

PRINTING MEDIA AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A DISCOURSE OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH ACTIVITIES IN THE PUBLIC PRINT MEDIA IN KWARA STATE.

By

TOKI OLUSHOLA TAJUDEEN

*School of Basic and Remedial studies
College of Education, Ilorin.*

Abstract

The vast transition of information to electronic and print media is making information resources of the world available to an increasingly global audience. The information delivery capability of print media serves all sectors of society, religious education inclusive. The importance and the influence of print media on modern Islamic Da'wah outreach cannot be overemphasized. There are various Islamic articles published in the Nigerian News papers by some Muslim scholars. These articles were designed to educate the Muslims and non-Muslims on socio-religious issues. This paper examines, the impact of religious education most especially, on the Muslims of Kwara via print media

INTRODUCTION

Da'wah is a form of Islamic education which implies calling people to the way of Allah. *Dāin* is a 'caller' or an 'inviter'. However, *Da'wah* is generic in view of its various contextual applications in the Holy Qur'an and divergent opinions by different scholars. The utmost and fundamental principle of *Da'wah* in Islam is implicitly defined in the *Qur'an* chapter 16, verse 125.

Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord, with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: For thy Lord knoweth best who have strayed from His path and who receive audience.

In relevance to the above verse, invitation to the way of Allah rules out aggression and the use of foul language. Divine invitation is devoid of hostility and should be convincingly preached through logical reasoning. *Da'wah* is a continuous activity because human beings are vulnerable to forgetfulness. Therefore, it is inevitable for constant purification of soul against greed, heresies, intolerance and religious crisis.

The tempo of dynamic social interaction has indispensably brought Muslims and Christians together on common platform of socio-religious interactions in Nigeria. Print media has been a veritable medium of educating the public on the concept of religious tolerance and harmony because of its universality and durability.

It is against this backdrop and other social needs that the Kwara State government founded the NIGERIAN HERALD in 1973. It was later changed to THE HERALD.

Establishment of Public Print Media in Kwara State

Before the advent of the societal or religious print media in Kwara State, *The Herald* which was established in 1973 had overwhelmingly played the roles of religious enlightenments through the regular publications of the Christian and Islamic articles on Sundays and Fridays respectively.

The Kwara State Printing and Publishing Corporation is the pioneering print media in Kwara state. It was founded by the Kwara State of Nigeria by Edict number 3 of 1973 on the 2nd January 1973, through the instrumentality of the then state military Governor, Colonel David L. Bamigboye.

Socio-Religious Roles of the Kwara State Printing Press

In consonance with the views which the then Governor of Kwara state, Colonel, Bamigboye had expressed from time to time, he stressed that the proposed newspaper would enjoy all the freedoms to which the press was entitled in order that it would carry out its socio-religious roles effectively.

The Herald acts as avenue of information between the people of Kwara state and their government. Above all, the singular objective of the newspaper is to coordinate the Muslims and Christians on the platform of harmony and good brotherhood state. In addition, *The Herald* would give publicity to the arts and culture of the people of Kwara and, according to the Edict, carry reports of outstanding and general interest as well as well-informed criticisms and features.

The Herald has continued to maintain these important roles to crave for religious understanding and peaceful co-existence in Kwara State. These important roles were demonstrated by presenting harmonious and reconciliatory reportage on religious crisis to the public such as during the 1986 Ilorin public disturbances arising from the Palm Sunday procession, the 1999 Ilorin religious crisis and the August, 2004 Ilorin crisis over the visit of the German itinerant evangelist, Reinard Bonnke to Ilorin. The Kwara State printing press attaches importance to religious education by giving enough coverage to religious issues in the Herald. Equal pagination for socio-religious enlightenments is given to Islam and Christianity on Fridays and Sundays respectively.

It is of prime concern in this section to examine *The Herald* as a public print media in relation to its Islamic religious education towards the religious needs of the people and maintaining peaceful co-existence among the adherents of different faiths. To this end, the activities of some Muslim writers and the various educational methodologies employed by them in carrying out their spirit of *Da'wah* will be brought into lime light.

The Herald allots two full pages captioned *The Qiblah* for Islamic issues on Fridays. The two pages are further separated into four divisions. The first column features reported news that reflect issues affecting Muslims. The column educates and offers situational reports from the Islamic events covered within the state and outside during the week to the Muslim readers. The subsequent column on the same page is regularly captioned 'Friday Discourse'. The Muslim columnists in the column educates and offers situational reports from the Islamic events covered within the

state and outside during the week to the Muslim readers. The subsequent column on the same page is regularly captioned Friday Discourse. The Muslim columnists in the column write on topical issues reflecting Islamic basic fundamentals such as *Institution of Zakat. Hajj* etc. While another column is captioned in relevance to the Islamic issue discussed, the last column is regularly captioned with *Safi Jimba on Friday*.

The write-ups of some Muslim columnists published in *The Herald* show the need for proper religious education of Muslims for purposeful *da'wah* outreach. The publication of Saudat AbdulBaki on "Role of Muslim Women in *Da'wah* justifies this. However, other constant Muslim scholars who have expressed their views in *The Herald* are: M.A. Ambali, Ahmed Ajiboye, Ibrahim Owotunwase, Safi Jimba, S.O. Muhammad, Lanre Badmus, Yusuf Ali, Biliqees Oladimeji, Bilal Shittu, Sulyman Nyang, Yasser Remilekun, Sekinah AbdulAzez etc. In addition to the personalities mentioned, the Hilal Crescent Islamic Centre also contributes educative religious articles regularly in *The Herald*.

At this juncture, it is expedient to examine the activities of some of the Muslim scholars mentioned in relation to their spirit of *Da'wah* in *The Herald*.

AbdulMuttalib Ambali

The first person that captured one's attention is AbdulMuttalib Ambali, a legal luminary and a regular *Herald* columnist. The research carried out has revealed that he has published some works in *The Herald* reflecting Islamic jurisprudence. Some of the topics he addressed include: *Ash-shahadah*; Evidence in Islamic Law, Democracy on the scale of Islam, Religious Adherents and Peaceful co-existence.

In his article, 'Religious Adherents and Peaceful Co-existence' he portrays Islam as a religion that promotes harmony, keen sense of brotherhood and good neighbourliness. AbdulMuttalib Ambali as a peace loving man uses mass media to enlighten the public on some controversial issues that often lead to chaos between Christian and

