

Religious Communication as A Mass Communication: A Case Study of Effective Da'wah in The Contemporary Society

Lateef Kayode Adeyemo¹
University Of Benin, Nigeria

Abstract

Religion has continued to be a very important aspect of human life from the very beginning of time. It has equally continued all through the ages to influence the forms of people life in their respective communities. It is a major determinant of their culture as well as their norms and values, indeed, their worldview. If there are issues held so dear by people to their heart, religion is therefore one of those things. According to Islam, about 124,000 Prophets and apostles/messengers were sent by Allah (God) to communicate His will to people. What is religious communication? What kinds of its forms and configurations? What purpose is it meant to serve? What do we mean by da'wah and what are the principles and factors of effective da'wah particularly as relates to modern time and contemporary society? In what follows hereunder, attempt is made to proffer answers to the above questions. Analytical survey of data collected through the media of interview, focus group discussion and review of library collections are made and conclusion is drawn from the findings availed by the study. The findings show that there shall continue to be imbalance and misplacement of priority as long as man fails to recognize the fact that just as he needs food and water for his physical development and growth, he equally stand in need of al-hidayah (Divine Guidance of Allah) for his spiritual development and growth as well. For injustice, oppression and suppression, adultery and fornication, anarchy and chaos, ignorance and superstition, internecine warfare, animism and barbarism, dissoluteness and wanton conviviality shall continue to be the order of the day if he neglects this all-important communications.

Keywords: religion, communication, mass communication, da'wah, effective communication

INTRODUCTION

By religious communication as applicable to this study, it refers to the communications between God and men and vice versa especially as received by those chosen by Him (God) to be His Apostle (*Nabi*), Messenger and

¹ Corresponding author : Lateef Kayode, University of Benin, e-mail : lateef.adeyemo@uniben.edu

or Prophet (*Rasul*). Their responsibilities are to communicate to members of their family as in the case of Adam (AS), to their nations with respect to other Prophets and Apostles, and Muhammad SAW, according to the Quran, was sent to the whole worlds. Although, religion according to *The International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of English Language* (Encyclopedic Edition) is "a belief binding the spiritual nature of man to a supernatural being, as involving a feeling of dependence and responsibility, together with the feelings and practices which naturally flow from such a belief". However, this paper is concerned with those revealed monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam with particular reference to Islam. It should be stated here no matter how brief, that several Muslim scholars have argued that Islam, to Muslims, is not just a religion in the ordinary sense of the word but a comprehensive way of life which covers the whole gamut of human life in all its ramifications (Adeyemo, L.K., 2006, 24-31). This is understandable given the fact that, religion to people like Karl Max and those of his followers is opium of the masses. This may only have an iota of truth in a society where leaders oppress their subjects/ followers and such followers and or masses are complacent finding solace or respite in religion.

Mass communication on the other hand, means a communication targeted at a very wide/large audience/readers which may take the medium of print or electronic device particularly in the modern time (Bittner, J.R., 1989: 11-13). This therefore implies that although *wahy* is always sent to a chosen man (Prophet/Messenger) at a particular time, it is mass communication since it is meant to be communicated to the entire members of his nation or the whole world as the case may be. This is further established by the fact that those *Wahy* (revelations) are documented for prosperity. *Da'wah* literally means a call or invitation to a feast. However, it technically means a call to all that is good (Godly) as against those that are bad not as determined by men but by God in the Scriptures He sent for the benefit of men and their society which are exemplified by those through whom the Message are being sent, that is, Messengers and Prophets as earlier indicated. All Prophets and Messengers are therefore *d'uat* (callers) calling onto the way of their Lord.

RELIGION AND COMMUNICATION: BELIEF, CULTURE, NORMS AND VALUES

Based on the four fundamental principles of Islamic worldview (*tawheed/ ikhlas, risalah/nubuwa, khilafah/ubudiyah and ihsan*) which indicates that Allah is the creator of the universe and all it contains and that although, man was the last of all to be created, Allah made him His viceroy on the earth surface (Quran 33: 72); communication from God to man and vice versa becomes inevitable if only to intimate him with his responsibilities on earth as Allah's *Khalifah*. Religious communication may manifest in several

ways. This may include semantics (terms and terminologies) as there are words/dicta that are peculiar to a particular religious group. These are faith based words. *Religious symbolic (non-verbal) communication* may also reflect or be expressed in peoples' culture: the way they dress, the manner of constructing their buildings, forms of their marriage, manners and conducts of their naming ceremonies and burial rites, education, their dos and don'ts, that is, norms and values, etc.

THE FORMS AND CONFIGURATIONS OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS

There are certain forms and configuration of religious communications which could be discerned from the following verses of the Quran.

It is not fitting for a man that Allah [God] should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a Messenger to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills: for He is the Most High, the Most Wise

(Quran 42: 51).

From the foregoing verse of the Qur'an, we can infer that religious communication is a quadripartite one, that is, from God to man, from Man to God, from God to man to man and from God to Angel to man to man. Communication from God to man is technically referred to as *Wahy*, that is, revelation. Four forms of such *Wahy* have been identified based on the verse of the Quran quoted above. God's communications to men is in some instances directly to the Prophet/Messenger from behind a veil (that is, God to man), as in the case of Adam and Musa AS and in some other cases through an intermediary of an Angel (Jibril AS) as in the case of Muhammad SAW. This is the one we referred to as God to Angel to man to man as the message is meant to be passed across to people by the immediate recipient (apostle/messenger) who receives it. There are yet instances, whereby revelations are made through inspiration. This is the form in which virtually all the Prophets are communicated. These are the three forms of communication from God to men as indicated in Quran 42 verse 51 quoted above.

However, while all the three are forms of revelation and therefore exclusive to Prophets/Messengers, the Apostle of Allah-Muhammad SAW -indicates that dream is ^{1/46th} of revelations. It therefore implies that every Muslim, depending on his closeness to Allah based on his obedience to Him and righteous deeds can experience good dreams, ones that emanate from his Lord just as in the case of Yusuf (Joseph) (AS) (see chapter 12 of the Quran). It should be mentioned that bad dream or nightmare are not included in this categories. It is *dua* (prayer or supplication) when the communication is initiated by men to God.

“When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me: Let them also, with a will listen to my call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way”

(Quran 2:186).

The clause, *let them listen to My call* is all about *da'wah*. When the communication is between men it is *dawah*-a call or invitation to all that is good and refraining from all that is evil (*al-amr bil-mahruf wa nahyi an al-munkar*), giving glad tidings (*bashir*) to the believers and warning (*nadhir*) the unbelievers of the consequences of their infidelity. This paper is particularly concerned with the last one, that is, *da'wah*-calling people to all that is good and warning them against the consequences of their evil deeds and infidelity. This is done by using the revelations sent by Allah in order to bring about *islah* (reformation) or *tajdid* (renewal) as the case may be. I have chosen *islah* and *tajdid* because Islam teaches that every human being is born on the natural instinct (*fitra*) to know and acknowledge Allah (God) as his creator and Lord Who alone deserves to be worshipped (Khan, M.W., 1998, 19-20). This is equally premised upon the fact that Allah had perfected His Din and completed His favours upon the believers.

This call is done by persuasion since there is no compulsion in the religion of Islam; and equally because man is not going to be rewarded or punished for anything he is forced to do.

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whoever rejects evil and believes in God has grasped the most trustworthy hand hold that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things (Q2:256). And dispute you not with the People of the Book except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong and injury

(Quran 29:46).

THE PURPOSE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of religious communications include among others: to acquaint man with the purpose of his creation and how best to accomplish it, strengthening his position as Allah's *khalifah* (vicegerent) and his understanding of the attendant responsibilities so that he may effectively play those roles, for his overall proper guidance towards proper conduct of all his affairs, to know and ensure proper and effective God/man relation, to ensure munificent and purposeful human relations, to ensure his comprehensive well being and success both here and in the hereafter

(Nur, A., 1957: 121-142).

“But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.” He will say: “O my Lord! Why have Thou raise me up blind, while I had sight (before)? (Allah) will say: “Thus didst thou, when Our Signs came unto thee, you disregard them: so wilt thou be this day disregarded (Quran 20: 123-126).”

Man is created by Allah as the acme of His handiwork and He therefore made him His vicegerent (*khalifah*) to serve a purpose on the surface of the earth. Man is therefore a creation of the highest honour and of responsibility. In spite of the position of honour granted man among the comity of God's creations, he is going to be reduced to the lowest of the low if he fails in the attendant responsibilities. Thus, the need to have a correct understanding (*fahm/fiqh*) of the purpose to be served and how best to serve it appropriately; otherwise there is bound to be confusion which is going to be proportionate or commensurate to the level of deviation from the original purpose assigned by God (Adeyemo, 2006, 36). This is very vital in view of the fact that, it is our idea of life that shapes our attitude towards it. Therefore, the correctness of our idea about it is very paramount as it is going to bring about a correct attitude towards it, otherwise, man shall continue to live a down trodden life here and experience eternal damnation in the next. Since man is not the architect of his life and also because he does not have a fore knowledge of what life is all about let alone his position and responsibility therein, it behoves that guidance (*al-hidayah*) be sent to him in order for him not to go (grope) in darkness. Of all the creations (creatures) of God, *Jinns* and *Men* are the only ones endowed with intellect and ability to make choice or discriminate, particularly between good and bad, moral and immoral, right and wrong and between good and evil deeds (Quran 51:56).

Hence, *Jinns* and *Men* are creations of responsibility. They are responsible for their actions and inactions with respect to the purpose of their creation. This equally account for why they are referred to as the creation of the highest honour (Quran 95:1-7), who, despite this honour or favour may be reduced to the lowest of the low if they fail to live in accordance with the *fitra* (nature) with which they were created. However, law governing the smooth running of human life cannot be made and unmade at will based on his whims and caprices since that would not facilitate stability but cause confusion. Islam unlike modern and post modern thoughts assigns a lofty goal to human life, a goal that requires certain level of stability, permanence as well as some degree of flexibility. Such laws are contained in the communications of God with men. The goal assigned to human life by religion (particularly that of Islam) nay by God, is to serve Allah and humanity through Him hence he

(man) is honoured as *His Khalifah* (viceroy/vicegerent) on the surface of the earth, a position that is meant for the fulfilment of his noble mission.

Of course, there cannot be service without knowledge particularly of the service to be rendered, thus the need for revelation which spells out man's mission and or terms of reference as well as ways and means of achieving them so that he/she may not grope or go in darkness with regards to his mission on the surface of the earth. Even though, man is endowed with intellect or rather knowledge which accord him the opportunity to participate in the knowing of things and gives him an edge or a degree over and above all other things, yet his knowledge just like himself is limited to time and space. This is why his reasoning alone could not suffice him to attain the overall success in his sojourn or vicissitudes on the surface of the earth. The concept of "worship" [service] in Islam as observed Muhammad Asad, is different from that in any other religion. He argues that worship is not restricted to the purely devotional practices, as for example prayers or fasting; it rather, as he says, extends over the whole of man's practical life as well. He then posits that 'if the object of our life as a whole is the worship of God, then we necessarily must regard this life in totality of all its aspects, as one complex moral responsibility'.

The existence of life on the planet earth, particularly that of man is not by accident nor is it by a sheer serendipity. So, everything including man-collectively and individually-is created to serve one purpose or the other and it is made in a way suitable for the purpose it is meant to serve. If these purposes are served and served appropriately, individually and collectively there is bound to be harmony in the cosmos which explains why it is referred to as a universe and not a *multi-verse*. However, the failure of one or more of these elements to function as expected or rather as designed by God is going to cause commotion and impede the proper functioning of the eco-system. Man is Allah's vicegerent on earth (Quran 2:30) and so he should carry out the will of his Master as enunciated in the Scripture He sent to him (Quran 2:28). This explains why there is need for man to be reminded of his purpose on earth and of the consequences of his failure to carry them out.

Hence, metaphysical issues (*al-iman bil-ghaybi*) such as life after death, rewards and punishment, etc. which are beyond human comprehension at least through physical sciences and empirical studies for which revelation is the guide are necessary such that man may be rightly guided in all ramifications (Sharifah al-Atas, 1996, 8). Thus, as argued by Osman Bakar, it is necessary for each individual to understand the nature and range of his potential gift. He posit further that only then can he/she know his actual relationship with the universe and his Creator and fulfill his trust, the function of vicegerency

that he/she had accepted. And only then can he/she realize the true meaning and significance of the Divine ordinances brought by the Holy Prophet SAW.

Based on Bakar's argument, man can only know and act according to the role he is to play on the surface of the earth if he follows the instructions that were handed down by God via *wahy* since there is no other way by which he could know it. The current attitude of man to life is said to be a replica of the attempt made by Adam AS who was instructed to use nature in the Garden of Eden as he pleases; however, with a very important condition. The condition as observed Bakar, was that he and his spouse should not approach one particular tree because it would cause harm, darkness, wrong, injustice and transgression to his life (Bakar Osman, 2007). He therefore opines that the forbidden tree, from which Adam AS was restricted as relates to the present state of man, refers to none other than the tree of secular knowledge. To him, the secular knowledge is that knowledge of man about the world and that of his place and role in it, which is conceived and acquired as he says, by discountenancing and excluding God, even in the case of some, by denying Him outright. This, no doubt, is what modernism and postmodernism represent which is at variance with religion and human nature itself. The question that may well be posed, one that is germane and apposite to our study is that: Can man fight against his nature and still retain the nature of his humanity? The answer is no and this was realised by Adam AS who made such a mistake and having seen the consequences of his action made a u-turn to his Lord.

Adam AS according to Bakar, was taught wholistic or *tawhidic* knowledge that enabled him to see the world from and in God and therefore; to live in a state of bliss. This could be understood as meaning that, in this *Edenic* stage of his life, Adam AS saw God everywhere. However, owing to Satan's seduction or misguidance as against the instruction handed down by God, he craved to experience viewing the world outside or in exclusion of God (Quran 2:35). In conclusion as opined Bakar, this particular event that Adam passed through was to become the prototype of secular knowledge in the anal of human thought. Adam was sincerely regretful of this momentous error and turned back in penitence to his Lord Who forgave him. The spiritual u-turn enabled Adam to re-affirm and re-establish his lost *tawhidic* knowledge such that he finds a re-union with his Lord, much as he regains his state of bliss although, this time on the surface of the earth. From the foregoing paragraphs, it is clear that life becomes worthy of living when men realize the purpose of their existence and strive to actualize it. According to Islam, to live is to serve: to serve Allah and humanity through Him, for whatever purpose a man serve is what make or mar his life. Service to humanity is what endears one man to another and it is *'ibadah* (service or devotional worship) if they

are borne out of good motive. Service to Allah endears a man to Him. There shall continue to be imbalance and misplacement of priority as long as man fails to recognize the fact that just as he needs food and water (and or drinks) for his physical development and growth, he equally stand in need of *al-hidayah* (divine guidance of Allah) for his spiritual development and growth as well. For injustice, oppression and suppression, adultery and fornication, anarchy and chaos, ignorance and superstition, internecine warfare, animism and barbarism shall continue to be the order of the day if he neglects this all-important provision (Adeyemo, 2002, 10). So as asserted by Prof. Bakar, the failure to follow the way of Allah SWT as revealed in His Book would result in *khusran* - the real loss in this world and the hereafter.

To Islam therefore, as asserts Fazlur Rahman (1982, 14-15) "God is the transcendent anchoring point of attributes such as life, creativity, mercy, and justice (including retribution) and of moral values to which a human society must be subjected if it is to survive and prosper-a ceaseless struggle for the cause of good. This constant struggle as he observes, is the keynote of man's normative existence and constitutes the service (*ibadah*) to God with which the Quran squarely and inexorably charges him. But the substantive or the constitutive teachings of the Prophet and the Quran according to him, is undoubtedly for action in this world, since it provides guidance for man concerning his behaviour on earth in relation to other men. He posit further that, 'God exists in the mind of the believers to regulate their behaviour if they are religio-morally experienced, but that which is to be regulated as he says, 'is the essence of the matter'.

God [Allah] has also set a fixed pattern (law) or *shari'ah* (pathway) within the limit of which every human being including other creatures (the animate and inanimate ones) has to move such that if everybody keeps to his/her respective limit, peace automatically becomes observable in the society. However, when these limits are left unobserved in any society; there is bound to be confusion, fracas and anarchy. All the affairs of man are regulated in order to ensure that peace reign supreme in the society. This is a balanced theo-centric civilization base on *Wahy* or communications of God with man, for human beings are theomorphic and not *homo-economicus*. Allah says:

We have given to you a law (a way of life) so follow it, and do not follow the fancies of those who know not

(Quran 45: 18).

Commenting on the above verse of the Quran, Sayyid Qutb (1980, 28) posit that:

“They are equipped with nothing but fancies and ignorance when they undertake the task which is no concern of theirs and does not properly belongs to them, their claim to one of the properties of Divinity is a great sin and a great evil”

DA'WAH AND FACTORS OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS

We have explained what is meant by *da'wah* in the foregoing paragraphs. We shall now turn to factors that facilitate its effectiveness. Asserts Abul A'la Mawdudi (1982, 46) :

To proclaim Din fully and to witness to it faithfully, it is, therefore, absolutely essential to launch an organised, collective struggle. All those who are conscious of their duties and responsibilities as Muslims, who are determined to discharge them, must unite, must organise themselves, and must make every effort to unite mankind to Islam. They must translate it into practice, remove all those obstacles which hinder and impede the task of calling mankind to Islam, and establish it.

We should therefore begin to build bridges and mend walls in order to realise the much needed peace that man so much desire. This calls for a deliberate and concerted effort to engage in dialogue in form of *Da'wah*. According to Jum'ah Amin 'Abd Al-'Aziz (1999, 7 & 8), effective *da'wah* must embrace the following: good presentation, refined style, awakening the truth, resorting to wisdom and fair preaching, argument in a way that is the best, cognizance of the environment and peculiar circumstances of one's audience, using the best means and medium of modern technology, analogy and persuasion, etc (see also Mustafa At-Tahan 1999, 35). To buttress this further he quoted Imam Eini who says:

Wisdom needs good knowledge of the secrets of life, and the nature of people and the society, as wisdom signifies fine and precise knowledge, teaching it signifies perfect knowledge and applying it signifies perfect actions.

Hence, he opines that for one to succeed in his call to the way of Allah, he needs to possess the following: good understanding, deep faith, strong love both for and of Allah and his audience, profound awareness, humility, sincerity and continuous work. Let us therefore look in-depth into the major

elements of effective *da'wah* vis a vis the speaker, the message and the audience.

The Speaker

The speaker or rather the caller (*dai*) should possess the following qualities: have knowledge of what he want to invite others to and be a practical reflection of the same as Allah says in the Quran:

It is not (befitting) that a man to whom is given the Book, and Wisdom and the Prophetic Office, should say to people: "Be ye my worshippers rather than Allah's". On the contrary (He would say): "Be ye worshippers of Him Who is truly the Cherisher of all: For ye have taught the Book and ye have studied it earnestly"

(Quran 3:79).

He should therefore be a symbol, the epitome or practical example of the ideal and standards to which he invites others. Allah says: Do you command people to be righteous and you forget your own soul?

(Quran 2:44).

He should be confident based on conviction. He should be properly dressed and put on a corporate/comely look (Quran 74:1-5). He should make his voice audible and soft and should avoid shouting. Allah says:

And be moderate in thy speech and lower thy voice, for hardest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass
(Quran 31:19).

He should therefore modulate his voice as at when necessary. He should also have correct knowledge of the history, condition and the psychology of the audience. He should be well acquainted with their environment. He should be modest and avoid dabbling into issues of which he is ignorant. He should address one issue at a time and present it in a way that it is best understood by the audience. He should always put on a smiling face; for smiling is an indiscriminate bonus that can be given to one's fellow men. He should be sincere with his Lord and audience and have genuine motive and care and affection for them (Syed, 2002, 45-59).

The Message/Speech

By message we mean what the speaker intend to communicate to his audience. So in this case, we mean *da'wah*-the Islamic Call or Call to Islam. This is not a call to political rally, revolution or revolt, it is a call meant to

free men from the narrowness of this transient world to the vastness of the hereafter, a deliverance from darkness and perpetual ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) to the beacon light (*nur*) of God and pristine knowledge (*'ilm*) that liberates. Such caller who invites people to these ideal and standards should himself possess its knowledge and be an epitome of its application. This suggests therefore, that he should keep company with the Quran, Hadith and *seerah* and should put into practice all things read by him using the Prophet as his mentor and model. He should be caring and affectionate to his audience. Hence, Allah told Prophet Musa AS to address Pharaoh softly.

But speak to him mildly, perchance he may take warning or fear Allah (Quran 20:44).

“Go thou to Pharaoh, for he had indeed transgressed all bounds.” (Moses) said: “O my Lord! Expand me my breast; “ease my task for me; “and remove impediments from my speech. “So they may understand what I say: “and give me a Minister from my family, Aaron my brother; “add to my strength through him. “And make him share my task: “that we may celebrate Thy praise without stint, “and remember Thee without stint: “for Thou art He that (ever) regards us. (Allah) said: “Granted is thy prayer, O Moses!”

(Quran 20:24-36).

He (the caller) should avoid argument and adopt only beautiful exhortation with wisdom and alluring presentation. Allah instructs:

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 knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance

(Quran 16:125).

He should invite them to the way of Allah, the way to which all Messengers and Apostles invited their people in congruence with what Allah commands:

Say thou: “this is my way: I do invite unto Allah-on clear evidence as the seeing with one’s eyes-I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! And never will I join gods with Allah!”

(Quran12:108).

Such caller (*dai*) will then qualify to be one of the best speech maker since he derives his inspiration from the All-knowing, All-wise (God) who Says:

Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah (his Lord) and says, "I am of those who bow in Islam (in submission to Allah)",

(Quran 41:33).

He should use appropriate analogy where and when necessary. He may adopt modern technology and methodology that are Islamic to enhance his presentation.

The Recipient of The Message/The Audience

The condition of the recipient/s or the audience must be understood and be taken into consideration. He should not be bored with lengthy talk; his/their perception should be noted and must be given the chance to express his/her own opinion. The speaker should therefore avoid words or actions and or even reactions that may offend their sensibility and provoke their anger, embarrass and hurt their feelings. He should show concern for them and respect their opinion. He should bear in mind their level of education and avoid the use of grandiloquent and phraseologies which may make it difficult for them to understand the message. There are three basic medium of passing message across to one's audience. The speaker must use them very well: these are mouth, hand and action (co-ordinated gesticulations). There should be eye contact between the speaker and the audience.

In a nutshell, the caller (*dai*) should open his speech in a friendly manner, shun criticism, others' opinions must be respected, should praise sincerely when and where necessary, show instant appreciation and acknowledge all improvements, encourage and motivate for this aid development, criticize himself and not his audience, indirectly point out their mistakes to avoid confrontation, admit his errors, ask questions instead of giving orders, make his suggestions appealing and easy to apply, express his genuine concern for them, always save their face/honour, do not argue with them, make his presentation alluring, let the idea be theirs, try to call to higher motive, and be sincere with himself, his audience and Lord.

DA'WAH IN THE MODERN TIME AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Although, there are a lot of misgivings about religions especially Islam and the Muslims which is not at all a new thing, so it was in the time of all the Messengers of Allah including Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus Christ) and

Muhammad SAW. It is normal, for this represents the struggle between the truth and falsehood. They were able to dispense all these by constant call to the way of their Lord. Since the Divine office of Prophet has been, according to Islam, sealed in the Prophethood of Muhammad SAW, this responsibility has been given to the Muslim scholars, however, much still need to be done by them. It is their duty to invite all and sundry to Islam (total submission to will of God) much as they suppose to represent the epitome of the same. The onus has been given to them to let the world know that there is only one God who created the heaven and the earth, that humanity has only one single parentage of Adam and Eve (thus brothers and sisters either of humanity or faith), that we have only one planet to share as neighbours. One God, one planet, one humanity, thus Islam preaches unity of humanity. Our press has a fundamental role to play in this enterprise for they have the key to information dissemination in our society, given the fact that everybody is a function of information at his/her disposal. The present situation with our media is unwholesome. A situation whereby, as observed Yusuf Islam (formerly Cat Steven, nd., 13) the media fail to give the full or true picture of what really happened but rather give you the picture the editor or the director wants. He asserts further:

*When we see the news about Islam or the Muslims, we see distortion going on. There is a kind of concealment of certain facts and therefore it is important for Muslims to take part in trying to project Islam in the media. I believe that the Muslims have a big duty [role] to play in the world. The first duty [role] is to practise Islam. Unfortunately, many people are turned away from Islam because of the misdeeds, misactions [inactions] and misbehaviour of certain so called Muslims. When we read the *Quran* we get a completely different picture of what a Muslim should be. Then they must share their knowledge of Islam with others. The best way to introduce Islam to others is to practice [it] Islam. This is the way that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) influenced those around him. It was his example that made people turned to Islam. It is a reminder to us, that when we remember God, who is the source of Peace, that we start to find happiness.*

Allays instructs thus:

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His

Grace, ye become brethren; and you were on the brink of the fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you; that ye may be guided. 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,

(Quran 3:103-104).

According to Abdullahi Yusuf Ali (2003, footnote 431, 154), *muftuh, aflaha, falah* (bliss) which are the root of the last word on the verse portray an idea of attainment of desires, happiness, in this world and the next; success, prosperity; freedom from anxiety, care, or disturbed state of mind—the opposite of *adhab* in the next verse, which includes: failure, misery, punishment or penalty; agony and anguish. The ideal Muslim community is happy, untroubled by conflicts or doubts, sure of itself, strong, united and prosperous, because it invites to all that is good, enjoins the rights; and forbids the wrong—a master stroke is of description in three clauses. The argument and conclusion reached by Yusuf Ali above is in congruence and resonate well with the following verse of the Quran where Allah says:

You are the best of people, evolved for mankind enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah
(Quran 3:110).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have, in the foregoing paragraphs look at religious communication as a form of mass communication as well as the factors of effective *da'wah* which signifies an aspect of religious communication particularly in Islam. We have tried to proffer answers to the questions which form the major thrust or focus of the study. Those questions include: what is religious communication?, what forms and or configurations has it?, what purpose is it meant to serve?, what do we mean by *da'wah* and what are the principles and factors of effective *da'wah* particularly as relates to modern time and contemporary society? We concluded that religious communication is, no doubt, a mass communication aimed at reformation or renewal (*islah or tajdid*) - a communication focused at giving right knowledge to people and redirecting the society to all that is good (Godly) and munificent to the general society and warning them about infidelity, evil deeds and its attendant effects on individuals and general public. It was argued that religious communication is invaluable for human comprehensive success and well-being not only here but equally in the hereafter (Al-Nadwi, 1980, 37). Although, man is the creation of highest honour and indeed vicegerent (*khalifah*) of Allah on

earth which also make him a creation of responsibility since he was created for a purpose; and in spite of the intellect with which he was endowed yet his knowledge just like himself is limited to time and space. Hence, it becomes expedient to send guidance to him by his creator in order to know and carry out those responsibilities to the best of his ability. Human life cannot be sustained by only bread and cake alone since man is made of Spirit and matter. He needed something greater than that, which can only be provided by communication with God-religious communication. So, for Muslims as observes Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim (1951, 21) :

The Quran says that God is the cause of all causes, and the ultimate cause of all existence. He is the Being as the foundation of all becoming; He is the Stable Reality which creates and supports all changes; "He is the beginning and He is the End; He is the Outer Appearance and He is the Inner Reality.

(Quran 57:3)

This is further buttressed by the Nobel Laureate Alexis Carrel (Quoted in R.H. Tawney 1937: 225) when he says:

Economists would realise that human beings think, feel and suffer, that they should be given other things than work, food and leisure; that they have spiritual as well as physiological needs[;] and also that the causes of economic and financial crises may be moral and intellectual. We should no longer be obliged to accept the barbarous condition of life in great cities, the tyranny of factories and offices, the sacrifice of moral dignity to economic interest, of mind to money, as benefactions conferred upon us by modern civilization. We should reject mechanical inventions that hinder human development. Economics would no longer appear as the ultimate reason for everything. It is obvious that the liberation of man from the materialistic creed would transform most of the aspect of existence. Therefore, modern society will oppose with all its might this progress in our conception.

This Godless approach of man to life had resulted into the highly speculative and exploitative free-market forces which created 'a crisis of deviant economics' (Robert Skidelsky, 2008) and enthroned the 'religion' of 'market idolatry' (William Raspberry, 1998) which had plunged the world into 'The Age of Turbulence' (Alan Greenspan, 2008). It is obvious therefore, that man

needs to be rescued from his reckless use of his intellect without any recourse to the divine source. For this is self destructive adventure that has manifested itself in form of wanton conviviality, dissoluteness and moral bankruptcy which has made man a slave of his passion without any recourse to reason.

Factors of effective communication, nay, effective *da'wah* are also identified and espoused. It is believed that if those factors are taken into consideration it will ensure effective and affective *da'wah*. By effective *da'wah*, we mean that call that is understood and accepted by the audience whereas affective *da'wah* signifies that which produces the desired result in individuals and the society. Therefore, there cannot be affective *da'wah* without an effective one. Hence effectiveness leads to effectiveness.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary*, New Revised Edition, Maryland: Amana Corporation.
- Adeyemo, Lateef Kayode (2002), "Women Liberation: Matters Arising", in *Nigerian Observer*, Friday, April 26, 2002 issue, Benin City: Bendel Newspaper Corporations .
- _____ (April 26, 2002), "Women Liberation: Matters Arising", in the *Nigerian Observer*, Benin City, Bendel Newspaper Corporation Ltd. P10.
- _____ (2006), "Islam: Its Meaning and Message" in Adeleke Fakoya et al (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of the Arts* vol. 7(1): 24-31, Lagos, Lagos State University Press.
- _____ (2006), "Islam: An Introductory Study", in Oyelade E.O. (ed.) *Readings in Philosophy and Religions*, Benin City: Tiredia publishing company for Department of Philosophy and Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin.
- Al-Atas, S. S. (ed.), (1996). *Islam and the Challenge of Modernity- Proceedings of the Inaugural Symposium on Islam and the Challenge of Modernity: Historical and Contemporary Contexts*, held in Kuala Lumpur between 1st and 5th August, 1994, Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC.
- Alan Greenspan (2008), *The Age of Turbulence-Adventure in a New World*, London: Penguin.
- Al-Balagh Foundation (1991), *Towards Peace*.
- Al-Nadwi, Abu Hassan (1980), *Pathway to Madina*, Luknow: Islamic Research Academy.
- Khalifah Abdul Hakim (1951), *Islamic ideology*, Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture.