

REPORT OF TRAINING

FOR

JUMA'AT IMAMS

FROM NORTHERN NIGERIA



ORGANIZED BY AHIP

FROM 18TH AUGUST 2006 TO 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2006

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REPORT OF FIVE WEEKS TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR JUMA'AT IMAMS FROM NORTHERN NIGERIA

The Adolescent Health and Information Projects (AHIP), Kano organized and funded a 5 weeks intensive training workshop for 377 juma'at imams, drawn from the 19 Northern States including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. (For the list see Appendix I). The main theme of the programme is "The Role of Juma'at Imams in Promoting Family Health." The training was conducted at 5 different centers with each center hosting three or four states. The first center was Sokoto, which comprised of Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States. The second center was Katsina, which was composed of delegates from Katsina, Kano, Jigawa and Kaduna States. The third center was Maiduguri made up of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and Taraba States. The fourth center was Bauchi where Bauchi, Gombe, Nassarawa and Plateau states were joined together. Finally, the fifth and the last center was Minna, which hosted Niger, Kogi, Kwara and the FCT Abuja. The training took place between the 18th August, 2006 and the 21st September, 2006 with exactly one week spent at each center.

AHIP organized the training Workshop with the assistance and collaboration of the Centre for Islamic Legal Studies of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI).

The Training Workshop was blessed with the full attendance of influential juma'at imams from all segments of the Muslim Ummah. Imams from both the *Izala* and the *Dariqa* attended and sat side by side and discussed issues of common interest to the Muslim community. The old generation of Imams and the new generation were also adequately represented. The Chief Imams of all the major Muslim cities in Northern Nigeria were in attendance. Muslim organizations like the Ansar ud Deen Society of Nigeria, the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) and Muslim women organizations like the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) and the Muslim Sisters Organizations of Nigeria (MSO) were all adequately represented.

The main objectives of the training workshops were to train:

- (a) the *juma'at* Imams on the importance and necessity of being current in contemporary affairs and using this current knowledge in their Friday *khutbahs* (sermons)
- (b) the Imams in the techniques of appreciating and drawing closer the youth as the most valuable asset of the Muslim community;
- (c) and expose the *juma'at* Imams on the importance of family health in promoting a healthy Muslim family and healthy Muslim Community and how to support advocacy, within the limits of Islamic principles, in the promotion of safe motherhood, fertility improvement and child spacing;
- (d) the Imams in self-reliance, skill acquisition and development as necessary in safeguarding the honour and dignity of the institution of the Imam
- (e) the jumaat Imams in understanding and appreciating the immense unparalleled influence they exert on the entire Muslim community especially in their weekly Friday *Khutba* (sermons) and how they can use these *khutbahs* in the re-orientation of and shaping the attitude of the Muslim community;
- (f) and teach the Imams how to organize effective Ta'alim sessions in an effort to promote education;
- (g) the Imams in appreciating their involvement in redressing the unacceptable maternal mortality situation;
- (h) the Imams on how best to address the issue of reducing infant and child morbidity and mortality among muslims.
- (i) the Imams on the techniques and and necessity of curbing and addressing the scourge of HIV/AIDS in the overall interest of the muslim community..
- (j) and expose the Imams on the importance of using current technology in daily affairs;
- (k) the Imams on the importance and benefits of using Alternative Dispute Resolution techniques in resolving disputes within the Local Community (ADR);

Taking into consideration the busy schedules of the participants, i.e. the Imams, it was decided that the training will not go beyond one week to avoid the risk of losing participants and even interest, if it is too long or too monotonous respectively.

An average 10 to 15 papers were presented at each center covering the entire objectives of the training. The following were topics covered:

- The Pre-requisites of an Imam;
- The Historical Development of the Institution of the Imamate in Northern Nigeria;
- The Imam as the Conscience of the Muslim Community;
- The Role of the Imam in Shaping the Destiny of the Muslim Community;
- The Role of an Imam on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
- The Role of an Imam in Fostering *Sulh* (Reconciliation) among his followers;
- The Role of an Imam in Enhancing the Quality of Reproductive Health of the Muslim Community (*Gudummawar da Limamai Zasu Bada Wajen Kula da Lafiyar Iyal*);
- The Role of the Imams in Fighting and Arresting the Scourge of HIV/AIDS among the Muslim Community.
- The importance and necessity of self-reliance and having trade or business by Imams in safeguarding their honour and dignity.

Eminent scholars and medical practitioners presented papers on the above topics. Modern technology of power point presentation was also used in many of the papers especially those dealing with Reproductive Health and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. For all the papers presented copies were made and distributed to participants, beside the normal conventional method of paper presentation and discussions, the new concept of 'Open Space' was also introduced in the last day of each workshop. The 'Open Space' technique afforded participants the

opportunity not only to introduce their own issues or issue they felt were not adequately addressed in the sessions for discussion but also to even be the convener and lead others in the discussion of that topic or issues without any restriction as to topic or number of persons involved.



Cross section of Participants Katsina center	Sokoto center	Maiduguri center
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Bauchi Center	Minna Center	AHIP Director and WHO Representative Sokoto
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At the end of each training session delegates wrote and adopted a communiqué in which observations were made, resolutions passed and calls made to appropriate authorities or bodies to continue organizing such training workshops in the spirit of continuing current education necessary for the effective discharge of the proper role of the Imams within the Muslim Communities. In all cases a call was made to AHIP after due appreciation to continue the good work they started and organize the training even if once in every year. The establishment of Nigerian Council of Imams was also recommended at virtually all the five centers. This council when established is expected to be the umbrella under which the entire Imams will operate and speak with one voice on all issues affecting the welfare of the entire Muslim Community. The communiqués passed in all the five centers, agreed on the following;

- (a) Knowledge of contemporary issues affecting the Muslim Community must be adequately used and given priority by Imams in their Friday *Khutbah*.
- (b) Juma'at Imams must address family Health issues in their *Khutbah* and community enlightenment. A healthy family leads to a healthy community.
- (c) An Imam must make effort to be self-reliant in maintaining himself and his family, to safeguard his honour and dignity. Skill development and self-reliance will make him say the truth without any fear or favour from anybody;
- (d) For intending couples, testing and screening for HIV/AIDS is permissible and even recommended in line with the spirit of the Prophetic saying "Nobody should be harmed and nor should he be allowed to harm anybody else" (*La Darara wala Dirara*)
- (e) The Governments at both the state and Local Government levels should do more in looking after the welfare of the Imams. It is recommended that an appropriate remuneration commensurate to their status be fixed for them. This will enable them concentrate more on their primary duties of training and uplifting the moral standard of the community.

Achievement

The Training Workshop succeeded not only in bringing together such large number of Juma'at Imams from all walks of life, nooks and corners of Northern Nigeria, to discuss issues of common interest to all muslim communities, it succeeded in forging a relationship with common understanding among the Imams. The workshop also demonstrated how common issues threatening the Ummah could unite and make it forget unnecessary divisive sectarian tendencies. The need and necessity for organizing similar workshops at reasonable intervals was also amply demonstrated. AHIP can localize and internalize the issues by opening a window in its vast commitments under the heading "The Imams and the Future of Muslim Youth."

The main theme of the training workshop was “**The Role of *Juma’at* Imams in Promoting Family Health**” In tackling this theme comprehensively other related sub-themes were created. Broadly, there are 6 sub-themes:

Sub-Theme One: The Pre-requisites of an Imam

Sub-Them Two: The Imam as the Conscience of the Muslim Community.

Sub-Theme Three: The Art and Technique of Developing and Delivering *Khutbah*.

Sub-Theme Four:The Role of Imam in Promoting the Reproductive Health of the community.

Sub-Theme Five: The Role of the Imam in Checking and Curtailing the Spread of HIV/AIDS.

Sub-Theme Six: The Contribution of the Imam in the Training and Up-Bringing of the Muslim Youth.

Below is the summary of the papers presented and discussed under various sub-themes:

SUMMARY OF KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

It is the tradition adopted in all the five zones to start the training by a short opening ceremony in which a keynote address was presented. Key Muslim leaders, and other important dignitaries were invited to the formal opening. The presenter of the keynote address was usually the most respected scholar of the area. In the keynote address the following issues were highlighted and discussed;

(a) The basis and grand norm of our life and all our actions as Muslims is the Qur’an, the *Sunna* of the Prophet and the *Ijmah* (consensus) of the Muslim community. It is therefore necessary that whatever we do in our lives must conform to the book of Allah, the *sunna* of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) otherwise it is rejected.

(b) The importance of the office of the Imam and the obligatoriness of Friday prayers. The weekly Friday Prayer is made obligatory and enjoined upon us by virtue of the Qur'anic verse,

“O ye who believe, when the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday (The Day of Assembly), hasten earnestly to the remembrance of God, and leave off business and traffic. That is best for you if ye but know.

And when the Prayer is finished then may ye disperse through the land and seek of the bounty of God; and celebrate the praises of God often (and without stint) that ye may prosper (Qur'an 62:9-10).

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) also said “whoever abstain from Friday Prayers for three consecutive weeks deliberately, Allah will remove Iman(faith) from his heart.” He also said, “I wish I could ask someone to lead the prayer for people so as to enable me go out to burn the houses of those who remained behind and refuse to come to the mosque for Friday Prayer.” From the above authorities it is very clear that whoever leaves Friday Prayer without any excuse deserves punishment. It is also a known legal dictum that any act whose performance attracts reward and its omission attracts punishment is in itself obligatory (*wajib*)

The Friday Prayer is a place where the entire Muslim Community assembles once a week to hear and discuss issues that are important to them. It is a unique gathering attended by the leader and the led, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the strong and the weak, the good and the bad. It is such a unique gathering that clearly indicated that people are in attendance not because the Imam has called them but simply because it is Allah's call they are answering. The Imam must appreciate the fact that his position is a unique privilege conferred on him. He is not there because he is better or the most learned of all the community. It is very common to find people in attendance that are more learned and more informed than the Imam.

(c) *Khutbah*, The Friday *Khutbah* (sermon) is so important that the prayer is not complete without it. It is necessary that the *khutbah* (sermon) fulfill all the

necessary conditions that make it valid. It must be in Arabic language but can be translated for the benefit of those who do not understand Arabic. It must start with praises of Allah and seeking blessings for our Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It must contain a call and an admonition to fear Allah and avoid His displeasure and punishment. Then it must address issues that are relevant and current to the Muslim community. The *khutbah* must avoid mentioning and calling names of people for either praise or condemnation. The *Khutbah* must be moderate neither too long nor too short.

The Imam must observe all the necessary etiquette for delivering sermons. He must have a very clear voice, must raise his head and keep looking at the crowd and must not appear unserious on what he is saying. He (The Imam) must appreciate that he is occupying a unique position where he is standing before thousands of people who have come to listen to him not because he is giving them money or any other material provisions but just because they want to listen to what Allah (SWT) has said in willing obedience to His commands. This opportunity and privilege of gathering and addressing thousands of people weekly without any effort on his part is not given even to the secular leaders of the community. Therefore, the Imam must make sure that his *khutbah* (sermon) remain current and lively so as to attract more followers. The Imam runs the risk of losing followers if his *khutbah* is dry and monotonous.

(d) Finally for the Imam to extend the correct message to the Muslim Community, through the *Khutbah*, he needs to be fully qualified in all the necessary qualities of an Imam. He must be a male Muslim who has attained full legal capacity. He must be learned sufficiently in the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and the principles of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). He must be in a position to give *Fatwa* (legal ruling) on issues that are likely to be brought before him. As an Imam, people are bound to refer their disputes, queries and questions to him for clarification. This makes it necessary for him to always be up-to-date in knowledge and current world affairs without which he cannot give effective leadership. The Imam must

be upright and must be of such a strong character and personality as to command the respect of the community he is leading. This means that he must be self-reliant and not dependent on charity or the magnanimity of rich and powerful politicians among his followers. Dependence on others will surely make him lose his respect and the ability and courage to tell the truth and convey the message properly.

1. Sub-Theme One: Pre-requisites of an Imam

After the Keynote address, the training proper commenced with paper presentations at the plenary sessions. The first papers presented and discussed are those that are dealing with the 'Pre-requisites of Juma'at Imams' (*Sharuddan Limanci a Musulunci*). Five different scholars and Imams presented on the same topic at the different centers respectively. Dr. Sani Yusuf Birnin Tudu from the Centre for Islamic Studies, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto, presented his own at the Sokoto Centre, Sheikh Imam Muhammad Arsalan Muhammad of the Department of Islamic Law, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, presented his own at the Katsina Centre, Sheikh Muhammad Arabi Abul Fat'hi of Maiduguri, presented his at the Borno center, Kadi Ibrahim Liman of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Bauchi, presented his own at the Bauchi center while Kadi Muhammad Sambo of the Sharia Court of Appeal Niger State presented his own at Minna center. All the papers presented on the Pre-requisites of Juma'at Imams emphasized the followings:

1. The Imam must be an adult of full legal capacity;
2. Must have adequate knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunna.
3. Must have adequate knowledge of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence)
4. Must be physically and emotionally fit.

It is also recommended that the Imam must

- (a) Be honest and upright
- (b) Be patient
- (c) Be humble
- (d) Be simple and moderate in all his dealings with people;
- (e) Be knowledgeable in current world affairs;

- (f) Be self-reliant in terms of his daily family needs;
- (g) Be learned in Arabic language and literature (nahwu,sarfu and balaga)
- (h) Be a teacher with students taking lessons from him
- (i) Be willing to assist individuals and the community at large over their problems
- (j) Avoid being seen or frequenting places usually frequented by people of easy virtues that may tarnish his image.

All the papers in this area talked about the mosque, what it is and what is said about it in the Qur'an and *sunnah* before they delve into discussions. The Imam, who is the head of the mosque and his pre-requisites. On the term '*Masjid*' which is translated as mosque, all the scholars agreed that the word is derived from the word '*sajada*' which means to prostrate. According to scholars the wisdom behind picking the act of '*sajada*' prostration out of all the other activities in prayer to signify and represent the mosque lies in the fact that among all the activities in prayer, the one that brings a person closer to God is the prostration. The Prophet (saw) SAID "The time a person praying is closest to God is at the time he is prostrating (i.e. during *sajada*). Below are verses of the Qur'an that talk on *Masjid* (Mosque).

- (a) Say: "My Lord has commanded justice; and that ye set your whole selves (to Him) at every time and place of prayer (*Masjid*/Mosque) and call upon Him making your devotion sincere as in His sight; such as He created you in the beginning; so shall ye return; (7:29).
- (b) O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer; eat and drink but waste not by excess. For God loveth not the wasters. (7:31).
- (c) It is not for such as join gods with God to visit or maintain the mosques of God while they witness against their own souls to infidelity. The works of such bear no fruit. In fire shall they dwell. (9:17).

- (d) The Mosques of God shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in God and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, and fear none (at all) except God. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance. (9:18).
- (e) Never stand thou therein. There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of thy standing forth (for prayer) therein. In it are men who love to be purified and God loveth those who make themselves pure. (9:108).
- (f) And the places of worship (mosques) are for God (alone), so invoke not any one along with God. (72:18).

The above are few verses from the Glorious Qur'an that talked about the mosque indicating its special place in a Muslim's life.

As for the traditions of the prophet (SAW) that talked about the mosque, the following few can be quoted;

- (a) Whoever build a mosque solely seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah will build a house for him in paradise (*al-Janna*)”
- (b) “The places loved most by Allah are the mosques.”
- (c) “When you see a person frequenting mosques, this is a sign of his unflinching belief (*Iman*) in Allah.”
- (d) “Seven people will be in the Shade of Allah on the Last Day at a time when there will be no other shade except that one“ Among the seven is a person whose heart is tied to the mosque’.The other six are (1) a just ruler (2) a young man who grew up in the worship of God (3) two men who made friends with each other for the sake of God (4) the man who when sought after by a beautiful and noble woman, said to her that he fears God (and rejected her blandishments) (5) the man who,when he gave sadaqa (charity/alms)with his right hand, did not let his left hand know what his right hand gave, and (6) the man who remembered

God in his private chamber with tears filling his eyes. (narrated by Bukhari and Muslim. Hadith number 376 in Riyad-us-Saliheen)

- (e) Give the glad tidings; to the people going to the mosque, of a full light on the Day of Judgment.
- (f) Prayer in the mosque has more rewards 25 folds than a prayer said at home individually.

The prophetic traditions on this subject are many. The above quoted are believed to be sufficient for the purposes of illustrating the prime position accorded to mosque in Islam which further goes on to show that of all acts of worship (*Ibadat*), prayer (*salat*) is the most important. It is therefore clear that the person who is appointed to lead that prayer must be among the best in the community both in terms of his religious knowledge and in terms of the respect he commands in the community. The leader in Prayer (*Imam*) is also the leader in battle and other worldly affairs. It was based on this same analogy that Caliph Abubakar as Siddiq was unanimously accepted as Caliph after the death of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). It should be recalled that in his last days he had asked Abubakar to lead the Muslims in the daily five obligatory prayers.

2. Sub-Theme Two The next sub-theme **Imam as the Conscience of the Muslim Ummah** was mainly focused on how the Imam as a model in the community can use his immense influence and nurture a healthy community. For the Imam to play his role properly, he must be equipped with the best of qualities in line with the Prophets of God (peace be upon them). The Imam as a scholar is seen as an heir to the prophets based on the famous statement of the Prophet (SAW) that “the Muslim scholars are the heirs to the prophets (peace be upon them).”(Bukhari and Muslim). So many papers were also presented and discussed on this sub-theme. There was the papers of Malam Mansur M. Ibrahim of the Centre for Islamic Studies, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto, Sheikh Abdu’aziz Yusuf, the Administrative Secretary of *Jama’atu Nasril Islam* (JNI) Plateau State, Sheikh Muhammad Tukur Adam (Abu Bassam) the Imam of al-

Manar-Juma'at Mosque, Tafawa Balewa Road, Kaduna, Malam Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, the Imam of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Imam Mukhtar Abdullahi, the Secretary of the *Jama'atu Nasril Islam* and the Kebbi State Council of Ulama, and Imam Hassan A. Modibbo of the College of Legal Studies, Yola and the Imam of Jimeta Central Mosque, they all presented at different location of the workshop.

The summary of the main points raised in their papers are to the effect that:

- (a) The mosque is the most important revered place in the life of a Muslim. Building of a mosque was the first thing the prophet (SAW) did on arrival at Madina after the *hijra*. It is a praying ground and prayer is the most important of the acts of worship in the life of a Muslim.
- (b) The Imam is the head of the Mosque who lead the believers in prayer and all other serious activities in their lives like marriage and funerals. It is, therefore, necessary that the first important role in the role of the Imam is teaching and inculcating good behaviour. The mosque is the first school of a believer. The lessons derived from the mosque are more respected than the lessons derived from conventional classrooms. This is because people attend the mosque on their own volition, purely to gain nearness to God, not because they are interested in certificates or any material reward.

It was in the mosque that the Prophet (SAW) taught the Qur'an to his companions. All the four great *Sunni* Schools also took their roots from the Mosque. The Hanafi School took its root from the Kufa Mosque in Iraq, the Maliki School from the prophet's Mosque in Madina, the Shafi'i School from the Sacred Mosque of the Ka'aba, Mecca, while the Hanbali school from the then great mosque of Cairo, Egypt. The Imam must revive the mosque as a center of learning. This is the only way he can serve as a mirror of the Muslim community and as a depository of the conscience of the Muslim Community.

- (c) The Mosque also serves as the administrative headquarters of the Muslim Community. It is the focal center where problems of the Muslim Community are brought and discussed. It is from the mosque that decision is taken as to when and where to send troops to the war front and who to appoint as commander. The leaders of the community are nominated and appointed in the Mosque.
- (d) The Mosque is also to serve as a court where disputes are settled, marriages contracted and dissolved, inheritance shared, legal issues raised and answered, assistance offered to the poor and the needy. The mosque is the best base and anchor for Alternative Dispute Resolutions (ADR). The mosque is also the best correctional center for those who deviate from the moral values of the community.

For the Imam to perform his role effectively, it is necessary that he is learned and highly respected by the community. He must be of high moral integrity and easily accessible to the members of the community he is serving.

Sub-Theme Three: The third sub-them: **Techniques of Planning and Delivering *Khutbah* (Sermon)** was also covered by many scholars among whom are; Sheikh Goni Muhammad Sa'ad Ngamdu, the Secretary, Jama'atu Nasril Islam(JNI), Borno State and the coordinator North East Zone of the JNI, Malam Mansur M. Ibrahim of the Centre for Islamic Studies, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto, Muhammad Tukur Adam (Abu Bassam) the Imam of al-Manar Juma'at Mosque, Tafawa Balewa/Link Road Kaduna Imam Tajudeen Muhammad the Imam of Zone 4 Mosque, Abuja and others.

The presenters reminded the participants that delivering *khutbah* is a privilege and a unique opportunity the Imam gets once a week to remind his followers of their duties to God and to themselves. People gather in his mosque in answering the call of Allah Who ordered that, "O ye who believe! When the call is

proclaimed to prayer on Friday (the Day of Assembly), hasten earnestly to the remembrance of God and leave off business and traffic. That is best for you if ye but know/” (62:9). The prophet (SAW) also enjoined taking special ritual bath on Friday, putting on washed clothes, attending the mosque on time and listening to the *Khutbah* (sermon) attentively. The *Khutbah* is generally agreed by the majority of the Muslim jurists to be an essential part of the Juma’at Prayer. Playing or talking during the *Khutbah* is not only frowned at but is seen by some scholars as capable of vitiating one’s Friday prayers. It is a unique time for the Imam to address all segments of the Umma, the old and the young, the weak and the most powerful. There could not be a better time to send and register a message with the Muslim ummah than through the Friday sermon. Unlike other gatherings, the gathering during Friday prayers has never ceases or dwindled in number. It only increases with the expansion of the ummah. The following key issues are discussed:

- (a) On mounting the pulpit(mimbar) to deliver *khutbah*, the Imam must realize that he is standing in place of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) to deliver his message. He must be courageous, firm, honest and fearless in saying the truth. He must be current and up to date in his knowledge of the Sharia and the current world affairs.
- (b) The Imam must plan his *khutbah* in advance. Be certain of his authorities and information because whatever he says becomes instant authority. Hearsay and unsubstantiated stories must be avoided.
- (c) The *Khutbah* must relate to current issues bothering the Muslim ummah.
- (d) The *Khutbah* must be delivered in the language understood by the listeners. Even though some jurists insist that it has to be in Arabic language, all the scholars agree that there is no harm if translation in the local language of the listeners at a certain stage of the *Khutbah* is made.
- (e) The *Khutbah* must be moderate, neither too long nor too short.
- (f) The *Khutbah* must contain four stages; (1) supplication and glorification of God, (2) Praises of and seeking blessings for the Prophet (SAW); (3)

The main theme of the *Khutbah* and (4) Prayers for the Muslim community.

- (g) The Imam must avoid excessive repetitions of the same *khutbah* or the same issues. He must avoid direct mentioning of names of individuals.

4. Sub-Theme Four: The Fourth sub-theme: Issues Relating to **Reproductive Health** and the Role the Imams can Play in Arresting Maternal Mortality and Reducing the Suffering Women undergo in Childbirth. These issues, the discussion of which was led by experts, in all cases, consultant obstetrics and Gynecologist, attracted the most interest and attention of the Imams. All issues relating to Reproductive health were raised and discussed. Emphasis was laid on,

- (a) The care of the pregnant mother. The discussion here focused on the need to provide balanced diet to the pregnant mother and to make sure she attends the antenatal clinic regularly and as recommended by the experts.
- (b) The need to mobilize the community towards eradicating the three delays that affects pregnant women
- (c) The need to go to the hospital immediately labour begins to avoid losing any of the two, i.e. the mother or the baby.
- (d) The need to delay conception and child-birth until when the girl/wife is physically and emotionally mature to avoid complications during delivery. This raises the issue of early marriage, which all the Muslim scholars agree is not prohibited by Islam as long as the consummation of the marriage will be delayed until such time when the wife is mature enough and capable of sexual intercourse.
- (e) The need for proper care for both the mother and the child.
- (f) The permissibility of spacing your children in such a way as to give enough room for the mother to fully recover from the previous childbirth and the child to enjoy properly the care and attention of its mother.

- (g) The need to study and understand the nature and types of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and how the Imams can help in curtailing them.

At the end of the discussion of the papers on Reproductive Health, the Imams appreciated the issues raised and promised to sensitize the Muslim ummah in their various mosques on the importance and necessity of taking the issues of Reproductive Health as matters of priority in checking and reducing maternal mortality.

5. Sub-Theme Five The fifth sub-theme was: **Educating the Imams on HIV/AIDS** and how they can assist in fighting it. The papers in this area were also presented by experts in the field: The papers in this area started with the discussion of what is meant by HIV/ AIDS,its history and how it was discovered and the effort made so far in trying to find a cure for it.Detailed explanation on the ways and methods of contracting it were also thouroughly discussed.And finally,the breakthrough so far in terms of the treatment that slows it”s effect and where and how to get the treatment and drugs,were also discussed. At the end of the discussions the Imams appreciated the facts that;

- (a) HIV/AIDS deserves the concern and efforts of each and every one of us. It is a scourge that affects each and every member of the Muslim community. If it has not affected one directly, it must have affected his relation, friend or even a neighbour or just someone they know..
- (b) The spread and contraction of HIV/AIDS does not stop at sexual intercourse alone. There are so many innocent ways of contracting the disease.
- (c) People living with HIV must not be stigmatized and rejected. Even if they contract the disease through some illegal ways. They are still our Muslim brothers and sisters. They deserve our sympathy and care.
- (d) It is in the interest of the individual and the Muslim Ummah at large that tests be carried out on intending couples before marriage, to avoid the spread of the disease and to protect innocent unsuspecting family

members. The Imams agreed that it is even part of the principles of Islamic Family Law that you ascertain the nature and status of your intending partner in marriage before committing yourself

6. Sub-Theme six: The sixth and the last sub-theme is the Muslim Youth and how the Imams can re-orient the youth to be one of the most useful member of the Muslim Community. Many papers were presented on this sub-them, among which are those by Mal. Umar Muhammad Kani of Aminu Kano College of Islamic Legal Studies, Kano, Kadi Ahmad Bose, of the Sharia Court of Appeal Taraba and that of Alhaji Muhammad Abdullahi a Director in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Maiduguri.

The papers in this area emphasized the fact that;

- (a) Clear social goals and visions must be set for the youth or assist them to set a goal for themselves. This is the only way they can grow with a sense of purpose and commitment to the goals and values of the ummah. This involves Imams drawing them closer to them and understanding them properly.
- (b) The youths must be provided with proper role model, the ideal-typical, from whom they will copy and re-model their lives. Such models will guide their conduct and behaviour at all times.
- (c) A conducive environment with full employment must be created which will make it difficult for the youths to descend to vices, drugs, political thuggery etc. the mosque can serve as a center where people are helped to find jobs and where modern facilities that will attract the youths are fully provided and installed.
- (d) The gap between the elders and the youth must be bridged, otherwise mutual mistrust and misunderstanding between the old generation and our youth will remain.

Finally, all the papers on the Muslim youth emphasized the fact that the youth is the most valuable asset of any community. The Muslim Ummah cannot afford to

ignore this vast resources of the Ummah. The entire future of the ummah depends on what nature of youth, the Ummah is able to nurture. It is not enough to blame the youth for lawlessness and lack of respect for elders. The problems of the youths must have emanated from the mistake and faults of the elders. It is said that when the older generations lost their bearings, the younger generations are also lost with them.

Other papers presented related to how the Imam can use his privileged position to assist in reconciling disputes among the community through what is known as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). This is a method of settling disputes outside the courts through the principles of *Sulh* (reconciliation) which is sanctioned and praised by the Qur'an in many verses of the Qur'an. Considering the high cost of litigation and the unbearable delays in our courts. The solution offered through the ADR method is certainly the best. A paper to this effect was presented by Dr. M.S. Abubakar and S.U.D. Keffi of the Centre for Islamic Legal Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Barrister Sa'idu Sa'ad of the Muslim Lawyers Association, Maiduguri also presented papers on this topic.

The papers in this area emphasized the following points;

- (a) That the main objective of ADR (SULH) is the promotion of peace, harmony and reconciliation between disputants;
- (b) That Sulh reduces unnecessary procrastination and delays which are associated with our conventional courts in which some cases linger for years or even decades;
- (c) That the Quran enjoined the Muslims to resort to sulh in all their disputes.

God says,

“If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them-----make peace between them with justice, and be fair, for God loves those who are fair (and just). The Believers are but a single brotherhood, so make peace and

reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers, and fear God that ye may receive mercy.” (Qur’an 49:9-10).

That the Prophet (SAW) has said,

“Conciliation (settlement) between Muslims is valid, except that which legalizes and unlawful act or makes lawful and illegal act” (Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi).

- The essential elements of *Sulh* consist of offer and acceptance between the parties e.g. where a party says “I agree to pay you N10,000.00 out of your N15,000.00 in my possession” and the other says ‘I accept,”
- The parties to the *sulh* must have complete legal capacity and in some cases a guardian can represent his minor ward.
- The Imam presiding over the *sulh* must have the necessary qualities of integrity, impartiality, knowledge and acceptability within the community.

Another presentation that attracted interesting discussions was on the necessity of Skill Development towards self-reliance of the Imams. Papers on this sub-theme were presented by Ustaz Hussain Zakariyya of Abuja and Kadi Ibrahim Liman of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Bauchi. They emphasized the necessity of Imam having a job, a business and a trade from where he earns his living and from where he is supporting his family. They all cited the good examples of the Prophets and Messengers of God (peace be upon them). Some were shepherds, blacksmith, etc. the leaders of the four *sunni* schools were not idle men waiting for their followers to bring them *Zakkat* or *sadaqa*. They were all self-reliant and independent. In fact it was this financial independence that made them fearless in their pronouncements. Poverty was never a sign of piety. It was and is still, the sign of weakness. It humbles a person.

For the Imam to command the respect of his followers and to be able to stand up and call to the way of God without any fear or favour, he must avoid looking up to

his followers for his sustenance. They all agreed that there is nothing wrong if Islamic Government in a State stipulated some wages or salary for Imams. They can accept it, even though; it is still dangerous, if they relied on it solely. Where they run into a conflict or disagreement with the Government, there will be problems. The Government may decide to withdraw the wages or the Imams may be tempted to compromise so as to save their wages and, may be, their seats for Hajj and Umrah.

Jobs and businesses that will be fitting to the status and role of the Imam were suggested including, of course, running schools and accepting payment for their services.

Other papers on different topics, but all related to the theme of the training were presented and discussed. These include topics like 'The Role of Imam in Re-orienting the Muslim Ummah presented by Imam Abdullahi Adam Jalingo. Related to it was the paper titled "The message of Mosque in Islam" presented by Dr. Abdurrahman Ahmad al-Imam from al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. Malam Hassan Idris of the Centre for Islamic legal Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria also presented a paper titled "The Contribution of the Imams in Nurturing a Strong Healthy Ummah." Malam Umar Paiko also presented a paper on the same issue. In all these presentations, the central issue was the need for the Imams to properly use their positions and the mosque for conveying the message of Islam to their followers and to regard doing so as an act of worship not looking forward to any material reward in this world. For the Muslims to take their proper place in today's world, the knowledge of current affairs, modern technology and the way Western Civilization operates are necessary.

The issue of Reproductive health and HIV/AIDS were not only taken seriously, in fact discussions on them evoked the widest interest. The participants went back home more informed and determined to do something to improve the lots of the

muslim ummah. New awareness and interest was generated on these current issues, the discussions of which would have been a taboo some years back.

APPENDIX II

SUMMARY OF COMMUNIQUES

Communiqués issued at the end of the Five Weeks Training Workshops organized and funded by the Adolescent health and Information Project (AHIP) with the collaboration of the Centre for Islamic Legal Studies (CILS), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) for Juma'at Imams from the Northern States of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, held between August 18th to September 21st 2006.

Preamble

Three Hundred and Fifty Juma'at Imams from the Northern States of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja attended the training workshop organized by AHIP with the collaboration of the CILS/ABU and the JNI at Sokoto, Katsina, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Minna. The main theme of the training is "The Role of Juma'at Imams in Promoting Family Health." Six sub-themes were identified, papers presented and discussed on them;

- The Pre-requisites of an Imam
- The Imam as the Conscience of the Muslim Community;
- The Technique of Developing and Delivering *Khutbah* (Sermons)
- Reproductive Health and Family Health Problems and the Role of the Imam in solving them
- The Scourge of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic and the Role Imams can play in arresting it
- The Problems of the Muslim Youth and the Role the Imams can Play in Solving them.

Observations

Scholars and Imams from all walks of life were invited to prepare and present papers on the theme and the sub-themes as listed above. Over 15 different presentations were made. After exhaustive discussion of the issues raised, the following observations were made;

1. That the office of the Imam is of paramount importance in the life of the Muslim Ummah. For the Imam to play such crucial role properly, he must possess these basic three qualities;
 - Sufficient and Adequate knowledge of Islam, the Qur'an and the *Sunna*, knowledge of contemporary issues affecting the *Ummah* and Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*).

- High Moral Integrity, pleasing personality, good appearance and physical and emotional stability
 - Self-Reliance and the good sense of and commitment to social responsibility.
2. That in most cases succession or inheritance and not merit is followed in selecting Imams especially in our traditional cities thereby sacrificing and compromising quality and knowledge.
 3. That most of the sermons (*Khutbah*) being delivered on Fridays are outdated and not relevant to our current situations.
 4. That the mosques are not properly utilized. The real functions of the mosque are not performed. The mosques are not well maintained and they lack basic facilities necessary in our contemporary world, i.e. good and functional toilets, water supply etc.
 5. That the Imams have a role to play in promoting family health and in sensitizing the Muslim Umma in arresting the spread of HIV/AIDS and in also reducing maternal mortality.
 6. That the Imams can play a very important role in re-orienting the Muslim youth who is presently far away from the Islamic moral values.
 7. That Imams can assist in settling disputes among their followers through ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) method, thereby minimizing cost and delay that are bedeviling our law courts.
 8. That the Imams can help in promoting women's rights and respect to women and children through their constant sermons and admonishing.
 9. That it is permissible under the principles of Islamic law to conduct HIV status checks before marriage by couples intending to get married.

Recommendations/Resolutions

Following the above observations, the workshop resolved and made the following recommendations;

1. That Imams must review their *Khutbah* (sermons) to reflect the current situations and problems facing the Muslim *Ummah*.

2. That the appointment of Imams must be based on merit and not on hereditary basis.
3. That the proper role of the mosque as a center of learning and community mobilization must be restored.
4. That Imams must strive to know and understand the contemporary world politics and on local politics so as to give a more effective leadership in their mosques.
5. That our mosques must be re-designed to contain modern facilities that can make them more attractive to our youths and the generality of our umma, i.e. must be fitted with good and functional toilets, a place for women reserved at the back, a bookshop and a library etc.
6. That the Imams must sensitize the community to appreciate the importance of healthy family in the physical and emotional development of the Ummah.
7. That it is necessary to allow our women, especially pregnant mothers to attend antenatal and post-natal care clinics as a measure in reducing maternal mortality.
8. That in Islam, it is permissible to conduct checks and screening before marriage so as to avoid the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.
9. That the Imams must devise ways and means in making our mosque youths friendly so as to attract them.
10. That Guidance and Counseling centers and Dispute Resolution centers be set up in each mosque.
11. That Training Workshops like this one be organized annually or at reasonable intervals for the continuous education of the Imams.
12. That a National Imams Council be set up which will look after the interests of the Imams and the Ummah in general.
13. That the Imams should call on the community to show concern and accommodate people living with HIV or AIDS and stop stigmatizing them as this sends them to our enemies in their quest for care and attention

14. That it is absolutely necessary for Juma'at Imams and in fact all other Imams and religious scholars to be self-reliant and maintain a trade or business to safeguard their dignity and honour.

Finally, the participants registered their thanks and appreciation to AHIP who took the responsibility of funding the entire programme. It is also hoped that AHIP will in the future continue its support to the Council of Imams that is coming up very soon.

All Praises are to God, the Almighty Who guide us to organize the Training workshop and through Whose Assistance and Mercy, we were able to successfully conclude it.

Signed

Chairman

Secretary