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Response to Muslims Da'wah Activities' by Non-Muslims in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Areas of Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Da'wah is a duty for all Muslims; the Glorious Qur'an provides the basic principles of Da'wah methodologies to be applied by the Muslims Da'i (preacher) in the Da'wah field. This paper, therefore, attempts to provide the much-lacking information on the activities of Muslims in terms of Da'wah and in one hand the responses of the non-Muslims in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Areas towards Islamic Da'wah. The paper looks into the activities of Muslim Organisations in the areas in carrying out Da'wah, Da'wah movement and also the responses of the non-Muslims towards Muslims Da'wah activities in the area. It was discovered that there is negative thought toward Muslims and the Da'wah message from the non-Muslims. This is crucial because necessary actions could then be taken or solution is sought to ensure the smooth progress of Da'wah activities in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon. This paper is adopted qualitative techniques to elicit primary data from the participants. And the researcher purposively selected ten (10) participants and were interviewed based on the issue investigated.

Keywords: Islam, Muslim Da'wah, Nature, Responses, Non-Muslims, Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon

Introduction

Islam as a perfect way of life is revealed for all mankind throughout the ages till the Last Day. This universal way of life was built under the foundation of Tauheed which Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked to proclaim to the entire mankind [1] as stated in the Glorious Qur'an, Suratul Saba 34:28.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know”

Islam is a religion which brings blessing to the universe. Its normative content and values allows for a meaningful and ordered human life. At once universal and particular, Islam has been historically proven to be able to bring harmony, peace, and prosperity to its adherents and their neighbors [2]. However, in the modern age, Muslims have been accused of extremism and fundamentalism, as well as being held responsible for many of today’s terroristic acts. Da’wah (Islamic mission, call, propagation, or proselytization), an important component of Islamic teaching, is thus a vital aspect in strategies to portray the image Islam.

Islam is a balanced religion which provides for all the needs of human beings directly or indirectly so that peace and happiness could be promoted among people living together in what can be termed as “Community” regardless of origin, ethnicity and religious inclination. These types of provisions are categorised as obligatory, such as poor due (zakat) and voluntary aspects like endowment (waqf), charity (sadaqah) among others [3].

Da’wah was the basic mission of the Prophets of Allah. They were raised up among their respective people to call them to the worship of Allah alone and to abandon the worship of the various false gods that they had invented [4].

Da’wah has been the divine-task of the Prophets sent by Almighty Allah to propagate their mission to the people they were sent. This is what is referred to as Da’wah in the technical sense of the term. Varying modalities had been deployed in channeling the message of Allah to His servants over time [5]. Methods such as public preaching, circulation of written materials in form of manuscripts and book authorship, ta’limat circles and one on one approach were used at different times in the development of Islam in Nigeria.

Da’wah in Islamic history has often been conducted in a pluralistic, multicultural and multi-religious society. Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon is a case in point. There are a number of theories concerning the entry of Islam and the process of Islamization in the areas. All of these theories confirm that Islam came to Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon in peaceful, non-violent manner. The Islamic missionaries (Da’i) who came to the Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon conducted Da’wah with wisdom, avoiding physical or psychological conflict.

Da’wah, or spreading the true teachings of Islam, is a fundamental responsibility of every Muslim. It is also a collective obligation of the Ummah.

During his life time, Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fulfilled this duty at every slightest opportunity. He addressed people individually and collectively; invited them to Islam by his beautiful preaching and characters [6]. With his death, the task of inviting people to Islam was carried out by Muslims from generation to generation because, it is an obligation upon all Muslims to command people to act rightly and enjoin what is sanctioned by Almighty Allah in the Glorious Qur'an in Suratul Baqarah 2:143.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ
كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ
رَّحِيمٌ

“Thus we have made You [true Muslims - real believers of Islamic Monotheism, true followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah (legal ways)], a Wasat (just) (and the best) nation, that You be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Muhammad) be a witness over you. and we made the Qiblah (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which You used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e. disobey the Messenger). Indeed, it was great (heavy) except for those whom Allah guided. and Allah would never make Your faith (prayers) to be lost (i.e. Your prayers offered towards Jerusalem). Truly, Allah is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind”.

In another verse, Allah talk about the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for the uprightness in spreading the message of Islam, where He said in Qur'an, Suratul Aal-Imran 3:104.

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“And let there arise out of You a group of people inviting to All that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and All that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and All that Islam has forbidden). and it is they who are the successful”.

Initially the task of Da'wah was carried out by individual itinerant Muslim scholars, rulers and merchants who sow the seed of Islam in various

parts of the globe [7]. Today Da'wah has taken a collective, organizational and technological structure as a result of increase in number of Muslim Organisations with the aim of propagating Islam.

To this end, this article is an attempt to investigate the nature of Da'wah and responses of the Non-Muslims towards the Islamic message in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon.

Method

This paper is adopted qualitative techniques to elicit primary data from the participants. The population for the study were Muslim scholars and some Muslim personalities in the area of study. To elicit the data, the researcher conducted In-Depth Interview (IDI) and non-participant observation. The paper adopted purposive sampling technique to select the participants for the interviews and observations, this has enabled the researcher to select participant who possess in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon investigated. This is because the aim of qualitative study is not to cover large sample but to study select few participants and examine the phenomenon deeply. The researcher purposively selected ten (10) participants and were interviewed based on the issue investigated. The elicited data from the participants were transcribed verbatim, coded and analyzed based on theme study. Similarly, data collated from the observations were integrated with the data generated from the interviews.

Funding and Discussion: Concept of Islamic Da'wah

According to Abu Ammar, Da'wah, an Arabic term, means to invite. Essentially, Da'wah has two dimensions: external and internal. External Da'wah is to invite non-Muslims to Islam and teach them about Islamic beliefs and practices. Internal Da'wah is to teach Muslims about aspects of Islam [8]. Da'wah is a fard kifiya (an obligation that rests upon the community, not the individual), if there are individuals within a community inviting people to Da'wah, then others within the community are relieved of the obligation. If no-one in the community issues the invitation, the sin falls on every individual within that community. A person who performs Da'wah is known as a Da'i (persons carrying out Da'wah duty). Although their effectiveness will vary according to their ability, all Du'at (those carrying out Da'wah) should be, at the very least, familiar with the basic teachings of Islam [9].

Literally, Da'wah means to call, appeal, and request people either towards the truth or falsehood, appeal for an aid or a call for help, appeal to Allah or pray [10]. Da'wah also meant an invitation to a meal. Da'wah is the process of reminding man of his true mission and attempting to bring him back to his origin.

Thus, the mission of all the Prophets is made up in this way of reminding their people about their destiny to which they were committed [11]. Allah says in Glorious Qur'an, Suratul An'aam: 90.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدْنُهُمْ أَفْتَدِيهِمْ قُلْ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنِّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

"They are those whom Allah had guided. so follow their Guidance. say: "No reward I ask of You for This (the Qur'an). it is Only a Reminder for the 'Alamin (mankind and jinns)."

Furthermore, Shaykh Aliyu Mahfuz defines Da'wah as motivating and directing people to the performance of good deeds in the right path [12]. A contemporary scholar in the field, give the following definition of Da'wah; theoretically, Da'wah means efforts to people to believe in Allah and His Prophet (SAW) by obeying and implementing the teachings of Qur'an and Sunnah. Da'wah covers all aspects of human life personally and collectively. Da'wah also means calling people to the fold of Islam. Whenever the term of Da'wah is attributed to Islam, it means an effort to spread and convey the message of Islam to people. Da'wah is also defined as the initiative to motivate people to enjoin the right and forbid them from the wrong so that they may succeed in this world and in the hereafter. It is an effort to protect or save humankind from evil and to admonish them from that which leads to the punishment of Almighty Allah [13]. Again, it was also defined by Al-Bayanuni Muhammad as conveying Islam to the people and educating them (about its teachings) and implementing its rules in the state of affairs [14]. Adam Abdullah Al-Ilori viewed it as drawing people's attention and rationality toward an ideology or belief which is of benefit and advantage to them. It is also rescuing people from going astray or from tribulations which beset them [15].

In the same vein, Munir Hijab succinctly stated that the formal meaning of Da'wah could be identified in two ways: first (teaching the) religion or Islam, its basic elements, facts and values and its legislation. It is, in reality, a complete social system which comprises all facets of human activity and all laws regulating this activity including those that involve the rights of the Lord over his servant. The second identification involves spreading, conveying and inducing or communicating and informing the religion [16]. In a conference organized by Muslim World League Da'wah is defined as:

Sermonizing about Islam and communicating the message of Islam to the Non-Muslims. This is a rather limited view of the meaning of Da'wah. The essence of Da'wah begins in the Midst of the Muslim Ummah itself. It is the search for practical means of organizing and directing all aspect of individual and communal life according to the principles of Islam [17].

Contextualizing the meaning of Da'wah, Sayyid Qutb, in his translated work, submitted that, the task of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is not an easy one, especially when we consider that it inevitably conflicts with people's desires, interests, and pride. There are in this world of our tyrants who impose their authority by force, people who are interested only in carnal desires and who do not wish to be elevated to a nobler standard. There are also the lazy who hate to be asked to be serious, the unfair who hate justice, the deviant who do not for a moment contemplate a straightforward attitude, as well as those who think wrong of every right thing and consider every wrong thing to be right. No nation, let alone humanity as a whole, can prosper unless goodness prevails; right is upheld and wrong is thrown out [18].

By contrast, Hafeez describes Da'wah as "propagating the Deen (Religion) of Allah using whatever lawful means" [19]. Al-Muqit goes on to say that Da'wah is unquestionably the best form of Jihad (religious struggle), and that it is not merely a form of Jihad or Tajdid (reformation [20]). These definitions lead one to the conclusion that Da'wah includes all acts of spreading knowledge of Islam through preaching, teaching, sermons, and charitable giving with the intention of broadening the concept of Islam on the one hand and upholding the true belief in the Oneness of Allah (Tauhid) on the other.

Da'wah is conceptually a way of providing social and humanitarian services to people in addition to being a tool for "calling to Islam." Many Muslims misunderstood the concept of Da'wah and only considered oral preaching to be part of it. The preceding definition of Da'wah is similar to most of the Islamic (Arabic) slang used in the Glorious Qur'an, the Prophet's sunnah, and sayings of his companions. And it can signify something literally or technically. 149 times in the Glorious Qur'an, its multifaceted meaning is revealed [21].

Importance and Obligation of Da'wah to Non-Muslims

Importance and obligation of Da'wah lies in the universal character of Islam. Before the revelation of the holy Qur'an, there were as many divine scriptures ordained by Almighty Allah for the guidance of the people on the earth. Each of those scriptures was sent on the earth to the respective Messenger and addressed only his own community thereby limiting their effect and importance for them only. However, it is the Glorious Qur'an which addresses the entire human community and making its effect and importance to every member of all human races for all time. Prophet Mohammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent as the symbol of mercy not only for the Muslims but also for all human kind, Allah said in Qur'an; Suratul Anbiyaa: 107;

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“And we have sent You (O Muhammad) not but as a Mercy for the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and All that exists)”.

The Glorious Qur'an is meant for all members of entire human community since its revelation irrespective of their religious beliefs, Almighty Allah said in Qur'an; Suratul Saad: 87;

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“It (this Qur'an) is only a Reminder for All the 'Alamin (mankind and jinns)”.

He also said in Qur'an; Suratul Yusuf: 104.

وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“And no reward You (O Muhammad) ask of them (those who deny Your Prophethood) for it, it (the Qur'an) is no less than a Reminder and an advice unto the 'Alamin (men and jinns)”.

Allah says in Suratul Baqarah: 21;

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O mankind! Worship Your Lord (Allah), who created You and those who were before You so that You may become Al-Muttaqun (righteous)”.

Regarding the all-embracing character of the Glorious Qur'an, Almighty Allah declares in Qur'an; Suratul A'raaf: 158.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

“Say, (O Muhammad), "O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, (from Him) to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity except Him; He gives life and causes death." So believe in

Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him that you may be guided”.

So, in broad area the solid concept that emerges from the above mentioned discussion is that Islam that generates its origin from the revelation of the Glorious Qur’an and Prophet Mohammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) being the last of all Messengers of Allah is of universal character. It does not limit its application and suitability to followers of a particular religion, Islam but stresses its necessity and adoptability to people of all other religions. Hence it becomes obligatory to every member of the Muslim community to convey messages from the Glorious Qur’an and Hadith regarding the all-embracing nature of Islam. To Ibn Katheer, performing Da’wah is a responsibility of all Muslims and every Muslim should carry out this responsibility in accordance to his own ability [22]. Abu Zahrah thinks that contribution to Da’wah is mandatory for each members of Muslim community [23].

The coming of Islam to Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Areas

Islam as a religion started to penetrate into the lives of the people Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon from the beginning of the last century (i.e. 20th century). This is relatively late spread of Islam to the areas, compared to places like Lafia, Keffi and Nassarawa Local Government Areas [24]. This is due to number of factors; by virtue of their geographical location, Nassarawa North Senatorial District (Akwanga, Nassarawa Eggon and Wamba) had no direct trade-link with the North which could have attracted immigrant Muslim traders into their midst to spread Islam through peaceful interaction in the earlier period, as had happened in most of the Northern states of Nigeria [25].

Another reason for the spread of Islam was the evolution of Nassarawa Eggon town as the social, political and economic centre of Eggon people. These developments had its root in the colonial indirect rule system in the area. Thus, it is safe to assert here that the activities of both colonial masters and Christian missionaries helped in no small measure in the rapid spread of Islam in Nassarawa Eggon. Another factor responsible for the spread of Islam in this areas is when the Hausa people came to the areas, they taught the elements of Islam to a few persons they came in contact with. When they left, the job was left to the few reverts in the areas [26].

Muslims Da'wah Activities in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon

In doing da'wah in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Areas, the role of the Muslim organizations or the Muslim Preachers are indispensable therefore, the following Muslim Organisations Jama'atul Nasr Islam (JNI), Jama'atul Izalatil Bid'ah Wa Iqamatis Sunnah(JIBWIS) and Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) have been identified for their Da'wah activities in the areas.

The Operations of Jama'atul Nasrul Islam (JNI)

Jama'atul Nasrul Islam (JNI) is one of the Muslim organizations that propagate Islam in the Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Areas with special attention to non-Muslims. The preachers under JNI visit towns and villages to conduct open-air preaching and to hold dialogue with non-Muslims. The tour of the preachers for inviting non-Muslims to the fold of Islam attracted a lot of reverts to Islam. For example, in Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Area many people accepted Islam as a result of the activities of JNI with the help of the late Aren Eggon, Alh Abdullahi Idde. Similarly, in Akwanga Local Government Areas tremendous success were recorded in respect of conversion to Islam. Consequent upon its Da'wah is directed to both Muslims and non-Muslims, JNI Nassarawa Eggon has established Islamiyyah schools for educating and inculcating Islamic Values to the Muslims of the Areas. These schools are mostly found in areas of high demand and remote villages [27].

In addition to the above, JNI in Nassarawa Eggon also conduct Tafsir in about 16 Masjid every Ramadan in the area. A committee responsible for Tafsir in the local government area ensured that a scholar is posted to each of the Masjid across the Local Government. And in Akwanga, the JNI have also established Islamic schools in many villages in the area with two of the schools sited in areas where there is less concentration of Muslims.

Consequently, this made people to respect Islamic culture and values on one hand and enable them to observe their religious obligations in accordance with Islamic teachings. It is also obvious, that JNI Nassarawa and Akwanga played gigantic role in the propagation of Islam through numerous activities. In addition, the schools established by JNI in the Local Government Areas promotes educational standard of the areas where the schools are situated. The Tafsir carried out across the Areas will also help in creating awareness to the target audience, thus, the aim of educating the Muslims and enlightening the non-Muslims of the areas is achieved. These tremendous successes suggest future prospects of Da'wah in the Areas [28].

The Activities of Jama'atul Izalatil Bid'ah Wa Iqamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS)

Despite the division in term of leadership prevailing within the two groups in the Areas, it is evident that both groups carried out similar activities in most of the Da'wah programmes with same methodology. This might be attributed to the national outlook of the organization with already planned activities to be followed by the respective members at the branches at all levels. The Da'wah activities conducted by the organization give much emphasis on teaching and preaching about correct practice of Islam. It organizes ward, local, and hosted state and national open air preachings programmes throughout the areas for calling people to the fold of Islam, and strict adherence to the true teachings of Islam. Apart from that, it conducts preaching at any given time in villages within the Local Government Areas. There is also a study circle (Ta'alim) between Salat al-Magrib and Isha' and after Salat al-Subhi, where Hadith, Qur'an and Fiqh (jurisprudence) are studied. The activities were mostly directed to Muslims with the objective of purifying their faith and ensuring the correct practice of Islam among them. JIBWIS in the area also extend it preaching's to non-Muslims inviting them to Islam; there were cases of Islamic propagation to non-Muslims leading to conversion and consolidation of the faith. Both Hafiz Abdul-Kareem Akwanga, Chairman JIBWIS (Kaduna) Akwanga zone (Akwanga, Nassarawa Eggon and Wamba) and Ustaz Safiyanu Ahmad, Chairman Council of Ulama JIBWIS (Jos) in Nassarawa Eggon disclosed the posting Du'at to areas of the new reverts to Islam in the Areas and paying those allowances to teach the reverts the basic knowledge of Islam [29]. The movement in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon has established several Islamiyyah /Conventional schools at various levels for primary, secondary, and adult female schools across the Areas.

In addition to the aforementioned activities, the organizations also used to organise public lectures, seminars, Qur'anic recitation competition at all levels and workshop for enlightening and mass mobilization to different categories of Muslims. These activities enhance the level of Muslims awareness to several contemporary issues affecting them as well as help them in carrying out activities expected of them [30]. The series of activities conducted by the JIBWIS in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon greatly helps in addressing some of the problems affecting da'wah in the Areas. Educating the target audience received a serious attention, if one looks at the number of schools established by the Organizations. Ta'alim Programmes and preaching tour across the villages also yields appositve result in the education of the Muslims and creating awareness to the non-Muslims about the teachings of Islam in the area. It organizes

workshops and seminars that help in updating the knowledge of its Da'wah workers with appropriate techniques and ethics of the Du'at.

The Activities MSSN Nasarawa North on Da'wah

The Nasarawa North Council of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) have organized and implemented series of programmes, since its inception in 1998, which contributed in no small measure to da'wah activities in the Local Government Areas under it (Akwanga, Nassarawa Eggon Wamba).

Programmes that the society carried out in the zone included; leadership training, debate and essay writing competitions among Muslim Students at various levels of learning, Islamic Vocation Courses, weekly public lectures in schools, hosting of conferences and programmes, and attending National Islamic Vocation Courses organized by MSSN in the state. Other activities carried out by the society were the sensitization, mobilization and voter education tour across the sixteen Local Government Areas to address the ugly situation on the wrong footing in the political scene of the zone by the Muslims [31]. In addition to the above activities, the council undertook other Da'wah programmes that include; Da'wah outreach involving visitation to hospitals and prisons, participation in Train-the-Trainers Course (TTC) at Da'wah Institute of Nigeria in Minna for enhancing modern techniques of Da'wah to its members. These series of activities yielded positive result in facilitating new techniques of Da'wah among youths in the Areas.

Response of Non-Muslims to Muslims Da'wah Activities in the Areas

Da'wah among non-Muslims must not be merely an appendage or an afterthought in the life of a Muslim. It cannot be pursued as a contingent activity. It should not be incidental to any special circumstances. Da'wah, for example, should not be taken up as a response or reaction to missionary activities by other faiths. If Da'wah is approached in this fashion, it will suffer the fate that it is suffering now. In other words, Da'wah should not be a reactive measure for Muslims, but it should in fact be a proactive endeavour.

On the response of the non-Muslims to Muslims Da'wah activities in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon, here are some of the responses.

A respondent stated that, the non-Muslims in our areas sees Islam as a religion of the Hausas which comes with new things that are against our inherited traditions and beliefs. And for that they cannot abandon what their parents left for them to join. That always the Muslims preachers will tell them to

abandon their tradition like that of wedding, naming ceremonies and burial. They always said, “we cannot stop drinking alcohol, eat Pig, and other animals which the religion of Hausa people or Muslims are saying is prohibited” [32].

Submitting further, Ismail Garba said, some of the non-Muslims in the villages will be complaining on the language use in communicating the Islamic preach, that they don't need a religion that will make them abandon their language to learn Hausa or Arabic. Some will say, you cannot be a Muslim without understanding both Hausa and Arabic in this area. And this Hausa people don't want to learn our language. That is why most of our people do not understand what they are saying because they don't speak our native tongue (Eggon language) [33].

Similarly, a respondent stated that even Eggon people who they speak the same language who are non-Muslims sees the Muslims in their midst as Hausas, this is because they are Muslims and at times when one tries to preach Islam to them, they will say ‘stop this your Hausa religion of a thing’ [34].

The researcher observed that, Muslims in some communities in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon when observing Salat, they become a cinema in the village. Some of the villagers will not even allow the Muslims fetch water from their Well to use. It come a talk of war whenever a lady from a non-Muslim family wants to marry a Muslim in the area under study. There is always exchange of bitter words between the families. In some cases, the non-Muslim family will be said that the Muslims have used their charm on their daughter.

According to Sanusi Abbas Waziri, when the message of Islam is being extended to the non-Muslims in our area they try equate what they have been told in their places of worship with that of Islam. They said; for many years' different Islamic organization came to this land, they came and told us stories about Islam. But Islam is similar to what is contained in the Old Testament, it has prohibited a lot of things which if we accepted it, it will stop us from enjoying our life. We have our traditional way of burial and the Christian type. If you are a Muslim, if someone dies, the person can be buried in that place and same day. But our culture is against such teachings. If you become a Muslim, you have to leave a lot of traditional activities which we cannot do without [35].

Another respondent asserted that the non-Muslims are always saying that they do not trust the activities of the Islamic preachers anymore. Their aim is to expand Islam all over Nigeria and increase the influence of Hausa people to middle belt which include our area. They said that they see the activities of the Muslims in the area as a continuation of the Uthman Ibn Foduye Jihad to conquer all Non-Muslim in the North and Middle Belt. The Islamic preachers are more of

political agents for Muslim politicians who are out to dominate and control our ancestral lands in the Middle Belt [36].

And according to Habibu the non-Muslims are saying that all Islam is after is to rubbish Christianity and their traditions in order to increase the number of Muslim in this areas so as to change the religion of the land. Our grandparents have resisted the earliest attempts of Jihad by Dan fodiyo, and there are several Muslims that came here before we allowed them to preach, but for now, we stopped them. This is because our people are not interested to join the religion that calls us Arna or Kafiri [37].

Similarly, another respondent stated that the non-Muslims do claim that; "a lot of our people who lived in the town were brainwashed and converted to Islam. Since that time they stopped participating in traditional events of the family. Even cultural festivals most of our Muslim relatives are not participating. That is why people in these areas do not like Islam because it distances a Muslim from his culture and people. A typical Muslim only see himself as pure and religious. It is not without reason that we reject Islamic preaching in our communities" [38].

In Nassarawa Eggon, the Late Aren Eggon (the Chief of the Eggon Kingdom) Dr. Bala Angbazo during his reign have always complaint of the words being used by some of the Muslim groups when observing their Da'wah programmes in Nassarawa Eggon must especially at the open ground in front of the palace. Some even went to the extent of throwing abuses on one another. Late Dr. Bala Angbazo always observed that, if he is to embrace Islam he will not join those who always look for trouble rather he will prefer the Izala people because they do not organise their programme except he is invited and at time they pay homage to the Eggon palace with their visitors [39].

The researcher also observed that, in the areas under study there are non-Muslims who do receive the call of the Muslim Da'wah and revert to Islam. This is due to the method used in communicating the message to the people which makes them to be convincing and as such many persons accepted the religion of Allah (Islam). It is also observed that, majority of those who revert to Islam from among the non-Muslims in the area are mostly youths.

According to Ustaz Ahmad Sadeeq that the state of the Muslim mentality and attitude today, both individually and collectively, towards Islam, towards adhering to its precepts, and towards spreading Da'wah to all people in order to complete Islam's mission, is the root cause of the neglect and negative responses from non-Muslims to Islamic Da'wah. The general attitude of Muslims is one of unawareness, indifference, or sheer neglect. Without attempting to set this

mindset right, the problems with respect to Da'wah will remain in relation to the responses of the non-Muslim [40].

Despite how harsh this may sound, many non-Muslims are turned off to Islam by the inconsistency between teachings of Muslim groups and behaviour and models of some Muslims. Given the current status of Muslims, how can the typical non-Muslim find Islam attractive, much less decide to adopt it. With the exception of a few lucky individuals, how can they react by simply reading books and listening to sermons?

To check most of this negative responses in these areas, two Eggon based Islamic organisations were formed in order to correct the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Islam and Muslims by non-Muslims in Nassarawa Eggon. These organisations are;

- i. Islamic Society of Eggonland (ISE)
- ii. Eggon Muslim Forum (EMF)

These have since get into action by extending the message of Islam among the Eggon people most especially to villages where there is no presence of Islam. This they do by informing the Eggon people that Islam is not the religion meant for the Hausa people alone but it is a religion the encompasses all mankind.

Conclusion

Islam as a worldwide religion has left nothing untouched to meet the desires of people of every religion. Side by side, it is a religious obligation of every true Muslim to preach, propagate and circulate Islam to people of all religions. If the members of Muslim community discharge their individual as well as collective responsibility to Da'wah, it is expected that many non-Muslims will embrace Islam and thereby will benefitted in both the worlds. As to the holistic methodology of Da'wah, the Glorious Qur'an says that a person is better than the other who invites people to the path of Allah, works righteousness and says that he is Muslim (Al Qur'an, 41:33). So it is an obligation of every Muslim to be reactive to the call of this verse of the Glorious Qur'an and should preach, propagate and establish Islam in every aspect of human life including convincing the people of other faiths to embrace Islam. If this is so, it can be expected that non-Muslims in Akwanga and Nassarawa Eggon will be a place where Islam will be established in every nook and crannies and everybody attached with this gallant work of Da'wah will be rewarded by Almighty Allah in both the worlds.

Credit author statement

Muhammad Maga Sule: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Supervision, Project administration, Investigation.

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