A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE FORMATION AND ACTIVITIES OF ISLAMIC *DAᶜWAH* GROUPS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Da'wah is an instrument *par excellence* for the spread of Islam and reformation of the society. Therefore *Daᶜwah* is the main duty of all Prophets of Allah. The Islamic terminology *Da'wah* is a complex subject which accounts for the various exegetical explanation of its contextual and conceptual meaning and application. It is also accorded different methodologies and approaches throughout the ages, particularly in recent times. Thus, many Muslim Scholars argue that *Daᶜwah* is a collective duty of all Muslims. Indeed, *Daᶜwah* under the auspices of a structural group began in Nigeria as a result of secularisation of the Nigerian system and some modern trends. Furthermore, some of the *Daᶜwah* groups have made tremendous contributions to Islam and Nigeria but the activities of others have been a matter of concern to many Muslims as their activities became a seed of discord amongst Muslims. In view of this, the paper examines the circumstances that often prompt the formation of structural *Da'wah* groups in Nigeria. It also provides an insight into networking information related to the legitimacy of the forming structural *Daᶜwah* group, its different kinds, aims, *activities*, achievements and problems. The paper concludes that *Da'wah* is a personal and collective obligation; alas, some Muslims appear callous towards this duty.

Introduction

It is generally understood that Islam is a universal religion and all Muslims believe that Islam is conveyed for all humankind. Thus, Almighty Allah (SWT) enjoined Muslims to follow the example of His Prophet in his deeds (Q. 3: 132). Therefore, Islam like the other divine religions, has its own ethics and methods of spreading its message or working for its course. Basically the Islamic terminology *Daᶜwah* denotes the preaching of Islam or working for seeking Allah's reward. A Muslim who practices *Daᶜwah* either as a religious worker or as a volunteer in a group or as individual is called *da'i* (plural *du'at*) or *murshid* (*murshidun*).

Furthermore, *Daᶜwah* is accorded different meanings and applications. Basically, *Daᶜwah* refers to inviting both Muslims and non-Muslims to repent and accept Islam as a religion of Allah (SWT). Literally, the word *'Da'wah'* originates from the perfect verb: *Da'a* meaning: 'He called' *Yad'ū* (imperfect verb of *Da'a*) means: 'He is calling', as in the continuous and "he calls" in simple present tense. The root word of *Da'wah* is *da'a* as a form of verbal noun *Du'a,* which means, 'call' (noun), 'prayer', 'or supplication', 'or request for

something'[1]. *Da'wah*in the technical sense has multiple definitions and applications. For example, Hafeez defines *Da'wah* as "an act of inviting people to accept Islam and or to observe their religious obligations correctly and ardently" [2] While Al-Ghazzali considers *Da'wah* as total programme that is devoted to the benefit of *'ummah* and Islam[3].Hafeez on the other hand defines *Da'wah* as "propagating the *Dīn* (Religion) of Allah (SWT) by using any lawful means"[4].Al-Muqit explains further that *Da'wah* is not only a form of *jihād* (religious war) or *tajdīd* (reformation) but certainly is the greatest type of *Jihād* (religious war)[5].From these definitions, one may conclude that *Da'wah* comprises all acts of disseminating the knowledge of Islam through preaching, teaching, sermon and charity with a view to extending the idea of Islam on the one hand and to maintaining the true doctrine to Oneness of Allah (*Tauhid*) on the other.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptually *Da'wah* is not only the instrument of "calling to Islam", but also a means of rendering social and humanitarian services to people. The meaning of *Da'wah* has been misconceived by many Muslims who restricted it to only oral preaching. *Da'wah* as defined above is like most of the Islamic (Arabic) terminologies contained in the Glorious Qur'ān, *sunnah* of the Prophet and sayings of his companions (*aqwālulsahaba*). It has literal and technical meanings. Its multidimensional meaning appears 149 times in the Glorious Qur'ān.[6] Indeed, the table below illustrates different usages of the word in the Glorious Qur'an

Qur'ān Chapter	Verse	Text (Transliteration)	Literal meaning	Technical meaning
2.Al – Baqara	68	*Qālū 'ud'ulanārabb akayubayyin lanāmāhiy…*	They said, Beseech on our behalf Thy Lord to make plain to us what (heifer) it is…	invocation (IbnKathīr)
2	171	*…Illadu'ā'anwanid ā'an…*	…but calls and Cries	A sound of voice (IbnKathīr)
2	186	*UjībuDa'awat al-dā'iidhāda'āni*	I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me	invocation (Al-Ṭabari)
2	221	*…Yad'ūnailā al-nārwallahuyad'uilā al-jannati ...*	… do beckon you to the Fire. But Allah beckons by His Grace to the Garden (of bliss)	Propagation (IbnKathīr).

3:Ali Imran 23		*Yud'aunailākitābi al-Lāhi li yahkumabaynahum ...*	…They are invited to the Book of Allah to judge between them…	Referring to.. (IbnAbdussalam)
3	61	*Ta 'ālaunad'uabnā'an awaabnā'akum*	Come! let us gather together, our sons and your sons…	Calling (Al-Mawarḍi)
3	153	*...war rasuluyad'ūkum fi ukhurākum…*	… and the Messenger in your rear was calling you back …	Propagation 'Da'wah' (Al-Mawarḍi)
4: Al-Nisā'	117	*In yad'ūna min dūnihī 'illāināthanwa'inya d'ūnaillāshayṭānam marīdan.*	call but upon female deities. They call but upon satan the persistent rebel!	Worship (Al-Daru al Manshuur)
6:Al-n'am *40*		*Aghairal-lāhitad'ūna in kuntum ṣā diqīn.*	Would ye then call upon other than Allah (reply) if ye are truthful!	invocation (Al-Rāzi)
6	52	*Walātaṭrudi al-ladhīnayad'ūnarab bahumbilghadātiwa al-ashiyy…*	Send not away those who call on their Lord morning and evening,..	Begging (Al-Ṭabari)
7	29	*...wad'ūhumukhliṣī nalahuddīna*	… and call upon Him, making your devotion sincere as in His sight:	Worship (Al-Baydawi)
7	43	*...nūdū an tilkumu al-jannatu'ūirthtumūh ābimākuntum ta 'malūn*	"And they shall Hear the cry; "Behold the garden before you Ye have been made its inheritors, for your deeds.	informing (Al-Ṭabari)

Going by the different usages of the term *da'ā* in the above few verses, the phrases *ˌud'u, nad'u, yad'ūna*, etc highlight both conceptual and contextual meanings of *Da'wah.* The same term*,* in some instances is used for worship

(*ibadah*) and invocation (*du'a*). Therefore *Da'wah* work encompasses all aspects of human and spiritual need of people. In view of this, *Da'wah* activities cut across socio-economic and political activities based on Allah's saying that "commanding the doing of right things and warning against wrong and helping one another."Q.3: 104.

Da'wah in the Time of Prophet Muhammad

In brief, *Da'wah* in the time of Prophet Muhammad was the affair of all companions. There was no specific group that isolated itself as *Da'wah* group as exits today[7]. In the Glorious Qur'an, Allah (SWT) describes the Companions of the Prophet and the entire believers as the best peoples ever raised up for humankind enjoining good and forbidding evil.Q.3.110In the Hadith reported by Sa'id al-Khudri, said the Prophet Muhammad enjoins Muslims that:

> If any one of you who sees a wrong thing (not permitted act) should change it with his hand, if he cannot then with his tongue (preaching), if he is not able then with his heart and that is the weakest type of faith.[8]

In the same vein, the Prophet enjoins all Muslims to take forward from him about what they learned even if it is a verse .[9]As explained in the above Hadiths that Muslims should uphold the command of Allah (SWT) and instruction of His Prophet Muhammad.

Formation of *Da'wah* Groups in Nigeria

The history of the early spread of Islam in West Africa as whole, and in Nigeria in particular has shown that it was a result of the collective efforts of Muslim traders, clerics and rulers. However after the intrusion of the colonial administration so many things have changed and continue to change. In most cases, the colonial administration destroyed some of the Islamic values entrenched by the *jihad* of Shaykh Usmanu Ibn fodiyo by replacing them with secular policies. These have in many ways seriously secularized Muslim cultural heritages.[10] It was established that the effects of secular policy led to conversion of Muslim children into Christianity in some parts of Nigeria.[11]   The first important step that was taken by concerned Muslims in this case was the formation of a structured Islamic *Da'wah* group; by so doing the1y were able to counter the influence of colonialism and Christian missionary schools. In that regard, the first formal Islamic *Da'wah* group founded in Nigeria was *Anwar-Ul-Islam*, established in the year 1916. Most pioneer members of *Anwar Ul-slam* seceded from *Ahmadiyya* movement[12]. It was followed by *Ansar-Ud-deen* Society of Nigeria in 1923. Subsequently, many other similar societies and movements emerged in different parts of the country.

Other factors for the emergence of most of the early and contemporary structural groups in Nigeria included the claims of promoting the course of Islam, protecting the interests of Muslims and reformation of Muslims'

characters. In addition to this, Kawu observed that the reluctance of the government to provide social amenities to the people and lack of the effective implementation of economic policies that will alleviate poverty prompted the growth of churches, Muslim organizations, ethnic associations with all kinds of evangelical groups, and even Asian outfits like *Hare Krishana*, now having Nigerian adherents.[13]Another reason is government's policy and challenge of globalization; for instance, a group of people is not allowed to transact with public institutions, local or foreign unless certain conditions are met. One of such conditions is to get government's approval through obtaining certificate of incorporation or other relevant agencies. Hence with such certificate (approval), an association will be able to:

    i.   open an account in any public financial institution;

    ii.   enjoy security services especially during prayer and preaching in congregation or convention;

    iii.   get government permission to operate certain businesses such as establishing private schools, hospitals, banks etc;

    iv.   sue or be sued at the law court; and

    v.   enjoy government grant (for Private school) or legal support as the case may be.

By implication, the above issues and other related circumstances compelled some individual Muslim preachers to organise themselves into various formal groups in order to achieve their set goals. Apart from the foregoing, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria permits Nigerian citizens to assemble freely and associate with other persons to form or belong to any political party, trade union, or any other association for the protection of their interests.[14]

Islamic Basis for Forming *Da'wah* Groups

      In Islam any act of worship (*ibadah*) or working for Islamic course by a Muslim or a group of Muslims must have basis in the Qur'an and Sunnah or sayings of the companions of the Prophet or consensus of Muslims, otherwise such action is null and void and shall not be counted as an Islamic action.[15] As for those who form structural *Da'wah* groups, there are a number of verses as evidences for their action. Some of these verses included the sayings of Allah (SWT) that "Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity Q.3:104. In another verse, Allah (SWT) described the people of the Prophet as the best generation ever produced on the earth, saying "Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for humankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah"(Q. 3: 110). Those who cite these verses base their interpretations on two logical conclusions that first, Allah has made enjoining good and forbidding evil obligatory (*wajib*) for the community as proved in verse 104 of chapter 3 and also implied on a certain group of people, because there are many people in the Society who are neither able to do *Da'wah*

nor have the power to enjoin good or forbid evil. Secondly, the word could also mean individual and not a proportion of the people as it is ostensible in the literal words of Allah. Because in a *Ḥādīth*, it is made clear that it is mandatory to enjoin good and forbid evil, either by hand, tongue or heart. In another verse Allah says:

> And it is not for the believers to go forth all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group (i.e remaining) to obtain understanding in the religion and warn (preaching) their people when they return to them so that they might be cautious (Q. 9:122).

According to the perception of some officials of these groups that were interviewed, the above verse or verses, there is clear evidence that *Shar'ah* permitted scholars to form a group of teaching and enlightening people about their religion at the time other people attended to their businesses or other assignments. They also cited the juristic opinion of Imam Ash-Shāfi`i in his work, *Al-'um* to support their own opinion; which logically explains that although *Da'wah* is compulsory on every individual, some could relieve others if they have taken *Da'wah* responsibilities. But if the entire people fail to do it then every individual should be held responsible.[16]They further supported their arguments with prolific Sunni exegeses such as IbnKathir, Imam Qurtubi and Imam Al-Mawardi which their commentary on the above verses implied that a group of people are made of scholars because not all people are educated.

In nutshell, the idea of the formation of structural group comes as a result of intellectual exercise (*ijthad*) that has been used to justify the *Shari'ah* basis of the action. However the emergence of *Da'wah* groups could not completely relieve individual Muslims from *Da'wah*, based on Allah's instruction in *Surat al-Asr*, the *hadith* of Sa'id al-Khudri cited above, classical and contemporary Qura'nic exegeses.[17]

Formal and non-Formal *Da'wah*

The word formal or structural in this discussion refers to *Da'wah* groups that have a constitution or registered with government's agency or intend to register. These types of groups or associations provide the detailed information about their mission, focus, aims and objectives. They further gave an insight of their organizational structure (charts) and explained the functions of each official and member of the groups as well.

There are four types of *Da'wah* groups. Each group is known by either its constitutional features or manifestations. The first kind of group was formed to promote the course of Islam irrespective of individual sectarian beliefs or affiliation. This group in its preaching insists on the unity of Muslim *Ummah,* the spread of Islam and education of Muslims such groups as *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria,[18]*Jama'atuNasrilIslam*,[19] and others. The second category was established on the sectarian ground and also aimed at promoting Islam along with sectarian belief. (e.g. *sufi* brotherhoods) through which they believe they could

attain their objectives. These included a group such as *Fityanul Islam*,[20] and *Qadiriyya Nasiriyya* Youth Movement,[21] which strongly supported the *sufi* orders (*Tijjani* and *Qadiriyyah*). The third sets of groups were established by professional and Muslim business tycoons who are mainly interested in the economic, health and technological progress and the empowerment of Muslims, this includes groups like *Da'wah* for educating and enlightening the nation worldwide (DEEN), [22] and Muslim Aid Initiative (MAIN). [23] While the forth type of groups are mainly aimed at controlling political power and the establishment of total *Shari'ah* in Nigeria, like Islamic Movement of Nigeria (*Shi'ah* movement) which claims that it champions struggles to bring the end of the system of tyranny,[24] and *Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah Wal-Jihad* (Group of the people of the *Sunnah* for Preaching and Jihad) whose founder (Yusuf Muhammad) published a book titled *Hadhihi 'Aqidatuna Wa Minhaji Da^cwati* (This is the way of our *Da^cwah*)[25] in which he zealously set out to declare the totally heterodox belief of formal structural groups then his own. However the groups differ on how to achieve their mission. The four classified groups may be further divided according to their doctrines, such as neutralism (not belonging to any sect), w*habism/salafism/sunnism*, or shi'sm; modernisms, fundamentalisms or extremisms.

The non-structural groups are groups that are divided into two, the fringe Islamic movements/groups that believe theirs was an absence of trust in Islam because other Muslims outside their camp are infields (*kafirun*). This type of belief is common with the ideology of *Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah Wal-Jihad (yusufiyyah*[26]*).*They do not recognise the legitimacy of the constituted authority. They often condemn the study of sciences and anything that comes from the West (Europe and America). This group includes the *Maitasine* movement, *Imaniyyah* group, *Qur'aniyun* group, and so on. Some of them have decided to withdraw from society because in their perception and belief the society is corrupt, and therefore urge their members to withdraw from it as did *Imaniyyah* (faithful Muslims) group in Taraba State[27] and the evacuated *Darussalam* (abode of peace) movement form Niger state. Their members are living in many parts of Nigeria. However, *Maitasine*, *Imaniyyah* and *Qur'aniyun* groups have not publicised or published their objectives as did by *yusufiyyah*. The second type of this category is of those whose opinion consider formal *Da'wah* group as just an act of innovation (*bid'ah*) that has no basis in Islam. They argued that Prophet Muhammad did not create an organization with structure.[28]The latter kind of group accepts all that is good, whether from the East (Arabs) or West (Non-Arabs) and recognises the faith of other Muslims. The groups include the *Da'wah* group in Kano.[29]

Common Objectives of the formal Groups

It is unlike non-formal groups which claimed that they have no other constitution apart from the Glorious Qur'an. The formal groups discussed above have so many things in common. It is from their constitutions we understand

their aims and objectives; focus and vision. At times their activities were documented and aired on media. Therefore, based on the analysis of their constitutions and activities one would conclude that they have a lot in common as summarized here:

1. To get Muslim children educated in schools free of Christian indoctrination.
2. To propagate and defend the true teachings of Islam and Muslims' interest.
3. To respond to the contemporary need of young Muslims (a balanced education; where western education will go hand in hand with Islamic education)
4. To preach against acts of immoralities, corruptions, oppression and others vices.
5. To organize Islamic lectures, exhibitions, conference, seminars and workshops.
6. To encourage and enhance peaceful coexistence among Muslims and non–Muslims
7. To Promote friendly and brotherly relationships among Nigerian Muslims in particular, and the world in general.
8. To establish an Islamic '*ummah* (community) governed by the *Shari'ah.*
9. To create awareness among Muslim women about the true teaching of Islam and to help them to live in accordance with Islamic tenets.
10. To be the mouthpiece of Muslims in the country, dialogue where necessary and negotiate with federal and state' governments on matters relating to Muslims' welfare in particular, and that of the entire communities in general, and also offer constructive advice to government.
11. To undertake vocational and professional training for Muslim groups and individuals.
12. To combat spread of HIV/AIDS//STDs/TB via preventive measures such as sex abstinence, drug abuse and other related matters.
13. To counsel and empower groups such as youth, married women, divorcees and widows [30]

Looking at above objectives, it is crystal clear that the groups have good intention and programmes for Islam and wellbeing of Muslim community ('*ummah*). However, the important question to ask is how sincerely are the above groups committed to implementing the stated objectives.

Da'wah Activities of the formal Groups
Some of the above *Da'wah* groups have provided written information that highlight details of their *Da'wah* programmes and achievements. In the analysis of these programmes the findings established that the *Da'wah* activities which cut across the groups can be summarised as follows:

1. Coordinating preaching programmes towards implanting the aims and objectives via organizing symposia, workshops and seminars etc.

2. Teaching Arabic and Islamic studies in their established *madarasah* (schools) and modern Islamic schools.
3. Conducting Qur'ānic learning (memorization) for adults in mosques and in evening classes.
4. Conducting of Marriage (*nikah*), and religious ceremony (w*alimah*) for their members.
5. Organizing Weekly/annual (Ramadan) Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsir*)
6. Organizing local, state and national open (public) preaching, sermons during Friday Congregation and annual feasts (*ids*).
7. Organizing study circle (*halqha*) between *salat al-maghirb* and *isha'* and after *salat al-subhi* where *Hadith*, Qur'ān and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) are studied.
8. Visitation of sick people in hospitals, clinics, inmates and rehabilitation centers to offer them relief materials, prayers and words of counselling (*nasihah*)
9. Organizing a forum where Muslim professionals and businessmen meet to exchange ideas across their fields of operation with a view to enhancing multi-disciplinary elation.
10. Conducting refresher courses to educate Imams and Public employees, publication and translation of Islamic books from Arabic into languages of different tribes, enlightening the people on contemporary issues.
11. Counseling the pre and post marriage men and women, career guidance.
12. Vocational skill training (VST); in this regard, some groups provide opportunities for skills acquisition in various socio-economic needs of the society. [31]

Apart from sharing common objectives and activities, some of the groups are seen to have different names with striking similarities in meaning, for example *Jama'atu NasrilIslam* and *Ansarul-Islam; Ahbab-al-rasulullah* and *Ahbabal Muhammadiyya; Shabbabal-Rasulallah; Nuruddeen* society and *Nurul Islam*,etc.

Achievements of the formal groups
       Indeed, despite the fact that some groups are causing problems, some other *Da^cwah* groups have added values to humanity and the society. In fact, it is quite obvious that they recorded a number of achievements in almost every item listed above and also have the potentials to offer more in part of the reformation (*tajdid*) of Muslim characters and social services. For example, in the field of education, the groups have intervened in providing access to tertiary institutions by the ever increasing Muslim youth yearning for it. They established and managed many Islamic schools, education centers and learning circles in which both adult Muslims and children and even non-Muslims are being trained. For instance, *Ansarul Islam* of Nigeria started four decades ago has 126 formal primary schools, 86 Islamiyah (*madrasah*) schools, 45 Arabic and Islamic studies centres in Kwara and Ondo states of Nigeria and 118 women study centres.[32] In

the same vein, *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria which was established 90 years ago, has indeed made a lot of specular achievements. *Jama'atu Nasril Islam* (JNI) also made similar contribution.[33] In recent times *Nasrul–Lahi–l fatihi* Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) has established a university, Fountain University, Osogbo, Osun State of Nigeria, which is duly recognized by the National University Commission (NUC). In nutshell, their *Da'wah* activities facilitated the establishment of Islamic Universities, such as Al-Hikmah and Al-Qalam Universities in Ilorin and Katsina, respectively. In the health sector, they run many hospitals and clinics nationwide, such as *Sunnah* hospital in Jos, and Mustapha al-Nury hospital Kaduna. Muslims Aid Initiative (MAIN) had successfully led a war on T.B. and HIV/AIDS/TB/STDs, maternity, etc. in different parts of Nigeria. In the socio-economic well-being of Muslim, workshops for youth on skill acquisition were conducted and many men and women benefitted from the programmes.[34] In the social and religious services they are acting as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as regard to settlement of conflicts. Equally important, they manage the distribution of *Zakah* (alms) in form of relief materials and sharing of property of deceased persons among his/her inheritors. Another notable achievement of the groups is that their enlightenment programmes motivated the formation of non-interest-banking industry (e.g. Ja'iz Bank, Plc), Islamic cooperative societies, such as *murahabah* multipurpose cooperative society of Gombe State University, Takaful companies etc. The groups also serve as network through which government communicates with people particularly, where media cannot effectively serve the purpose, such as during religious or ethnic conflicts. In actual fact, it is on record that some of the *Da'wah* groups have been working tirelessly as necessary for human welfare and spiritual upliftment.

Challenges

In contemporary times, religious groups are said to be growing faster in Nigeria than in any nation in Africa. Places of worship (mosques and churches) and religious institutions are proliferating everywhere in the country. Apart from that the groups pay for air time to transmit their religious programmes on electronic and print media. Moreover, some groups have developed home video films and cassettes to propagate their religions[35]. It is unfortunate that BBC world survey of people's religious beliefs and transparency international (TI) paradoxically, showed that Nigeria is on the top list of most corrupt nations in the world between the years 2005 to 2014[36]. Thus, little has been achieved or being done by the Islamic groups in combating corruptions in the society and even in the area of conversion of non-Muslims to Islam.

The challenge facing the Islamic groups may be categorised into two types, internal and external. Internally, it is observed that some *Da'wah* groups do not strictly practice what they preach despite the fact that Allah cautions believers on this bad habit. The almighty Allah says in the Qur'an "Most loathsome is it in the sight of Allah that you say (preaches) what you do not do",

"Do you enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget (to practice it) yourselves" (Q. 2:44).

Nowadays, the attitudes of some groups to derogate some Muslims by declaring their actions as misguided and misleading, based on their own personal interpretations or minor differences has been of a serious challenge to unity of Muslims and progress of Islam. In the same vein, Abdurrasheed pointed out that, there are different categories of Muslims involved in Islamic faith propagation (*Da'wah*) but their attitudes prevent non-Muslims from knowing the real meaning of Islam.[37]Aliyu also states that:

> In most cases, a lot of hitches developed along the way, in the course of *Da'wah* conduct. This necessitates the question what types of (*Da'wah*) organizations or kind of movements are they. And for what and how were theyformed.[38]

Other *Da'wah* groups excessively and publicly use provocative terms or remarks, such as infidel (*takfir*), *mushrik* (polytheist), *Dan bidi'a, munkiri* (heretic), *munafiq* (hypocrite) against Muslims who observe five pillars of Islam and also working for Muslim development. Some groups out of their little knowledge strongly criticise and condemn the *fatawa* (Islamic decisions) of the world recognised Islamic jurists and founder of four *sunni* schools of law (Imam Abu Hanifah (b. 80 AH[39]), Imam Malik (b. 93 AH), Imam Shafi'i (b. 150 AH), Ahmad (b.164 AH) and other jurists like QadiIyad, Imam Auza'i, Imam Thauri among others, whereas they praise their Shaykhs. Some of these preachers relegate Islamic teachers in public schools by calling them *'yan-boko* (a provocative word against Islamic teacher/lecturer that uses English as a medium of instruction in public schools). This type of unguided utterances from some preachers and groups have vehemently ignored the counseling of the Prophet that "Whoever curses a believer, it is as if he killed him and whoever throws the charge of *kufr* (infidel) at a believer, it is as if he killed him"[40]and also says, "A Muslim is a brother to Muslim, he shall not oppress him, he shall not forsake him, he shall not deny him and he shall not belittle him."[41.] Almighty Allah warns believers that:

> O you who believe let not a group scoff a group; it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad it is, to insult one's brother after having faith and whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed *zalimun* (wrong doers) (Q. 49:11).

A renowned world Islamic preacher, Shaikh Bn Bazz pointed out that the enemies of Muslims are happy to see proliferation of Muslim groups and sects because such development is something desired by *Satan* (devil) and enemies of Islam."[42] In the same vein, Shaykh Abdul-Khaliq pointed out that there are kinds of *Da'wah* groups, one is for good (*Jama'at al-Khair*), while the second is the opposite (*Jama'at al-sharr*).[43]

Conclusion

The above discussion has examined the main religious purposes of the formation of the structured *Da'wah* groups/movements in Nigeria. The concept of *Da'wah* has been discussed and the study has shown that *Da'wah* is a very important duty which comprises all activities of promoting Islam, reforming Muslims and rendering social services to humankind. It is clear from the foregoing discussion that tremendous contributions have been made by the *Da'wah* groups despite the numerous challenges. The study explains that *Da'wah* is not restricted to formal groups or few individuals; rather it is a duty for all Muslims. In view of legitimacy of *Da'wah* groups, formal or non-formal, this researcher agrees with the view that they are of two kinds, good and bad. The sample of good groups are those which promote the cause of Islam while the others destroy the image of Islam by wrong interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an and sowing seeds of discord in the Muslim community. Arising from the foregoing, towards progress, *Da'wah* groups and individual *da'i* (preacher) have potential roles to play towards Islamisation process and encouraging unity of Muslim '*ummah* in Nigeria. That will be possible by creating a forum to discuss issues concerning their differences and grievances and the consensus of such forum should be binding on all groups. The preachers should always be of good model to the public. The groups and individual preachers need to focus on persuading non-Muslims to accept Islam.

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