of Sokoto, who is the Amir of Muslims in Nigeria. The major role of the Assembly is to mobilize minimum of 2.2 billion Naira annually that would be deployed towards establishment of educational and health institutions, among others. This is called practical *da'wah* that would impact the lives of Muslims and non-Muslims in Nigeria.

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