DA'WAH IN SOUTH AFRICA: Its Link to Governance and Democracy

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Abstract: The present article constitutes an update on the findings of earlier researchers. Its strong point lies in its interrogation of issues by employing social science theories of power in addition to theories of religion at appropriate places.   In the process, triumphs and problems relating to *da'wah* are revealed. There is also the incongruity between the commitments demanded by Islam and the existential truth of Muslims. This applies particularly to governance and democracy issues. Despite shortcomings, *da'wah* continues apace. Possible solutions to these problems are presented at the end of this article.

Keywords: *Da'wah*, Governance, Democracy.

Introduction

The topic is scrutinised under the following headings: historical overview, consolidation of identity, high profile *da'wah* in South Africa, triumphs, problems and conclusion.

Historical Overview

The precise date for the advent of Islam in this country remains enigmatic. According to Moosa, recent studies indicate that its arrival from the north may have occurred as early as the fifteenth or sixteenth century[1] by which time Muslim Arab traders had reached Mozambique. For Mumisa, there exists proof that the Xhosas of the Cape in particular had contacts with Arabs long

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[1] Ebrahim Moosa, "Islam in South Africa" in J W De Gruchy and M Prozesky, eds., *Living Faiths in South Africa,* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 128.

before the arrival of the Malays mentioned in the next few paragraphs.[2] Doi cites Maylam in support of the argument that some Muslims had come to South Africa during the pre-colonial period: Proofs of this are some practices of the Lemba tribesmen living in the Limpopo province adjacent to Zimbabwe that closely resemble Muslim conduct[3]. Nevertheless, the early contact between Islam and southern African tribes did not make any significant impact on the latter.[4]

J. S. Mayson reports that there were a handful of Malays from Batavia who arrived at the Cape in 1652 with Jan van Riebeeck;[5] one of whom bore the name of Ahmad.[6] He was exiled to Cape Town by the Dutch East India Company[7] following his resistance to the Dutch occupation of the East Indies.

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[2] Michael Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi",*Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* vol 22, no. 2 (2002), p. 279. "Malay", despite its inaccuracy in this context, has been used to designate this community for the purpose of convenience as "CapeMuslim" also becomes problematic when referring to members of this community who have settled beyond that province.For a fuller account of the dispute regarding its usage, refer to G. Vahed and S. Jeppie, "Multiple communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", *State of the Nation: 2004-2005*, www.hsrcpress.ac.za, (2005), pp. 254-255. Accessed on 16 June 2007.

[3] Abdul Rahman I. Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", *Emory International Law Review,* vol. 14, no. 2 (2000), p. 1152.

[4] Muhammed Haron, *Islamic Culture among the Nguni (Xhosa & Zulu) People,*www.uga.edu/islam/islam_nguni.html, (n.d.), p. 3. Accessed on 16 June 2007.

[5] Ebrahim Mahida, "History of Muslims in South Africa: A Chronology", *South African History Organisation,* www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/onlinebooks/history-m..., (n.d.). Accessed 23 May 2011.

[6] Suleman Essop Dangor, *Shaykh Yusuf of Makasar,* (Durban: Iqra Publishers, 1994), p. 3.

[7] This was a chartered company established in Holland in 1602. According to the wide economic and political mandate it enjoyed from the government, it was able to use Dutch colonies for numerous objectives. It possessed a twenty-one year monopoly to conduct colonial activities in Asia and was given quasi-state powers including the ability to wage wars, imprison and execute convicts, negotiate treaties, coin money and establish colonies. For all these details consult: Clem Chambers, "Who needs stock exchanges?", *Exchanges Handbook,* www.mondiovisione.com/exchanges/hand.. (n.d.). Accessed 1 February 2008; Anon., "Slave Ship Mutiny: Secrets of the Dead", *PBS,* www.pbs.org/.../674, (11 November 2010). Accessed on 12 November 2010; and Glenn J. Ames, "The Globe Encompassed: The Age of European Discovery", in

He used his exile to consolidate the teaching of Islam among slaves in the territory, many of whom came from Muslim backgrounds in the Malay Archipelago and Bengal.[8]

Four years later the first free Muslims arrived from Amboyna[9], an Indonesian island in the southern Moluccas. They were brought to the Cape in order to defend the new colony against the indigenous people and also to provide labour in the same way that they had been employed at home, first by the Portuguese and later by the Dutch. They were prohibited from openly practising Islam according to the Statute of India drafted by Van Dieman in 1642.

The first high-profiled political exiles arrived in 1667, and included Shaikhs Abd al-Rahim Matahe Shah and Mahmud who were rulers over Sumatra. They were banished to the Cape because the Dutch considered them a threat to their economic and political hegemony.[10]

The early Muslim population comprised mainly slaves. According to Böeseken, as quoted by Bradlow and Cairns, 50% of them were from India, 30% from Africa and Madagascar, 15% from Indonesia and the remainder hailed from Ceylon, Malaysia[11], and Indo-China, Japan and identified lands.[12] There wer[13]e

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George Bryan Souza, ed., *European Expansion and Indigenous Response,* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 102-103.

[8] Anon., "Islam in South Africa", *Wikipedia*,en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Islam_in_South_Africa, (n.d.). Accessed on 16 June 2007.

[9] Its name is also spelt "Amboina". Its capital is Ambon. Refer to www.thefreedictionary.com/Amboina. Accessed on 26 January 2012.

[10] Mahida, "History of Muslims in South Africa", www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/onlinebooks/history-m..., (n.d.).

[11] The nation-state as we understand it today, whose formation dates back to 1963 with the joining together of the Malay Peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo.

[12] Frank R. Bradlow and Margaret Cairns. 1977. *The Early Cape Muslims: A Study of their mosques, geneology and origins.* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1978), p. 92. This impressive work occasionally relies on the pioneering findings obtained by A. J. Böeseken. *Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700.* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977).

[13]

also servants, refugees, non-political prisoners, voluntary migrants and political exiles.[14] To the latter category belonged religious figures mentioned below.

Such prominent personalities included Shaikh Yusuf (who arrived in1694 among the first cohesive Muslim community comprising twelve *imams* in the group), Rajah of Tambora (who arrived in 1697 and recorded the first *Qur'ān* from memory while in prison), Tuan Sa'id (who arrived in 1744 and, upon his release, became a policeman and used his status to enter locked and guarded slave quarters for preaching Islam) and Imam 'Abdullah ibn Qadi

'Abdus Salam.[15] The latter petitioned for the first mosque site; upon failure, he led public congregational prayers in defiance of the law. After his release in 1793, he established the first Muslim school at Dorp Street in Bo-Kaap which later became the first mosque (*Masjid al-Awwal*) to be used for congregational prayers.[16] The land had previously belonged to a freed woman slave, Saartjie van de Kaap.[17]

Islam was a popular religion among the slaves[18]: its tradition of teaching enabled literate slaves to gain better positions in their masters' households. At the same time, it taught its followers to treat their slaves respectfully.[19] Yet this

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[14] E. C. Mandivenga, "The Cape Muslims and the Indian Muslims of South Africa: A Comparative Analysis", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* vol.20, no. 2 (2000), p. 347.

[15] According to *South African History Online,* he was known as Tuan Guru. See www.sahistory.org.za/archive/1700-1799 (Accessed on 9 February 2012). I have not found any details suggesting that this personality had really used only this title although the authoritative work by Bradlow and Cairns, mentioned above, also refer to him by this appellation.   See Bradlow and Cairns, 1978, p. 14.

[16] Mandivenga, "The Cape Muslims and the Indian Muslims of South Africa"*,* pp. 38-43.

[17] Z. Cajee, *Islamic History and Civilisation in South Africa: The Impact of Colonialism, Apartheid & Democracy (1652-2004),* www.awqafsa.org.za, (n.d.), p. 10. Accessed on 16 June 2007.

[18] Bradlow and Cairns, 1977, p. 16.

[19] Anon., "Islam in South Africa", *Wikipedia,*p. 10.

banned religion had to be preached secretly and practiced privately[20] until 1804, when religious freedom was proclaimed.[21]

Up to the nineteenth century, conversion to Islam was a secular phenomenon rather than a religious one for Achmat Davids[22] and Robert Shell[23], which has to be understood within the context of slavery. They argue that slaves of all creeds were powerless, exploited, humiliated and dominated primarily through violence. Since the power structures were controlled by whites (that is people of European descent), these slaves endured secular excommunication that was often supported by religious exclusion.

But Orlando Patterson, in a more generic psycho-sociological study about slavery maintains that it is precisely on account of this degradation that slaves yearn for the reinstatement of their dignity. They feel deprived of their social value and dignity.[24]

Based on Patterson's argument, Mason maintains that Islam accorded to them a momentous alternative since they believed that by adopting this way of life they would move from the margins of settler society to the centre of the Muslim community.

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[20] Yusuf Da Costa and Achmat Davids, *Pages from Cape Muslim History,* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1994), pp. 20-21.

[21] Davids, *TheMosques of the Bo-Kaap,* p. 35. Achmat Davids, *TheMosques of the Bo-Kaap,* (Cape Town: The South African Institute for Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980), p. 32. This researcher also authored *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims,* published posthumously in 2011. See protea.bookslive.co.za/blog/2011/07/01discussion-about-achmat-davids-the-afrikaans-of-the-cape-muslims… (Accessed on 9 February 2012).

[22] Ibid, p. 32.

[23] He is extraordinary professor of Historical Demography at University of the Western Cape. One of his outstanding publications is entitled *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838.* Refer to newhistory.co.za/Robert-shell.2010 (Accessed on 9 February 2012).

[24] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Books, 1982), pp. 5 and 337. Where necessary, this author quotes examples mainly from American history. This point is also raised in his *Freedom, Vol. 1: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture,* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), pp. 21-22.

The religious leaders (or *shuyūkh)* helped in filling this spiritual vacuum for slaves and free blacks by attracting them to Islam and initiating them into their mystical fellowships. With the perpetuation of these brotherhoods (*ṭuruq)* there emerged several small, covert, isolated and secretive Muslim communities in the Cape during the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries that were structured around the practices of *ṣūfism.*

The second period of Cape Muslim history begins as early as the 1770s when there appeared signs of a shift to more overt kinds of organisation resulting from the Dutch government's increasing toleration of more open Islamic worship. At that time the government showed greater neutrality to regular prayers held in private homes. During the last decade of that century Muslims first held open-air Friday prayers, then established the first religious school (*madrasah)* and built the first mosque[25]. Such acts laid the institutional foundation for sustained growth and consolidation.

In this regard, Tuan Guru who was mentioned earlier played a prominent role after his release from prison. As a sound Islamic scholar, he composed *Ma'rifat al-Islām wa l-Imān* (Knowledge of Islam and Faith) which was a compilation containing a discourse in Islamic theology, supplications, Prophetic traditions [*aḥādīth]* and amulets, and inspired by Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (d. 795 A. H./1392 C. E.), a leading *mutakallim* (scholar of dialectical theology) and *ṣūfī* (mystic). According to Davids, it became the founding text of the Muslims because it created an ideological framework within which slaves and free blacks, many of whom were slave owners, could function harmoniously while retaining their respective stations in life. Tuan Guru was an exemplar of this phenomenon; while he was a slave owner, he offered slaves the possibility of upward social mobility in a peaceful environment without

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[25] Bradlow and Cairns, 1977, p. 19.

condemning the practice of slavery. Several imams were freedmen. Slaves were de facto only emancipated in 1838.

There were also reasons for the social progress of Muslims; many whites held Muslims in higher regard than other blacks, largely because of their sober habits and higher literacy levels. Simultaneously, Muslim rites of passage – commemorating inter alia birth, marriage and death – would certainly have attracted others whose progress through life remained unnoticed.

Another socially striking factor recorded by Bradlow and Cairns was the high regard for freedom evinced by Muslim slave owners themselves, who either freed their slaves gratuitously if they professed Islam or allowed them to purchase their ransom at a low price.[26]

From less than 1,000 adherents in 1800, the colony's Muslim community rocketed to 7,500 in 1842, with 6,500 of them in Cape Town alone. According to Shell, most of this growth resulted from conversion.[27]

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, there were also small numbers of Muslims in the eastern parts of the Cape such as Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.[28]

In sum, in the experience and conduct of converts to Islam at the Cape during early times, we observe all the dimensions of religion to varying degrees according to Glock and Stark's model which are:

- Ideological: beliefs that were expected to be accepted by the followers. For example, Tuan Guru's work stressed the importance of monotheism.

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[26]*Ibid,* p. 105.

[27] John Edwin Mason, "'Some Religion He Must Have': Slaves, Sufism and Conversion to Islam", *South Eastern Regional Seminar in African Studies (SERSAS),* (15-16 October 1999), www.ecu.edu/african/sersas/MasonSERSASF99.htm, pp. 2-11 (Accessed 23 May 2011).

[28] Bradlow and Cairns, 1977, p. 18.

- Ritualistic: religious rituals that were expected to be observed by the followers. For example, specific litanies were chanted during mystical fellowship gatherings.

- Experimental: emotions, feelings and imaginations for a relationship with the Divine Being. This was evident in the desire of at least some reverts for communion with Allah.

- Intellectual: fundamental information and knowledge about religious beliefs and the holy books expected to be recognised by the followers. This point ties up with the ideological dimension explained earlier.

- Consequential: the results of religious beliefs, practices, experiences, and knowledge in the believers' daily life and their relations with others.[29] This point has been underlined when evaluating social experiences of Muslims.

From another angle, we may argue that this entire phase provides testimony to the social value of religion according to Durkheim for creating group cohesion among the downtrodden members of society and building spiritual fellowships.[30] The views of Davids, Shell and Patterson have already been delineated for this purpose. At the same time, the educational value of religion was amplified by the slaves' desire to attain literacy for enhancing their social status.

The great popularity of mystical practices among early Muslims of the Cape points to fulfilment of the substantive and psychological functions of religion among them.

With regard to religion's substantive function, Eliade has found that the daily life of an individual is linked to the sacred by the appearance of the sacred realm

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[29] S. Z. Hashemi and M. R. J. Yeganeh, "A Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Modern Modes of Religious Preaching", *Asian Journal of Social Science,* vol. 37, (2009), p. 277.

[30] Seth D. Junin, *Religion: the modern theories,* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2003), pp. 20-21.

called hierophany.   Moreover, people have a constant longing for an otherworldly perfection.[31]

Imam 'Abdullah Ibn Qadi 'Abdus Salam represents a fascinating mix of authority types defined by Max Weber[32]; while he was a traditional scholar (having been inspired by

Ash'arite thinking), he was also charismatic to the extent that his book's healing powers attracted outsiders to the fold of Islam, and legal-rational as observed in his theological discourses. Besides, the ideological framework that he presented found acceptance among slaves and their masters alike, which was a commendable feat.

Externally, another problem lurked large at that time: the heavy setback suffered by the Dutch in the East Indies in about 1700 seriously undermined effective contact between the local Malays and their counterparts in the larger Indonesian Archipelago, causing the gradual disappearance of teachers of Islamic traditions from their midst. The situation assumed critical proportions by 1850 when the tide began turning. Having lost intellectual and religious contact with the East Indies, new generations of Muslims formed contacts with the heartland of Islam, namely Makkah. This move was enhanced by the opening of the Suez Canal. By the 1870s community members studied Arabic and Islamic Studies in Makkah and returned to the Cape, invigorated.[33]

To this day, the majority of them follow the *Shāfi'ī* legal school. Moreover, they observe numerous cultural practices including the Prophet's birthday, the recitation of specific spiritual hymns on auspicious occasions, the

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[31] Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (U.S.A.: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 177, 180.

[32] Dana Williams, "Max Weber: Traditional, Legal-Rational and Charismatic Authority" at danawilliams2.tripod.com/authority.html (Accessed 11 February 2012).

[33] Mandivenga, "The Cape Muslims and the Indian Muslims of South Africa"*,* pp. 347-348.

caliphate display[34] and the ceremony commemorating a child's mastery of *Qur'ānic* recitation.[35]

Meanwhile, the first Muslims came to Natal from South India in 1860 as indentured labourers to work on the sugar plantations. Among this group was probably the legendary Badsha Peer from Madras who taught the essentials of Islam to the labourers.[36] The Indians, most of whom were Hindus, were imported since they provided the cheapest and highly reliable labour at a time when the Zulus were unwilling to work for long periods.[37] When their contracts expired after three to four years, they became free residents of the territory.

Beginning in 1869, a second wave of Indians entered South Africa as passenger migrants who were either merchants or their employees. They mainly came from Gujarat, Maharashtra or Uttar Pradesh and settled in different parts of Natal, Transvaal and the Cape. Islam flourished among this group most; thus they formed the core of the nascent Muslim community.[38]

One of the conditions upon which these traders arrived in Port Natal was that there would be no state interference in their religion. This explains the swift growth of mosques and religious schools (called *madrasas)* wherever they settled.[39]

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[34] Ceremonies during which participants pierce their bodies with lethal objects like swords and knives. The objectives are to demonstrate the power of Allah in protecting their bodies against any bodily harm and to prove the superiority of the sacred realm of Islam over all mundane realms. During the early times under review, the mundane realm translated into slavery, colonialism and white supremacy. Refer to Mason, *ibid.*

[35] A. T. Baker, *Exploring the Foundations of an Islamic Identity in a Global Context: A Study of the Nature and Origins of Cape Muslim Identity.* Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal (unpublished masters' dissertation submitted in the School of Religion and Culture), (2006), pp. 45-84.

[36] Cajee, *Islamic History and Civilisation in South Africa,* p. 8.

[37] Mandivenga, "The Cape Muslims and the Indian Muslims of South Africa"*,* p. 349.

[38] Mandivenga, "The Cape Muslims and the Indian Muslims of South Africa"*,* p. 349.

[39] Cajee, *Islamic History and Civilisation in South Africa,* p. 7.

Tayob contends that Muslims who established mosques, particularly in the hinterland province of Transvaal, did so by devising strategies and expounding a peculiar political ethic. The mosque committees became the most powerful brokers between the state and the Muslim communities. They often accommodated and complied with state legislation to extract concessions from political authorities or find loopholes therein to circumvent discrimination against Indian ownership of property.[40] This situation rendered members of those committees, who belonged to the trading class, extremely powerful.[41]

As regards preachers, special mention has to be made of the traditional and charismatic Goolam Mohammad Soofie, commonly known as Soofie Saheb, who arrived from Ratnagiri in 1895. According to oral tradition, he established the shrine of Badsha Peer in central Durban as well as a mosque, orphanage and spiritual retreat (*khānqāh*) at Riverside. Over the next fifteen years he replicated such structures elsewhere in Natal, Cape Town and Lesotho. These formed the core venues for establishing a distinct, popular Islamic identity within the disparate working-class Muslim population which promoted practices like visitation of saints' tombs and faith in their intercessionary roles, and celebration of the birthdays of the Prophet and other saints.[42] Muslims of Indian origin mainly follow the legal school of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah.

The first African Muslims to arrive in this country were the "Zanzibaris", so called because they were rerouted from Zanzibar to Natal.

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[40]It has to be remembered that racial discrimination was practised by all governments, regardless of whether they were Dutch (in the Cape), Boer (in the Transvaal) British (in Natal and later over the Union of South Africa up to 1961) or white Nationalists (between 1961 and 1994). So, legislation against Indian acquisition of property affected Muslims in Natal and Transvaal because they constituted the backbone of the Muslim communities.

[41] Abdulkader Tayob, *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams, and Sermons,* (Gainesville, Tallahassee & Tampa: University of Florida Press, 1999), pp. 62-64.

[42] G. Vahed, "Contesting 'Orthodoxy': The Tablighi-Sunni Conflict among South African Muslims in the 1970s and 1980s", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* vol.23, no. 2, (2003), p. 314.

They were formerly slaves, who were brought to Natal between 1873 and 1880 to alleviate the labour shortage. They came from northern Mozambique, Tanzania, Comoros, Zanzibar, Malawi and possibly Somalia. Upon expiry of their indenture period, they settled in and around Durban in places like the Bluff, Berea, Umgeni, Verulam and Pinetown. The Indian Muslims in those areas welcomed them, prayed with them and took keen interest in their settling down. At Kings Rest the community built a mosque with the help of the Indian Muslims who had already settled in Durban. They could easily assimilate with the South African blacks and some of them even married them. Such spouses invariably adopted Islam.[43] They observe the legal school of Imām Shāfi'ī and cultural practices like the Prophet's birthday.

Gradually, some indigenous people (such as the Africans, Coloureds, Whites and others) have also embraced Islam over time. This matter will be amplified later.

From the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century, migrants from various countries of Africa (like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Somalia and Ethiopia), the Middle East (like Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Iran, Turkey and Yemen), South Asia and Eastern Europe (like some countries of the former Soviet Union) have settled here, giving the Muslim community a cosmopolitan spirit.

An estimate of current census figures indicates that Muslim population stands at around 750,000 which constitutes 1.5% of the total population of 49 million. While Indians and Malays constitute the bulk of this figure, Africans constitute the fastest growing segment, having increased by 52.3% since 1991 when they numbered 11,986. In 2004 they comprised 11.42% of the Muslim

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[43] Vahed, "Contesting 'Orthodoxy',p. 8; Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi*",* p. 280.

population with a total of 74,700 adherents.[44] Class differences are due to discrepancies in education levels, unemployment and income levels of the employed. Work status is determined by levels of education. Language is another marker of differentiation. All these details confirm the diverse nature of South African Muslim society.

Consolidation of identity

This aspect has indirectly contributed to *da'wah*. The focal points of enquiry are Muslims in terms of how they have maintained or (re)invigorated their pre-existing identities. In this context, *da'wah* has to be perceived as an adjunct to cardinal endeavours whose favourable results would constitute a bonus. In other words, *da'wah* per se is not the primary objective where, for instance, non-Muslims are influenced by media that primarily target Muslim readers, viewers or listeners and they eventually embrace Islam. Viewed differently, *da'wah* in this framework is of low intensity and is predominantly targeted at 'lapsed' Muslims.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the Muslims began developing their own institutions, mosques, religious and secular schools together with a host of cultural, educational and welfare bodies.[45] Recently, they have also embarked on media productions. A brief summary of the kinds of organisations is first given below and then further details on some of them are provided.

According to Dangor, the South African Muslim community is well organised, having established social welfare, relief, *da'wah,* and cultural

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[44] Anon., 15 November 2004, "Muslims say their faith growing fast in Africa". *Religion   News   Blog,*   at www.religionnewsblog.com/9398/muslims_say_their_faith_growing_fast_in_africa (Accessed 8 November 2014); and *South African Demographics Profile 2014*, at www.indexmundi.com/south_africa/demographics_profile.html (Accessed on 8 November 2014).

[45] Cajee, *Islamic History and Civilisation in South Africa,* p. 9.

organisations. Muslim professionals have also formed professional bodies, like the Islamic Medical Association (1980) and the Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers (1984). Many broad based bodies also undertake *da'wah.*[46]

Additional details appear below:

Mosques

As mentioned earlier, *Masjid al-Awwal* was the first mosque built in the Cape. Its counterparts in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng are the *Jumma Masjid* (established in 1881 in Durban), *Kerk Street Masjid* (built in 1888 in Johannesburg)[47] and *Queen Street Masjid* (built in Pretoria in 1887).[48] Presently, almost every town, city or village inhabited by Muslims has a fully-fledged mosque *(masjid)* or a little prayer structure *(jamā'at khānah).* Their number is approximately 739.[49]

Educational institutions

They were established by Muslim merchants for both mundane and profane objectives. Presently, there are more than forty Muslim secondary schools privately run by Muslims, along with scores of *madrasahs* which indirectly help the cause of *da'wah*[50].

Religious schools have been constantly found in most areas inhabited by Muslims. Although they have become more organized over time by teaching

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[46] Suleman Essop Dangor, "The Muslim Community of South Africa", *Al-'Ilm, Journal of the Centre for Research in Islamic Studies,* vol. 11, (Durban: University of Durban-Westville, Jan. 1991), p. 71.

[47] Abdel Salam Jad Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fi Janūb Afrīqīya ,* (unpublished doctoral thesis), (Pretoria: Unisa, 2005),p. 104.

[48] Cajee, *Islamic History and Civilisation in South Africa,* p. 10.

[49] *Radio   Islam,* www.radioislam.co.za/salaah%20times/masaajid%20coordinates.htm   (Accessed   31 May 2011).

[50] Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", p. 1166. Their number now exceeds seventy (see footnote 46).

standard syllabi, they aim to, in Vahed's words "…instil Islamic practices and rituals rather than foster independent and critical thinking".[51]

Nonetheless, their doors have been flung open to Coloured and African Muslim children from the outset "as Muslims believed that Islam should be spread among the Africans, and the *madrassah* (sic.) and schools were the best means of *da'wah* activities".[52]

Since earlier times, elementary religious schools have been combined with secular schools, with both of them operating at the same venue but at different times of the day. Examples of these are the Waterval Islamic Institute outside Johannesburg (established by the Mia family in 1935 and where free hostel accommodation was also provided),[53] the AhmediaStateAidedSchool and the SouthCoastMadrasahStateAidedSchool (established in 1947), AnjumanIslamStateAidedSchool (established in 1953) and Orient Islamic School (established in 1960). Apart from the first mentioned, all the other schools are found in Durban.

Lately, there has been a growth of Muslim private schools (with their number having reached more than seventy by early 2003)[54] where students are largely Muslim while the curriculum is mainly secular with a small number of courses in Islam. They have emerged as a gender counterrevolution to practices promoted by the state and broad society in which, involved parties believe, the necessary Islamic moral values can be instilled.[55] The teaching of several subjects at secular schools like sex education and AIDS are disapproved. Many also

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[51] G. Vahed,. "Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* vol.20, no. 1, (2000), p. 60.

[52] Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi*",* p. 294.

[53] Cajee, *Islamic History and Civilisation in South Africa,* p. 9.

[54] *Al-Qalam* (Muslim newspaper), "Islamic Schools in South Africa". www.iberr.org/southafrica.htm (January 2003). (Accessed on 18 June 2007).

[55] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa",p. 271.

contend that social problems like gangsterism, drugs and pornography result in moral decline for which they mainly blame non-Muslims.[56]

As a result of this initiative, Suraya Hassim, chairperson for the Islamic Relief Fund, declares that many African women with children attending such schools are converting to Islam.[57]

Finally, religious seminaries have been established over the final quarter of the twentieth century. They include: Darul Uloom Newcastle (1973), Darul Uloom Azaadville (1981); Darul Uloom Aleemia Razvia in Durban (1983); Darul Uloom Zakariyya (1984); Darul Uloom Pretoria (1993),Islamic College of South Africa (now known as Islamic Peace College of South Africa) (1990)[58], Darun-Naim Institute of Higher Islamic Learning (2002), Institute of Islamic Sharia Studies (1972), Markazul Quraan was Sunnah (1990), Qaasimul Uloom (1986) [all of which are based in Cape Town] and Jameah Mahmoodiyah (1992) in Springs.[59]

Most of the institutions situated in the eastern parts of South Africa are rooted in the tradition of their inspirational source*,* the Darul Uloom at Deoband in India. The clerical religious body in KwaZulu-Natal explains the importance of these establishments as follows:

"One of the main Role (sic.) and object (sic.) of the Darul Uloom is to provide, the muslims with a direct access to the original sources of Islamic Learning, produce learned men with missionary zeal to work among the muslim masses in particular, to create a truly religious awakening towards classical Islam, ridding the prevailing innovations and unorthodox practices, observations and belief

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[56]*Al-Qalam*, "Islamic Schools in South Africa".

[57] Suraya Hassim, "Reasons for conversions to Islam among people". (Interview conducted telephonically on 17 April 2007).

[58] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fī Janūb Afrīqīya,* pp. 117-120.

[59] Anon., "Islamic Colleges and Universities in South Africa", www.muslim.co.za/education/colleges_universities, (Accessed 9 February 2012).

that have crept into the Ummah (community-YD) and to impart instruction in classical religion.

The Darul Ulooms (sic.) role is, as has always been the propagation of the Quran and the Sunnah (Prophetic practice-YD), the endeavour to keep the faith in its original form and to preserve the tenets of Islam along with safeguarding the community from religious heresy.

Throughout the corridor of Islamic History the Darul Uloom played a vital role in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and the preservation of the Deen". (Islamic practice?)[60]

These criteria are valid for all traditional seminaries, regardless of their affiliation.

The following can be deduced from this statement:

- The focus lies on reforming the Muslim community rather than disseminating its message among others; and

- Replication of classical models rather than production of new ones through enhancing research capacity are underlined.

Fortunately, some of the organisations undertaking *da'wah* are offering more holistic education and skills development programmes. Some examples are tabularized below:

Name of Organisation	Year of Establishment	Geographical Area/s covered	Knowledge and skills imparted
Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre	1992	13 centres, focusing mainly	Adult religious classes, sewing

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[60] Anon., "The Role of Darul Ulooms".*Jamiatul Ulama of KwaZulu-Natal*, www.jamiat.org.za/duloom.html (Accessed on 18 June 2007).

		in the Johannesburg metropolis, Mpumalanga and North-West Province	classes, computer literacy and construction work.[61]
Naqshbandi Tariqah	1990	Environs of Cape Town	Adult religious classes, sewing and wood-work classes.[62]
Discover Islam Centre	2005	Environs of Cape Town	Adult religious classes in scriptures, family values and Islamic law. Multi-faceted

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[61] Anon, "Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre", www.altawheed.org.za (Accessed 10 February 2012).

[62] Mogammad. "Naqshbandi Tariqah", (11 October 2010). www.naqshbandi.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view_article&id=97:activitie s&catid=52:western-cape (Accessed 10 February 2012).

			skills development.[63]
Islamic Da'wah Movement	1977	17 centres in 6 provinces, focusing mainly in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape	Islamic law, da'wah, leadership and management, socio-political and finance/economic issues.[64]

Media and Literary Activities

The *Qur'ān* has been translated into Zulu under the supervision of Maulana Cassim Sema of Newcastle. It has also been translated into Afrikaans by Imam M A Baker of Cape Town. Some portion of it has been rendered into Xhosa. Abdul Rasul Osman has translated a tract called *Teachings of Islam* into Tswana. The Africa Muslims Agency has prepared and translated a number of rudimentary Islamic texts into Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho and Tswana.[65]

The following publications circulate either regionally or nationally: Newspapers include *Al-Qalam, Muslim Views, Ar-Rasheed, Al-Miftaah, Al-Balaagh, The Shari'ah, Majlis* and *Al-Irfaan.*Journalsinclude*Al-Huda, Muslim Woman, An-*

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[63] Auwais Rafudeen. "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre", (4 November 2010).

[64] Anon. www.idm.co.za (2011). (Accessed 14 Feb 2012).

[65] Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi*",* p. 395.

Nisaa', Al-Misbaah and *Awake.*Besides this, several booklets and pamphlets on specific topics are distributed.

The following radio stations beam broadcasts: *Radio Islam* (Lenasia)*, Channel Islam International* (Lenasia)*, Voice* (Johannesburg, now defunct), *786* and *Voice of the Cape* (Cape Town)*, Radio 1548* (Laudium)and *Radio Al-Ansaar* (Durban).

A single channel, *ITV,* transmits television programmes from Pretoria.[66]

During the post-9/11 period, some non-Muslims showed interest in obtaining insider's views on topics like Islam's attitude to violence. After reflecting on them, some of them embraced Islam.[67]

The dominant theme is the permanent problems confronting Muslims which are both of their own as well as of the defiled un-Islamic environment's making. The latter is often displayed in paranoia for everything alien.[68]

We conclude this section with the following remarks of Vahed and Jeppie: "The 'new' Muslim media is controlled by hegemonic groups among Muslims, usually conservative and monied, who are playing a key role in implanting a common perspective consistent with their normative outlook".[69]

Growth of religious movements

Indeed, during the last three decades of the 20th century the *Tablīgh Jamā'ah* has emerged as a global entity for spiritual reformation. It concentrates largely on the Muslim community. Preachers, sometimes even from foreign lands, discharge their mission from door to door by encouraging fellow believers to observe the fundamentals of their faith. They interpret religious injunctions very literally and use mosques as bases for their endeavours. Their

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[66] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fī Janūb Afrīqīya ,* p. 145.

[67] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fī Janūb Afrīqīya,* p. 144.

[68] Vahed, "Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities", (2000), pp. 60, 63.

[69] Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa",p. 270.

scope of activity and preaching is restricted to six issues only.[70] Huge religious conventions are held at strategic places from which recruited preachers are sent to various regions, both local and international. Converts also join them in growing numbers. Some of them send their children to local seminaries where on graduation they spend a year executing the tasks mentioned before taking up a profession.[71]

Alongside these late twentieth century developments, there has also been the mushrooming of spiritual groups in South Africa's major cities. This development, to some degree, resulted in competition for spiritual space with the *Tabligh Jamā'ah*. And as far as could be ascertained, these groups have been pretty successful in gaining support from individuals who come from all walks of life. The primary cause for resorting to mysticism is the eradication of harmful ethical traits like greed, materialism, pride, unbridled passion and dishonesty under the guidance of a spiritual mentor. Members are obliged to attend sessions where mystical chants are performed and advices on self-reformation are given. Traditional religious values that are stressed include self-sacrifice, frugality, contentment, peace and forgiveness.[72]

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[70] They are: Believing in the oneness of Allah, offering the five daily prayers, gaining knowledge and remembering Allah, honouring every Muslim, having sincere intentions and sparing time to disseminate this mission. See Anon. "The Tablighi Jamaat Movement", (n.d.). www.inter-islam.org/Miscellaneous/jamaat.htm (Accessed on 14 February 2012). Refer also to Council of Ulamaa Eastern Cape. "Tabligh to Muslims".
www.councilofulamaa.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=713:tabligh-to-muslims&catid=34:islam&Itemid=61 (Accessed on 16 February 2012).

[71]Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi*",* pp. 289-290; Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", (2000), p. 1177. For a fuller discussion on the *Tabligh Jamā'ah* and spiritual movements, refer to Haron, M. "The Dawah Movements and Sufi Tariqat: Competing for spiritual spaces in contemporary South(ern) Africa".www.uga.edu/islam/dawah_tariqat_sa.html(Accessed 20 June 2007).

[72] Vahed, "Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities", (2000),pp. 57-58; Vahed and Jeppie, "Multiple communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", (2005), pp. 267-268. See Ahmet Akgunduz for a short list of "Norms and Values in Islam" (n.d.) at islam.uga.ed/norms_values.html (Accessed on 14 February 2012).

This trend has also led to a number of leading mystical guides regarding South Africa a convenient place to station themselves. Prominent personalities such as Shaikh Abu Bakr Siraj ud-Din (Martin Lings), Shaikh Abdul-Qadir As-Sufi ad-Darqawi (Ian Dallas who heads the Murabitun*, a group of predominantly converts to Islam in various parts of the world), Shaikh Fadhlalla Haeri (a *Shī'ite)* and a few others have either made South Africa one of their regular stop-overs or have established flourishing branches here. For example, Shaikh Haeri made South Africa his permanent home in an outlying town known as White River. He leads the *Ja'farīyah-Shādhilīyah* order with some locals playing prominent roles in the order. Despite these relocations, contact has been maintained with their followers and supporters via cyberspace connections. Websites for many of these orders have been designed and this has drawn a new clientele and also added to the growing numbers of adherents.[73]

As stated earlier, these religious movements primarily attempt to spiritually and morally rejuvenate lapsed Muslims. Exceptions to some degree have been the "Murabitun" about whom we will say more under point 3.3 below.

Adoption of piety symbols and practices

Especially in post-apartheid South Africa, piety norms are actively and consciously demonstrated in an attempt to counter social evils. They include wearing of the veil by women, consumption of food and beverages that comply with Islamic law (thereby making them lawful [*ḥalāl*] according to bodies like the South African National Halaal Authority, Muslim Judicial Council and Islamic Council of South Africa), performing multiple pilgrimages to Makkah,

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[73] M. Haron, "The Dawah Movements and Sufi Tariqat: Competing for spiritual spaces in contemporary South(ern) Africa", p. 11. See also, www.yanabi.com and www.answers.com for details on Haeri, and the latter site for details on ad-Darqawi. (Accessed on 21 June 2007). For ad-Darqawi, also see A. Godlas, "Sufism Sufis, and Sufi Orders: Sufism's Many Paths", www.uga.edu/islam/sufismorders.html#Shadhili (Accessed on 26 June 2007).

eliminating what are considered to be harmful instruments of technology like television from homes (which are guilty of undermining viewers' morals through screening of objectionable programmes), promoting early marriage to eradicate pre-marital sex, supporting Islamic financing and banking, advocating Muslim Personal Law, attending Muslim schools and turning to self-reformation activities.[74]

In all the cases mentioned above, the primary objective of relevant individuals and institutions is to principally ensure that the true message of Islam as understood by them is either conveyed to or implemented by other Muslims. Communicating this message to non-Muslims appears to enjoy secondary importance.

This reflection displays a serious ethical problem relating to *da'wah*. Referring to religion generically, Martin Prozesky enunciates: "Proselytization becomes ethically unacceptable when it violates the core values of truthfulness, fairness, equality of treatment, respectfulness toward others, and universality of concern, … whether or not these values are recognized and centralized by particular religions".[75]

Da'wah in its high-profile sense will be scrutinized next.

High-profile *da'wah* in South Africa[76]

Islam during colonial and apartheid times enjoyed diminished status as compared to Christianity. In such circumstances, its capacity to be openly

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[74] Haron, "The Dawah Movements and Sufi Tariqat", pp. 49-58. See also, Vahed, and Jeppie, "Multiple communities: Muslims in post-apartheid South Africa", (2005),pp. 267-275 (with adaptations).

[75] Martin Prozesky, "Principles, Practices, and National Constitution", *Emory International Law Review,* vol. 14, no. 2, (2000), p. 865.

[76] The crux of points raised under 3.1-3.3 has been covered by the Israeli based body called PRISM. Its aim is to identify Islamic extremism globally. Nevertheless, it contains a sound synopsis of our appraisal. The document may be consulted at www.e-prism.org/images/Islam_in_Africa_Newsletter_No3_-_July06.pdf (Accessed on 16 February 2012).

propagated was seriously impaired. Despite this drawback, local Muslim reflections on *da'wah*took the form of the following types of writings: historical and or analytical accounts of the spread of Islam in parts of South Africa or in the country as a whole; polemic rebuttals of Christian evangelists; and religious pluralism that was at times combined with a search for socio-political justice against legislated discrimination.[77]

As evident from our appraisal above, there were no formal bodies prioritizing the propagation of Islam among non-Muslims up to the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. Therefore examining governance issues in this sector up to then is irrelevant.

The situation has changed radically over the past twenty years with at least a hundred bodies claiming to be engaged in *da'wah*activities.[78]

The spotlight now falls on organisations that have prioritized the propagation of Islam to non-Muslims over the past fifty years. As a prelude to this topic, two representatives with different approaches to *da'wah* have been selected for analysis.

Major individuals and organizations

Imam Abdullah Haron of Claremont Muslim Youth Association

He was born on 23 February 1923 in Newlands-Claremont, Cape Town. Among his tutors were the Azhar-trained Shaikh Ismail Ganief Edwards (d. 1958) and Shaikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Alawī al-Mālikī of Makkah (d. 1986).[79]

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[77] M Haron, *Muslims in South Africa* (Cape Town: South African Library, 1997), pp. 55-65.

[78] R. Hassen, "Dawah Organizations in South Africa", (2007). (Information given by e-mail on 8 June). But according to the South African Muslim Directory & Guide, their total is only 37 (Refer to www.islam4u.co.za/organisationsdawah.html), (Accessed 9 June 2011). The discrepancy could be ascribed to how local Muslim organizations interpret their core activities with many of them combining social and relief work with part-time *da'wah*.

He served as leader of the congregation at Al-Jamia Mosque, Claremont from 1955 until his death in 1969. During that period he founded the Claremont Muslim Youth Association and its mouthpiece the *Islamic Mirror,* conducted religious classes for adults and children, encouraged women's participation in all Muslim activities, created a forum where people from diverse backgrounds and faiths met to discuss issues, and assisted members of his community regardless of religious affiliation morally and financially. He offered all these services free of charge.

After his family business closed down, he was employed as a sales representative by a candy producing company based in the U. K. This afforded him the desired mobility in terms of entering Black townships to conduct *da'wah* during the height of apartheid, when racial segregation meant that people from a particular racial group could only visit members of other racial groups after having received a permit to do so.

He won immense respect among Xhosa speaking people. On account of his warmth and humility, they affectionately called him *mfundisi* (priest). Many community members had some of their members imprisoned by the state in the 1960s for socio-political activities. Haron deemed it his duty to support such people in various ways to alleviate their plight. He worked closely with the Pan-Africanist Congress, which was the driving force in those areas against racist rule. Through this intimate networking, he spread Islam among the community members.

After having been under surveillance for about two years, he was arrested under the Terrorism Act which permitted the state to imprison a captive for up to 180 days. Throughout this period, he fasted. He was killed by

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[79] M. Haron. "The Martyr of Justice". *The Muslim Weekly,* vol. 3.0.1 (2010). www.themuslimweekly.com/Detail/View.aspx?NEWSID=TWOOO12955 (Accessed on 10 February 2012).

the security police on 27 September 1969, who alleged that he had fallen down a flight of stairs.[80]

Imam Haron used social work as an avenue to propagate Islam among downtrodden people. Moreover, his contact with people of various faiths indicates his ecumenical spirit.

Shaikh Ahmed Deedat of Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI)

Deedat's approach differed completely with that of Haron. Born on 1 July 1918 in the Surat district of India, he arrived in South Africa in 1927. Although he had no prior knowledge of English, he familiarized himself with it in six months and achieved impressive results at primary school. His secondary schooling career was terminated due to financial problems that beset his father. He was thus sent to work in a store in a rural area.

Students from a nearby Christian missionary school would visit the store and engage Deedat in religious discussion and debate. He found their approach abrasive. Fortunately, he found a book on comparative religion entitled *Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq* by the Indian scholar, Raḥmat Allah ibn Khalīl al-ʿUthmānī al-Kīrānawī which he read avidly to prepare himself for the challenge that lay before him.

He then began researching religions in greater depth and recording his information, after which he began delivering public lectures from 1940 onwards.

The Islamic Propagation Centre came into existence as a result of his lectures to the Arabic Study Circle in Durban during 1956. He had realized the need for individuals to be knowledgeable about Christian missionary work conducted by the Anglican diocese and the DutchReformChurch amongst Muslims in various parts of the country. It was then that he and his bosom

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[80] M. Haron, "Imam Abdullah Haron: The Martyr of Justice", www.islamonline.net (File prepared on 5 June 2006 and accessed on 20 June 2007).

friend, Ghulam Hussein Vanker, set up the foundations of this organization in March 1957.

From 1957 until 1980 Deedat and his support group confined their teachings to the Southern African region. Whenever he held public debates the halls were packed. Muslim crowds were generally attracted to his harsh method of debate, arguing that it was necessary to counteract the hostile approach of Christian missionaries. However, there were those who argued that his approach differed from the dignified model prescribed by scripture.

Deedat was determined to train people in *da'wah* so that they could spread Islam in African townships. For this purpose, he established 'As-Salam' in Braemar south of Durban. He moved with his family to that area where he worked unceasingly to build a mosque, dam, two houses, and dormitory for twenty-five students. The experiment failed due to lack of financial resources.[81]

During the 1980s after his disparagement of Hindu beliefs, he was verbally attacked from numerous quarters. Despite the criticisms, he soldiered on relentlessly. He grew immensely popular in Nigeria and some of the Arab states where many of his writings were translated into Arabic.

In 1986, he visited Saudi Arabia for a conference, and enthralled the Arab world in the first interview with his dynamic personality and profound knowledge of comparative religion.
Then followed visits to the United Kingdom, Morocco, Kenya, Sweden, Australia and Denmark for *da'wah*.

In the United States, his debate with Reverend Jimmy Swaggart on "Is the Bible the Word of God?" was witnessed by 8,000 people which boosted his prominence.

An interesting outcome of his Malaysian tour in the early 1990s was that he was prohibited from speaking in public or debating openly with counterparts

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[81] G. Vahed. "Ahmed Hoosen Deedat (1918-2005)". *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* issue 8 (2005), p. 82.

in that country. By then his organization had been renamed Islamic Propagation Centre International.

He suffered a stroke in 1996 which left him paralyzed from the neck down and unable to speak or swallow. He was flown to a hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where he was taught to communicate through a series of eye movements. He remained bed-ridden for the last nine years before succumbing to his illness.[82]

Deedat has left behind numerous booklets, many of which have been translated into different languages. However, his video material proved more popular since it gave viewers a close-up view of the *da'wah* worker in action. For his efforts, he received abundant financial backing from people in the oil-rich Arab countries.[83] Mention should be made of the fact that Mr. Vanker, who had resigned in 1982 because of ill health, was the other active member of IPC during the 1960s through to the 1980s. His style was markedly different from Deedat's and he was viewed as a sober and intelligent debater; someone who wisely responded to issues pertaining to Christianity and other religious traditions.

He used multimedia most effectively for stepping up da'wah efforts to share the Islamic faith with as many 'reverts' as possible, and to democratize Islam in two respects: first, by reaching out to a broader range of population groups – and black Africans in particular – as potential 'reverts'; and second by spreading the word through argument and reference to the texts of the Book themselves.[84]

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[82]Haron. "The Dawah Movements and Sufi Tariqat",pp. 6-7. Also, F. Asmal, "Muslims mourn late Sheikh Deedat", www.islamonline.net (Report dated 8 August 2005 and accessed on 20 June 2007).

[83] G. Vahed. "Ahmed Hoosen Deedat (1918-2005)", p. 83.

[84] Preben Kaarsholm. "Transnational Islam and public sphere dynamics in KwaZulu-Natal: rethinking South Africa's place in the Indian Ocean World". Lecture presented to the History and African Studies Seminar in the McIntyre Library, 16 February   2011.

Turning to Deedat and IPCI's attitude to interfaith dialogue, which adequately mirrors the conduct of most Islamic missionary bodies at that time, Haron finds them "guilty of not satisfactorily engaging in any form of serious inter-religious cooperation and dialogue; an activity that was sorely needed because the socio-political and religious landscape compared to the earlier decades had readily changed. In the light of these changes, the question that arises at this juncture is: should da'wah be treated as a form of 'dialogue' or regarded merely as a 'mission'? Deedat chose the latter rather than the former because Christian missionaries during his period were not there to initiate or engage in dialogue but to proselytise; they were there on a mission to save souls for Christ and thus intent on converting the 'lost' Muslim soul to become a Christian. For Deedat, this was the perpetual challenge that needed to be dealt with in a firm and uncompromising manner. Since Deedat remained stubbornly devouted to the exclusivist approach, it was unlikely that he would ever have rendered his support for inter-religious dialogue even though the 1980s was vastly different from the 1950s when he began his vocation as a Muslim missionary. In this regard when anti-apartheid religious groups such as the Kairos document signatories and the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (est.1970) (that formed part of the South African Chaptre of the World Council of Religion for Peace [WCRP]) aligned themselves with the liberation movements and promoted inter-religious cooperation against the apartheid state Deedat's name did not feature among list of members in the late 1980s. The WCRP's religious pluralist approach was something 'foreign' to Deedat who was understandably still obsessed with his exclusivist approach in spite of having encountered a socially politically and religiously transformed terrain".[85]

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findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3103/is_1_81/ai_n57341802/p9_12/?tag=content;coll1 (Accessed on 10 February 2012).

[85] M. Haron, "Ahmad Deedat -The Making of a Transnational Religious Figure: A Review Essay", pp. 17-18.

Successors to Deedat have maintained the legacy of *da'wah* but have adopted a conciliatory approach to other faith adherents. Its operations are global: it sends printed and audiovisual material to all parts of the world and maintains communication with interested person via internet.[86]

Others

Other role-players include:

Mohammed Laher formed the Islamic Missionary Society in Johannesburg during 1958 and focused greatly on Africans. With his supporters, he set up simple Islamic centres to serve the needs of the impoverished communities in the African townships. This also caused him to initiate schemes and self-help projects to empower the communities.

These types of projects also became part of the programme of the Islamic Da'wah Movement of Southern Africa (IDMSA), which was formed in Kwa-Zulu Natal during 1977. It began as a constituent of the Muslim Youth Movement in 1974.[87] It had humble beginnings in an Islamic centre located in one of the townships outside Durban, namely Umlaas Marianhill Islamic Centre. Medical doctors like Ebrahim Dada, Yusuf Osman, and Faizal Ahmad as well as the stalwart of Islamic *da'wah*, Yusuf Mohammedy started this body.

However, when the Africa Muslims Agency (AMA) came onto the South African scene, some of its members joined it to pursue *da'wah* in the region.

Presently they are located in all the major cities of South Africa. Close contact with bodies in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi. They employ thirty-one full-time preachers among whom a fair number speak

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[86] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fi Janūb Afrīqīya*, p. 181. A fuller discussion on Deedat's legacy is found in the articles of Haron and Vahed quoted above.

[87] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fi Janūb Afrīqīya*, p. 183.

indigenous languages. There are three full-time African Muslims based at the head office to handle reversions and related issues.

The Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) of South Africa came into existence in 1970 and serves the Muslim community in South Africa through education and advocacy, with a focus on socioeconomic development and gender justice. From 1971 to 1974 it mainly focused on raising awareness of Islam and bringing young Islamic scholars to South Africa. Between 1974 and 1977 MYM established independent projects such as the Islamic Relief Agency, Islamic Daʿwah Movement of Southern Africa (IDMSA) and the South African National Zakat Fund (SANZAF), as mentioned above. In 1986 MYM underwent a policy shift towards more direct political engagement; MYM members who sought an even more overt political focus broke away to form Call of Islam. In the post-apartheid period MYM has largely been inactive, but during 2010 the organization focused on restructuring and revitalizing the movement and hosted a conference in September to finalize MYM's new trajectory. Its main initiatives are now camps, campaigns, skills training, lecture tours, and literature.[88] Whereas its earlier governance model was similar to other institutions mentioned here, its focus changed from the 1986 when it gradually grew more aligned to the model observed by the Call of Islam.

In 1982 Farid Esack criticised the MYM's stance as being too elitist since it interacted with Islamic movements abroad while ignoring interfaith cooperation at home. For him, this was an instance of positive neutrality, meaning that while it condemned apartheid vehemently, it was neutral with respect to competing liberation movements. Of paramount importance to him was the contextualisation of the political struggle in South Africa. He penned his ideas in a few publications and his nuanced hermeneutical interpretation of the Qur'ān in *Qur'ān, Liberation and Pluralism.*

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[88]http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/organizations/muslim-youth-movement-of-south-africa(Accessed on 9 November 2014).

He formed the organisation called Call of Islam in 1984 and became its primary ideologue in response to emergence of the broad-based umbrella body called the United Democratic Front (UDF) which aimed to accommodate all grassroots movements in the quest for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. Of immediate concern to the UDF was opposition to the government's ploy of creating some semblance of democracy by giving people of Indian origin and Coloured people representation in a Tricameral Parliament that excluded the majority indigenous people from the legislature. The Call of Islam comprised members belonging to the lower-middle and working classes of the Cape Flats together with the middle class of Transvaal. It espoused the eradication of depraved social conditions among all South Africans; regardless of ethnicity, language and religion. All members of society had to unite to confront apartheid in different guises.

Governance and democracy in the later version of MYM and Call of Islam were guided by secular norms since these groupings forged alliances with the broader disenfranchised majority of this country. While these values entrenched themselves within these organisations as political activism intensified, *da'wah* activities diminished.

Africa Muslims Agency (AMA), directed by Faried Choonara, opened its offices in Johannesburg in 1981. The organization was and still is bankrolled by Kuwaiti funds via Dr. Abdurahman as-Sumayt, and it operates in more than 35 African countries. The purpose is to not only give *da'wah* but also to provide other assistance particularly during floods; the Mozambique floods were a case in point. AMA and other organizations such as *Waqf al-Waqifin* (Gift of the Givers) have been very active in helping these communities in times of need.[89]

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[89] Haron. "The Dawah Movements and Sufi *Tariqat*", pp.7-8. Also consult www.idm.co.za for some details given about the present state of affairs of the Islamic Da'wah Movement of Southern Africa (Accessed 14 February 2012).

Shaikh Abdel Salaam Jad Bassiouni is an Egyptian national who was born in 1950 and obtained a BA in Shariah and Law from al-Azhar in 1977 and a diploma for Propagation and Islamic Studies from the Institute of *Da'wah* Leaders in Makkah. He obtained his first MA degree from Sierra Leone in 1985 after researching the topic "*Da'wah* and its future". He was then sent by the Muslim World League in Makkah to South Africa in 1990. Here he completed his second masters' degree at RandAfrikaansUniversity in Johannesburg in 1996. He obtained his doctorate from the University of South Africa (Unisa) in 2004 after having researched "Islamic Propagation in South Africa: Past and Present".

He was instrumental in the opening of the first "Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre" outside Lenasia. Twelve more of them have opened in various parts of Gauteng and Mpumalanga. More than 20,000 people, mainly Africans, have accepted Islam. About two thousand of them are taught daily at the various centres.

Among the focus areas of this group are: dispatching *da'wah* groups and health personnel to needy areas, distributing publications on Islam in various indigenous languages, delivering lectures on *da'wah* at mosques and radio stations, visiting prisons for conducting *da'wah* among inmates, conducting training for preachers and empowering women with some lifeskills.[90]

He avoids confrontations and debates with his addressees. His strong links to local religious leaders points to his preference for a traditionally sanctioned approach to *da'wah*.[91]

Shaikh Abbas Phiri embarked on a personal campaign of *da'wah* in the KwaMashu-Ntuzuma-Inanda area north of Durban. He only had religious education in Malawi. After settling in South Africa he married a local woman and set up home in Inanda. With the support of Indian Muslim traders, he

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[90] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fī Janūb Afrīqīya,* pp. 168-169.

[91] Anon, "Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre", www.altawheed.org.za (Accessed 10 February 2012).

launched himself on his mission. In this respect, he was different to other Malawians and Mozambicans who, according to Mathee, "… did not integrate with the local Black population to the extent of propagating Islam to them".[92]

After assessing the situation, he first obtained the consent and blessings of the local chiefs and town councillors after having explained his motive and religion to them. He was confronted by other challenges too, such as the misperception by Africans of Islam being synonymous with Hinduism – as the only adherents visible to them were Indians – or its being a religion of Indian traders and merchants only. Racial attitudes at the time negatively impacted on *da'wah* which were compounded by what was perceived to be the unethical conduct of some Indian Muslims. Selflessly and relying on a pension from the local authorities, he laboured and converted a part of his home at Ntuzuma into a prayer venue (*jamā'at khānah)* which also served as a religious and cultural centre. He ran his religious school from there. His basic strategy for conversion was to firstly acquaint himself with them and explain Islam and its basic rituals to them. He wanted dedicated Muslims to emerge from his endeavours. He converted over a hundred people. Others learnt from Shaikh Abbas's work. As time passed a number of similar activities were commenced by other organizations.[93]

The major bodies representing *Sunnī* religious leaders such as the Jam'iatul Ulama in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, the Muslim Judicial Council in the Western Cape, Majlisul 'Ulama in the Eastern Cape[94] and the Sunni Jamiat, as well as the umbrella body representing *Shī'ites,* Ahlul Bait (based in Cape Town, with branches in Polokwane, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Kroonstad, Bloemfontein, Durban and Port Elizabeth) have *da'wah* sections.[95]

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[92] Shaheed Mathee, "Muslim Identity Constructions in Soweto", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* issue 6, (2003), p. 51.

[93] Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi*",* pp. 287-289.

[94] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fī Janūb Afrīqīya,* pp. 176-179.

[95]Anon, www.afosa.org (n.d.), (Accessed on 21 June 2007).

Other bodies include Crescent of Hope, Muslim Youth Movement, Al-Ikhwan Da'watul Islam Movement, Islamic Call Society and Islamic Centre for Africa.[96]

An interesting association has been the Islamic Relief Fund based in Johannesburg. It is striking for two reasons; namely, the chairperson and majority of its executive committee are women and it has worked among people of all major race groups (as well as a few Chinese) and religions (namely, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and African Traditional Religion) during its thirty-five year existence. About 16,000 people have embraced Islam at their hands.[97]

The Dawah Co-ordinating Forum (DCF) was launched on 15 May 2004 at Verulam. Muslim activists and *da'wah* workers from diverse organizations and ethnic backgrounds launched this broad coalition with the objective of fostering unity and cooperation within the ranks of people belonging to previously marginalized groups, besides procuring workers to help build partnerships with government for various social upliftment programmes like HIV/AIDS awareness, adult literacy skills, African Renaissance and the moral regeneration of the nation.[98]

In Cape Town, at least the following two organisations are conducting *da'wah;* namely, the Naqshbandi Tariqah and Discover Islam Centre (DIC). The Naqshbandi Tariqah was established in 1990 and focused strongly on spreading Islam in the local African townships after the visit of Muhammad Nazim Adil Al-Haqqani, the fortieth grand shaikh of that mystical order, in 2000. They have conducted regular *dhikr* sessions in African townships with increasing participation of the local people. The ladies' wing of this group participated in

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[96] Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", p. 1179.

[97] S. Hassim, "*Da'wah* Report. Johannesburg: Islamic Relief Fund". (Report received on 10 April 2007).

[98] Rafik Hassen, (2007). (Information provided by e-mail on 23 March 2007).

teaching basic Islam to the local ladies and establishing educare centres. This body has also initiated economic empowerment projects in those localities.[99]

Discover Islam Centre was founded by Canadian Dr. Abdul Hakim Quick in 2005. It has two focus points. The first is simply to spread the message of Islam through various means. The second and primary function is to create a new home for intending or recent reverts. In this regard, it offers preparatory guidance and counselling sessions. Once they embrace Islam they are listed on a database and their cases are constantly monitored. General socio-economic support networks are provided. They are encouraged to attend the basic Islam course offered by this organisation.[100]

Three foreign organizations may also be identified: namely, Al-Azhar (of Cairo, after its agreement with the Muslim Judicial Council on the establishment of its schools in this country in 1994), the Saudi sponsored World Assembly of Muslim Youth (which has run *da'wah* workshops and health clinics in poor areas twice annually since 2001) and the Muslim World League (which ran training courses for *da'wah* workers in 1986. It has had a *Da'wah* Office since 2000 which operates as a subsidiary of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Propagation and Guidance).[101]

The Cultural Division within the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has sponsored *Shī'ite da'wah* enterprises, targeting particularly indigenous people.

Mention also has to be made about the informal role of Indian Muslim traders over time: Some Tswanas accepted Islam in this way and returned to their people to continue the task. Such traders also married some Tswana, Venda and Sotho women, thereby initiating them into the faith. It is the fastest growing religion among the Venda on account of its lucid principles. In areas

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[99] Mogammad, "Da'wah by the Naqshbandi Tariqah", pp. 1-2.

[100] Auwais Rafudeen. "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre", (4 November 2010), pp. 1-3.

[101] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fī Janūb Afrīqīya,* pp. 191-195.

inhabited mainly by the Sothos in the Free State, mosques and Islamic institutions are often seen. Traders in those areas have contributed to poverty alleviation among the local people.[102]   But much of the *da'wah* effort among locals is informally done by older converts and by the thousands of Muslim immigrants from other African countries that have surged into South Africa since the end of apartheid.[103]

Conversion through marriage has also resulted in the acceptance of Islam by some Whites.[104]

Finally, as a precaution it is worth mentioning that the proliferation of organisations and forums may also reflect fissures and ruptures within the fabric of the Muslim society. This is undoubtedly the situation in South Africa where conflicts among power structures based on ideological, social, economic and ethnic lines are euphemistically portrayed in terms of the dynamism of Muslim society at large.

Surveys on *da'wah*

Reasons for accepting Islam

In surveys conducted by Bassiouni, he found that the primary reasons for conversion were disgruntlement with Christianity after having been regular church-goers. Some believed that Islam was an effective safeguard against vices like liquor and promiscuity. Others maintained that Islamic law would alleviate their plight.

A large proportion among them accepted Islam on the basis of its intrinsic logic and rationality.

From his findings, he further concludes that:

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[102] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fi Janūb Afrīqīya,* pp. 96-98.
[103] N. Itano, "In South Africa many Blacks convert to Islam", *Christian Science Monitor,* www.defending-islam.com/page 372.html (Accessed 23 May 2011).
[104]Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fi Janūb Afrīqīya* , p. 140.

(a) The potential for favourable *da'wah* among the youth and more educated members of the target group is great. Simultaneously, there is a great onus on the part of *da'wah* conducting individuals and groups to bolster literacy and empowerment skills campaigns among those people both in order to increase their potential for accepting the message of Islam as well as for enhancing their socio-economic stability.

(b) Islamic rationality ought to be the cornerstone of all preaching.

(c) Constant social interaction and direct contact with the target groups is crucial to entrenching Islam among them. For this purpose, lifelong and graded education about Islam and the teaching of economic skills acquire paramount importance.

(d) Poor subject material and incompetent preachers pose a serious threat to the success of

da'wah. Shortage of language skills for tellingly interacting with source texts and target audiences can be disastrous.

Indeed, personal contact between preacher and audience is the preferred method of disseminating religious messages, as expounded by Hashemi and Yeganeh, because "… it is able to affect emotions and minds and, through forming a social and communication network, has directed the religious society…Here, a kind of empathy is formed between the sender and the receiver and the preacher's behaviour patterns and gestures come to help their lecture and oration. In other words, nonverbal cues serve as a supplement to the process of delivering messages".[105]

By contrast, "… in media preaching, the audiences are general, some of whom may be exposed to the message accidentally, and where there is no direct interaction between the origin and the destination of the message. Also, the media are incapable of transferring the emotions of the origin and, due to the

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[105] Hashemi and Yeganeh, "Traditional and Modern Modes of Religious Preaching", pp. 280-281.

presence of the channel, there will form only a superficial, inauthentic relation between them. The modern media preaching, although more widespread, is less profound, usually causing no direct feedback while communicating with the audience who may not know each (sic.) another …

The mass media are more efficient in spreading beliefs and increasing awareness rather than directing trends and creating emotions".[106]

These criteria are important to bear in mind in relation to the use of popular multimedia forms mentioned earlier.

Informational problems, listed under are (d) above, are being tackled by some *da'wah* organisations of which the following are noteworthy: IDMSA with its headquarters in Durban undertook translation of the Holy Qur'ān into Zulu and Xhosa, two of the most widely spoken African languages, in 2006 and 2008 respectively. A team of scholars is currently handling these meticulous tasks.[107]

It has also held two weekly classes for reverts. A proper syllabus for basic course is devised and a register and profile of students is maintained.[108]

Likewise, IPCI has developed a structured syllabus for revert classes catering to two levels: basic and an advanced class, each one involves two months of training. IPCI is currently developing a supported Distance Learning class for its training programme so as to cater to the needs of reverts who are unable to attend classes at the Centre or wish to study Islam whilst engaged in fulltime employment.[109]

In order to minimize the domestic, social and financial trauma of reverts, the Islamic Da'wah Movement of Southern Africa (IDMSA) and

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[106] Hashemi and Yeganeh, "Traditional and Modern Modes of Religious Preaching", p. 281.

[107] Anon. "IDM Dawah 2011", www.idm.co.za/portal/index.php/publications/xhosa-quraan and www.idm.co.za/portal/index.php/publications/zulu-quraan (Accessed on 15 February 2012).

[108] Anon, "IDM Dawah 2011", www.idm.co.za/portal/index.php/education-a-training/revert-classes (Accessed on 15 February 2012).

[109] Anon, "IPCI", www.ipci.co.za n.d. (Accessed 14 Feb 2012).

Discover Islam Centre (DIC) provide accommodation to them at their centres for a reasonable period in which they are given in-house training on Islam.[110] The religious teachers here invariably turn out to be African Muslims.

However, some of the converts are sceptical about the work of *da'wah* organisations and complain about the lack of follow-up after the conversions.[111]

According to Mumisa, the greatest number of converts is youth attending educational institutions of different kinds. They meet with their Muslim friends from elsewhere in Africa or some of the African-American Muslims visiting the country and are drawn into the ambit of the faith fraternity.[112]

Rebekah Lee discovered that the overwhelming majority of African converts to Islam in Cape Town during the late- and post-apartheid eras were women. In this regard, her conclusion supported the assessment of Hassim, Mohammedy and Rafudeen[113] but contradicted the findings of the reporter for the Christian Science Monitor.[114] According to Mohammedy, the women were either housewives or were unemployed.[115] Causes for conversion ranged from disillusionment with Christianity and the financial subscriptions demanded by churches, to the economic stability offered by Islam. The latter is buttressed by the teaching of occupational skills to converts.[116]

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[110] "IDM Dawah 2011",; Rafudeen, "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre", p. 2.

[111] Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", p. 1180; Rafudeen. "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre", p. 3.

[112] Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi*",* pp. 290-291.

[113] R. Lee, "Understanding African Women's Conversion to Islam: Cape Town in Perspective",*Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* issue 5, (2002), p. 52; Hassim, "*Da'wah* Report. Johannesburg: Islamic Relief Fund"*,* p. 3; Yusuf Mohammedy, "*Da'wa* Report of the South African *Da'wa* Network", p. 1. Report received on 26 June 2007; Rafudeen, "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre",p. 2.

[114] Itano, "In South Africa, many blacks convert to Islam".

[115] Mohammedy, "*Da'wa* Report of the South African *Da'wa* Network"*,* p. 2.

[116] Mohammedy, "*Da'wa* Report of the South African *Da'wa* Network"*,* p. 53.

For Philander, however, the major reason for conversion in Cape Town is marriage to a Muslim partner. The secondary reason is the value intrinsic to Islam itself. This applies particularly to reverts from Black communities.

In the Black townships *da'wah* is designed to meet economic needs as well as providing information about Islam. But in the Coloured and White communities, reverts are drawn from the middle and upper classes for whom economic needs do not feature in the *da'wah*.

While Coloureds have enjoyed lengthy contacts with Cape Muslims, (in Philander's words) "Islam in the black townships still needs to be given a cultural component as they have been traditionally isolated from the broader Muslim community. Hence there are also efforts, through Islamic songs for example, to build an indigenous African Muslim culture in Cape Town".[117]

The difficulty in articulating an African version of Islam will be covered shortly. According to the Christian Science Monitor, success in *da'wah* is related to its strong stance against promiscuity, AIDS, alcoholism and domestic violence which is rampant in Black townships. Islam has grown six-fold in thirteen years among the developing sector.[118] These sentiments broadly confirm Bassiouni's findings.[119]

There is also a perception that Islam is a return to some rehearsed rituals and ideologies existing in African tradition generally and among the Xhosa specifically. These relate to burial rituals, circumcision, animal slaughtering and gender relations. Restrictions on the free intermingling of sexes are then

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[117] Rafudeen, "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre",p. 2. This kind of endeavour is strongly disapproved by conservative religious leadership. I had personal experience of this in December 2007 when one of the African reverts at a religious function used rap music to illustrate Islamic themes in the presence of a senior teacher at the religious seminary in Azaadville, Krugersdorp. Nevertheless, the thrust of Philander's arguments is applicable nationally.

[118] Itano, "In South Africa, many blacks convert to Islam"..

[119] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmiyah fi Janūb Afrīqīya ,* pp. 183, 200-205.

interpreted as beneficial since they curb women abuse.[120] Equally, one needs to be perceptive to the differences between Islam and African tradition too; for example, ancestral intervention before the Supreme Being, the consumption of alcohol and the smoking of dagga are permitted by the latter but rejected by the former.[121]

The commonality between some traditional African rituals and Islam results in begging the epistemological question: What is (South) African Islam? During a study of Islam among Africans in some of the townships near Durban, Preben Kaarsholm detected two divergent interpretations of this question. One position here - as represented by the Amaoti Islamic Society's Imam Twaib Ismael – displays the attractiveness of Islam in terms of its complete break with African 'tradition' and cultural 'custom' in a way that resembles the approach of Pentecostalist and 'born-again' Christian churches. But a contrary position - represented by Adam Mncanywa and promoted in his printed pamphlets – projects Islam as a programme for the rejuvenation and cleansing of a unified pan-African 'tradition'.[122]

The last insight extricates Islam from South African boundaries and places it within continental strictures. Are the two terms used interchangeably, even though it may be imprecise to do so? Or is Mncanywa convinced that the two terms share a common denotation? Anyway, the implication raised by the

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[120] Lee, "Understanding African Women's Conversion to Islam", p. 55. See also, "Jamiatul 'Ulama's Youth Convention a success", *Laudium Sun,* (May 2007), p. 12. Therein similar views are expressed by Maulana Abbas Hlatwayo, an activist from Soweto. Also see Gordon Bell, "Islam spreading in Christian South Africa", www.islamawareness.net/Fastest/southafrica.html (14 November 2004), (Accessed 9 June 2011).

[121] Jung, *Theological reflections on the spread of Islam and attitudes in Churches,* p. 27. One could argue that some practices of mystical orders closely resemble 'ancestral intervention' discussed above.

[122] Preben Kaarsholm. "Transnational Islam and public sphere dynamics in KwaZulu-Natal".

first version is that Islam stands closely aligned to the ethos of African tradition, purging it off unwanted ingredients.

Politically, Islam is viewed by some politically responsive Africans as a barrier to the encroachment of comprehensive western hegemony. Muslim countries in Africa and Asia have suffered greatly at the hands of colonialists and their lackeys. In recent times, these sensitive people bravely flaunt garments bearing the image of Usama bin Laden, for instance, since he was regarded by them as an icon of resistance to neo-imperialism.

Closely paired with this political profile is the pan-Africanist perception of Islam. According to Mahida, Africa is the only continent with a Muslim majority of around 56%.[123]

In our review of *da'wah* during recent times, we discover that Islam is valued in both substantive and functional terms.

Its substantive value is shown in cases where some respondents to Bassiouni's survey explained that they were attracted to the truth contained by Islam, or where some respondents to Lee's survey indicated that Islam for them was a return to some practices existing in traditional African religions. At this level, the contents of Islam and their meanings for these adherents were found especially appealing, thereby verifying the theory of Eliade in terms of religion's quest for meaning, its hierophany and its special, autonomous status mentioned earlier.

Islam's functional value is observed in the following attitudes of reverts towards it: (a) its economic value, in terms of offering economic stability (according to the findings of Mohammedy and Philander); (b) its educational importance, in terms of offering skills development to poor Blacks in particular (according to the findings of Mogammad and Philander); (c) its social value for creating group solidarity as per Durkheim's view, in terms of forging trans-

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[123] Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", p. 1187.

continental links with fellow Muslims at educational institutions (according to the findings of Mumisa), or for forging/cementing marital links (according to the findings of Bassiouni and Philander), or for addressing scourges like alcoholism, AIDS and promiscuity (according to the findings of Bassiouni and the Christian Science Monitor). Weber would hold that the last aspect can be a force for change; (d) its political value in confronting Western hegemony and promoting pan-Africanism (according to Doi); and (e) its psychological value, in terms of providing solace through *dhikr* in various forms as promoted by mystically oriented groups like Discover Islam, Naqshbandi Tariqah and the Tabligh Jama'at (according to Mogammad and the anonymous writer of the article on this movement at www.inter-islam.org/Miscellaneous/jamaat.htm mentioned earlier).

Problems with *da'wah*

Racial conflicts and African Muslim independence

For Doi, it needs acknowledgement that Muslim traders in particular could have played an important role in the spread of Islam, but owing to their segregationist mentality, they failed to integrate themselves into the local African communities. Soon after setting ashore in Natal, they even differentiated themselves from indentured Indians by identifying themselves as Arabs or Turks. Religion, for many of them, was a symbol of social distinction. It was little wonder, then, that this outlook was further entrenched by the policy of apartheid which bracketed Muslims into racial categories.[124]

Secondly, Ebrahim Fakude sketches a useful historical perspective of *da'wah* which sets the subsequent problems raised by some Muslim thinkers in proper perspective.

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[124] Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", pp. 1167-1168. Vahed, in "Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities", pp. 31, 47-48 airs the same criticism in a more refined tone.

Islam developed in the black townships during the late 1970s. However, it failed to surface as a result of social impediments like Christianity (which was the official religion of the state then) and communism (which disparaged any contact with religion). Apartheid also impeded the growth of Islam in the townships because it prevented African Muslims from living in the vicinity of Muslims belonging to other races; moreover, it portrayed non-Christian religions as the work of the devil. At that time, Muslims from Malawi and Mozambique settled in those areas for the primary reason of attaining economic prosperity. They also married local women who customarily adopted Islam. *Da'wah* was not their primary objective.[125] Besides, xenophobia complicated their tasks as a result of which *da'wah* attracted inferior importance.

The riots of 1976 resulted in many politically sensitive local Blacks seeking refuge in countries north of South Africa. There, some of them experienced Islam personally and brought back their positive experiences. The same applied to the political exiles of the 1990s. Meanwhile, inside the townships mosques were becoming a safe haven for refugees against the security forces. The Murabitun movement, mentioned earlier, espoused the hopes of the Young Lions (the name given to the youth in the 1980s) because it highlighted Islam's teachings on justice and human rights.[126]

The relationship between the established community of Muslims (that is, Malays and Indians) and the developing community (that is, the Africans) initially improved during the transitional period. Both sides had a better grasp of the other's strengths and weaknesses. But tensions gradually developed on account of issues like the uneven distribution of funds.[127]

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[125] Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", pp. 1170 ff.

[126] Sitoto calls this the contribution of political activism to Islam. See T. Sitoto, "Engaging *Muslimness* and the Making of African Muslim Identity", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* (2003), issue 6, p. 47.

[127] Ebrahim Fakude. "Muslims in the Townships of South Africa", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* (2002), issue 5, p. 47.

In this regard, Itano reported that the developing community also complained about the established Muslims' greater preoccupation with and concern for the plight of Muslims far from home like Afghanistan.[128]

In the post-democracy era, the African inhabited townships witnessed the flocking of many Muslims from other African countries, thereby introducing new schools of thought. Black Muslims were now adopting *Shī'ism* over other *Sunnī* schools of thought observed by the established community as a sign of revolt.[129] According to Fakude, hostilities increased once more with grievances ranging from racism and exploitation to the unfair distribution of charity. These tensions have not been satisfactorily resolved up to now.[130]

In addition to Fakude's observations about Islam in the townships during the late 1970s, Doi affirms that apartheid had also fabricated racial stereotypes meaning that converts entertained the notion that Islam was a religion controlled by merchants and professionals.[131]

In the light of this dilemma, Sitoto complains that the African Muslim presence continues to be invisible in South African Islam with perceptions about their late-coming into its fold dominating discourses. Consequently, Muslim institutions in established communities are not yet prepared to absorb new Muslims.[132] This situation persists, not withstanding representation by all major language groups in South Africa in the emerging sector. Examples of such

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[128] Itano, "In South Africa, many blacks convert to Islam".

[129] Shaheed Mathee. "Muslim Identity Construction in Soweto". *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* (2002), issue 5, p. 53.

[130] E. Fakude, "Muslims in the Townships of South Africa", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* (2002), issue 5, pp. 47-49. As an aside, White Muslims from the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe (including Bosnia and Albania) and Turkey have also begun pouring into this region. Some Muslims from those areas who did not identify themselves as Muslims in the apartheid era have now openly begun to meet with Muslims of other ethnic communities and participate in religious activities. See Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi*",* p. 295.

[131] Doi, "Proselytism and Islam in Southern Africa", p. 1175.

[132] Sitoto, "Engaging *Muslimness* and the Making of African Muslim Identity",pp. 45-47.

highly acclaimed Muslims include world renowned pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, legendary poet Don Matera, rising journalist Simphiwe Sesanti, former South African junior lightweight champion Hassan Mpisekaya, chief financial officer in the Department of Public Enterprises Ike Idris Nxedlana, advocate Dawood Ngwane, librarian Nafisa Zondi and bank administrator Faisel Mkhize.[133] The current Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, provides the finest example in this category.

Additional experiences in metropolitan districts on both the east and west coasts attest to this problem.

About Cape Town, Philander regards one of the major challenges faced by reverts to be scepticism by the established, broader Muslim community of their motives that can lead to reverts being marginalised. Besides, they are always considered Islamically uneducated (even if they are otherwise well versed); hence they fail to gain full membership of the community. There is a pervasive sense of intolerance on the part of some Muslims from the established sector towards them.[134]

Regarding Durban, Kaarsholm reports the sense of superiority felt by established Muslims in the words of Adam Mncanywa as follows: "…they continue to think that they are 'born' Muslims and we are converts - that they have ownership to the faith".[135]

All the same, the crisis demands an equitable solution. While it is acknowledged that members of the established community have used their varied skills to stifle legitimate aspirations and needs of African Muslims, some of the latter have not been entirely innocent either. Lee cites as one of the

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[133] T. Sitoto, "Imam Essa Al-Seppe and the "emerging and unorganized African Muslim sector". A Contextual Analysis", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* (2002), issue 5, p. 45.
[134] Rafudeen, " Rafudeen, "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre", p. 2.
[135] Kaarsholm, "Transnational Islam and public sphere dynamics in KwaZulu-Natal: …"

reasons for African women's conversion the satisfaction of their material needs which, in the words of a Muslim-born Xhosa woman Fatima Lobi "… was detrimental to the spiritual independence of Africans".[136] Such a stance betrays a culture of dependence on others and ultimately breeds insincerity. There also remains the suspicion that Islam is used as a vehicle for the amassing of power on the part of some without having made any significant sacrifices.[137] Islamophobia and the alleged oppression of women – topics of concern in America and Europe – affect *da'wah* among Whites and elements of the Coloured community. It does not really surface among the Black community.[138]

Despite these problems, the number of Muslims continues to grow in the townships, according to Fakude. People embrace the faith by themselves, without much contribution from *da'wah* bodies.[139] Disappointingly, he fails to provide details about avenues through which Islam reaches them as well as where and how they proclaim the testimony of faith (*shahādah).*

Al-Muwahhidoon believe that new African initiatives at *da'wah* have to be acknowledged with the building of alternative leadership structures in developing communities. The Masakhane Muslim Community of Cape Town united Muslim individuals and communities in the townships, provided coherent leadership, mature arbitration and qualified education to African Muslims. The latter resulted in, *inter alia,* the teaching of Islamic Studies courses coupled with life skills empowerment. It also launched teachers' training courses. Consequently, it has now been recognized by international and

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[136] Lee, "Understanding African Women's Conversion to Islam",p. 54. Refer also to Quick's comments about the quality of conversions in Jung, *Theological reflections on the spread of Islam and attitudes in Churches*,   p. 30.

[137] Shaikh Ahmad Namutamba (Interview on 25 September 2006).

[138] Rafudeen, "Interview with Mawlana Zakariyya Philander: Discover Islam Centre", p. 2.

[139] Fakude, "Muslims in the Townships of South Africa", p. 49.

governmental Islamic bodies throughout the Muslim World.[140] Unfortunately, its energies have declined since about 2003.[141]

There is also the Southern African Muslim Mission that was founded at Soweto in 1981 and the Organization of African Muslim Unity that was founded in KwaZulu-Natal in 1997.[142]

The reasons for conversion and the problems facing converts cited above find ample echoes in the observations of Jung,[143] advancing the view about their general validity despite the unscientific nature of Bassiouni Moussa's deductions.

Based on the aforesaid analysis, power relations between the two categories of Muslims generate the following features:

The socio-economic vibrancy of established Muslims (and in particular the Indians among them) relative to developing, African Muslims played itself out in the asymmetrical power relations between them. Established Muslims possess a monopoly of financial and informational resources that has, in general terms, created the subordination of developing Muslims to their dictates.

There have been at least four reactions to this situation; namely, voluntary compliance, adoption of *Shi'ism,* investigating a new brand of African Islam, and imitating power structures existing among established Muslims.

Regarding the first response, Max Weber maintains that a power relation of dominance involves the following:

- Voluntary compliance by individuals.

- Those who obey do so because they have an interest in so doing, or at least believe that they have such an interest.

- Belief in the legitimacy of the actions of the dominant party is likely.

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[140] Al-Muwahhidoon, "Islam in the African townships of the Cape", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* (2002), issue 5, p. 51.

[141] Jung, *Theological reflections on the spread of Islam and attitudes in Churches,* p. 107.

[142] Sitoto, "In South Africa, many blacks convert to Islam", (2002),p. 45.

[143] Jung, *Theological reflections on the spread of Islam and attitudes in Churches,* pp. 30-31.

- Compliance or obedience occurs over a sustained period so that regular patterns of inequality are sustained.[144]

Regarding the second response, *Shiʿism* was adopted by some African Muslims as a symbol of revolt to the status quo, according to Mathee.

The third option (that is, of articulating an African Islam) has been explored for some time now without any satisfactory resolution on the horizon.

The fourth option has been attempted on a limited scale by some ambitious African Muslims without any perceptible triumph.

For consolidating their power grip on developing Muslims, their established counterparts have mostly employed two models of authority mentioned by Weber.

Traditional and legal-rational authority has been vested in the hands of religious leaders (or *ʿulamā*),[145] who cleverly appropriate this term to themselves.[146]

Such comprehensive legal-rational authority in modern times creates belief in the existence of a panoptic tower, according to Bentham, that lies in close proximity to all people. They internalize the ability of the omniscient observer seated in the tower. Gradually, they police themselves.[147] This situation is described by Michel Foucault as follows: "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of

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[144] Max Weber. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology.* New York: Bedminster Press, 1968, pp. 212, 214.

[145] Consult Vahed, "Contesting Orthodoxy".

[146] The Prophetic statement they refer to is العلماء ورثة الأنبياء which has been criticized as spurious by the "Al-Muḥaddith" website. Refer to www.muhaddith.org/cgi-bin/dspl-cgi.exe/form (Accessed on 17 February 2012). For an alternative definition of this term, refer to Al-Ghazālī, A.Ḥ. *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn.* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1957), vol. 1, p. 33.

[147] Dino Felluga. "Modules on Foucault: On Panoptic and Carceral Society". *Introduction   Guide   to   Critical   Theory.*   n.d. www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/newhistoricism/modules/foucaultcarceral.html (Accessed on 11 February 2012).

power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection".[148]

In response to this authority, the unrest among some members of developing Muslims portrays what Spencer regards as, a search for value-rational authority. This entails subordination to principle via procedures of decision-making. Thus, such opponents normally submit to the values they espouse rather than to charismatic individuals.[149]

The task of *da'wah* is further exacerbated by other factors which will be analyzed below.

Problems facing *da'wah* institutions

This entire assessment is based on the findings of Bassiouni Moussa;[150] nevertheless pertinent comments of others will be appropriately cited.

Problems could be divided into four categories: administrative, informational, lack of coordination among institutions involved in *da'wah,* developmental-cum-financial, poverty linked, internecine conflicts and lack of commitment.

Administrative problems

Firstly, several institutions operate without any constitution or administrative system as a result of which all decisions are left to the discretion of the director; ultimately, they function like personal businesses. Workers have

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[148] Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish* (translated by Alan Sheridan). (New York: Pantheon, 1977), pp. 202-203.

[149] M. E. Spencer. "Weber on legitimate norms and authority". *The British Journal of Sociology,* (1999), vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 123-134.

[150] Bassiouni Moussa, *Al-Da'wat al-Islāmīyah fī Janūb Afrīqīya ,* pp. 209-223. His appraisal is generic, without citing specific examples. Another thought-provoking article in this genre is the one by Islahi entitled "Errors in the Current Mode of Preaching" at www.amin-ahsan-islahi.com/?=57 (Assessed on 18 February 2012). The last category mentioned here is not covered by Bassiouni Moussa.

insufficient knowledge of sound administration; yet they adopt a complacent attitude towards it, often believing administrative incompetence to be a symbol of Islamic work.

Secondly, many administrators lack foresight or refuse to build on previous experience. They cling to earlier decisions unconditionally and unilaterally. All these discrepancies result from lack of experience. Many workers do not climb the administrative ladder whereby responsibilities are commensurate with experience.

Thirdly, work is delegated to incompetent people concerning religious knowledge or ethical conduct. Thus, nepotism and partiality cloud the assigning of tasks.

Many of Bassiouni's criticisms were applicable to the IPCI when Deedat was accused by his adversaries of unilateral decision-making and nepotism between 1990 and 1996 on account of some of which numerous court battles were waged.[151] At this juncture it is appropriate to mention that governance and democratic practices among most organisations engaged in *da'wah* is sadly lacking.

Informational problems

Firstly, there are preachers lacking information on strategies of *da'wah* or the rules of the faith. Some of them cannot differentiate between authentic and spurious Prophetic reports; by relying on the latter, they disseminate ignorance. Likewise, there are those who cannot distinguish between actions that are compulsory, recommended or permissible.

Relating to the first remark cited in the paragraph above, we may deduce that the problem relating to incompetent preachers' knowledge of other faiths and worldviews would be even more deplorable. Martin Prozesky comments thus about it in general terms: "Convert-seeking is religiously unacceptable

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[151] Vahed. "Ahmed Hoosen Deedat (1918-2005)", p. 84.

when it fails to harmonize fully with the core values and principles of the religion or religions in question. (It is the preachers' religious duty –YD) to study diligently the beliefs and cultures of those they wish to convert, so that they can understand and portray them the way insiders would".[152]

This problem can also infringe on the fundamental human rights of the audience as regards their human dignity.[153] To alleviate this problem, either partly or fully, IDMSA provides in-service training on a fortnightly basis to its preachers. Involved personnel from all the province's centres attend this training throughout the year at the head office. Training is conducted by in-house personnel and volunteers to increase their capacity.[154]

Secondly, scarce or ineffective Islamic references cause the dwindling of true scholars' reputation in the eyes of the masses. This observation would be entailed in the negative responses to the last question of many respondents to Bassiouni's first questionnaire cited already.

Thirdly, Mohammedy cites language incompetence as a great problem.[155] This obstacle is discernible both at the level of the language of the Islamic (or source) language and at the level of the target language of the addressees. To partially overcome this hurdle, groups like IDMSA are employing personnel indigenous personnel for *da'wah*[156].

Lack of coordination among institutions involved in *da'wah*

Some institutions become prey to un-Islamic practices without discriminating between virtuous and sinful deeds, the considerations of time and

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[152] Prozesky, "Principles, Practices, and National Constitution", pp. 863-864.

[153] Prozesky, "Principles, Practices, and National Constitution", p. 865.

[154] Anon. "IDM2011". www.idmdawah.co.za/portal/index.php/activities/duaat-in-service (Accessed on 15 February 2012).

[155] Mohammedy, "*Da'wa* Report of the South African *Da'wa* Network", p. 2.

[156] Anon. "IDM2011". www.idmdawah.co.za/portal/index.php/activities/team_of_duaat (Accessed on 15 February 2012)

space, and faulty prioritization owing to lack of coordination among relevant bodies. Occasionally, this deficiency leads to verbal confrontation among them.

The essential cause of this plight is insufficient consultation with religious leaders for guidance which nullifies their administrative skills. At the same time, some religious leaders are guilty of not cooperating with such groups when they are invited to do so. Ever so often, the inflexibility is the outcome of partial knowledge. Despotism from religious leaders is at times based on satisfying the cravings for power over the people without consideration for accountability before Allah.

Another illustration of lack of coordination is evident in the implementation of different curricula, which are often merely improvised products, by different institutions.[157] Formal proof of lack of coordination is found when we scrutinise important role-players' websites, which normally ought to articulate institutional policies. Such an endeavour   reveals the following anomalies:

- IDMSA details its links to other organisations with which it has close co-operation. The majority of such bodies are located in neighbouring countries while just one local body (whose activities are confined to a single town) features in this regard;[158]

- Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre mentions the Jam'iatul Ulama or any other organisation with which it can share mutual interests.[159]

- None of the other highlighted bodies attend at all to this topic.

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[157] Mohammedy, "*Da'wa* Report of the South African *Da'wa* Network"*,* p. 1.

[158]   Anon,   "IDM2011". www.idmdawah.co.za/portal/index.php/activities/dawah-activities   (Accessed on 15 February 2012).

[159] Anon, "Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre", www.altawheed.org.za (Accessed on 15 February 2012).

Developmental-cum-financial predicaments

Islamic work often relies on the arbitrary decisions of individuals rather than resorting to policy guidelines that can be followed in the absence of leaders. Shortage of finance, especially among the developing community, hampers many Islamic projects. The root to this problem lies in lack of investment incentives for the benefit of the Muslims at large: too many organizations endure dire financial straits. Reliance on help from the community, rather than financial independence, has become the norm. Many groups are either wittingly or otherwise heedless of such plans.

According to Mohammedy, the post-9/11 period has seen the drying up of foreign financial help.[160]

Exploitation of poverty for winning adherents

This blame has been laid at the door of Christian evangelism which has resorted to building schools, clinics and churches and whose facilities are offered gratis most of the time. In this way, according to Mohammedy, missionaries have exploited the needs of the deprived to open the door of Christianity to them. They are often heavily supported by their parent churches or the media to distort the message of Islam, often after doing fieldwork among Muslims under the pretext of paying social visits to them.[161]

Conflict among *da'wah* groups

The elevation of trivial differences among organizations involved in preaching to the level of benchmarks creates mutual animosity. All the resources and energies of institutions are devoted to stirring petty conflicts among them which disclose their insincerity. These transgressions emanate from insufficient

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[160] Mohammedy, "*Da'wa* Report of the South African *Da'wa* Network"*, p. 1.
[161] *Ibid,* p. 1.

knowledge and experience and assume the form of religious, personal, ethnic or national partisanship.

Some points raised under this sub-section and 3.4.3 provide the ideal settings for power struggles.

Lack of commitment on the part of some *du'āt*

While it has to be conceded that many *du'āt* are poorly remunerated for their efforts, it has to be acknowledged that at least some *du'āt* are motivated essentially by financial gain. Though this may be difficult to assess quantitatively, it is an area that researchers cannot ignore. *Da'wah* requires dedication, commitment and sincerity of purpose which are lacking in some instances.

Conclusion

Indisputably, there incongruity between the commitments demanded by Islam and the existential truth of Muslims, whether they belong to the established or the developing communities. At any rate, *da'wah* continues apace

This article has also explored various substantive and functional dimensions of Islam which have lured people from different ages, classes, genders and eras to its fold. Social phenomena such as power relations and authority have also received attention.

Great brainstorming and soul-searching is imperative for producing efficacious solutions. While South African Muslims could learn from the experiences of other regions, particularly those in Africa, it would be detrimental to transplant those blueprints uncritically on local soil. A plausible solution to this problem could lie in firstly forging and then propagating an "African" Muslim identity which involves the adoption of the African worldview to the extent that it conforms to Divine, revelatory truth. Such an experiment has been eminently successful for rich and vibrant cultures like the Swahili in East Africa, the Hausa in West Africa and large parts of the Muslim world where cultural

contacts have occurred.[162]   But as my article has shown, this question has been attended to by some Muslims although a lot more rumination is outstanding. During the course of this reflective journey, at least one religious leader has already spoken about Islam's compatibility with a pan-African tradition. Is he delving in hyperbole? This question is probably left for several other research works to probe.

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[162] A. Rafudeen, "Towards forging an 'African' Islamic identity", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa,* (2002), issue 5, p. 24.

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