

THE MASS MEDIA AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF RELIGIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The basic concern of this study is the involvement of the mass communications media in the commercialization of religions in Nigeria. This paper has tried to examine how African Religion (Afrel), Christianity and Islam, which are said to be the principal religions in Nigeria, make use of the mass communications media, such as the press, radio, television, audio and video cassettes, tracts, pamphlets and books for commercialization purpose. Based on the findings of this research, it appears that gullibility has been part of humanity from time immemorial, and so, bad merchants of religion can always have a field-day. The study also identifies some good merchants of religion who patronise the media, such as some genuine preachers, singers, poets, playwrights, and so on. On the whole, the public is advised to be watchful and discerning of the pronouncements and deeds of merchants of religion who reach-out through the mass communications media.

Introduction

Ordinarily, religion, as a concept, evokes the idea of the supernatural and the mystical, while the word commerce refers to one of the most mundane human activities. In the seventies, I could hear people talking about proliferation of churches with little or no consciousness that it was related to commerce. Probably, most people thought, then, that it had no more to do than with leadership crises and disagreements over doctrinal issues. But the commercial aspect seems widely focused, currently. Likewise, commercial motives could be perceived in respect of many Islamic leaders. And, since commercialization is a human art and act, it cannot be said to be totally out of the purview of African Religion (acronymed Afrel).

The basic concern of this study is the involvement of the mass communications media in the commercialization of religions in Nigeria. One would like to examine how Afrel, Christianity and Islam, which are said to be the principal religions in Nigeria, make use of the mass communications media, such as the press, radio, television, audio and video cassettes, tracts, pamphlets and books for commercialization purpose. Of course, the Eckankar, Rosicrucian Order, Godianism, Eastern religious traditions, and so on, also feature in the mass communications media in Nigeria, to some extent, but they are not the concern of this paper.

It is necessary to examine merchants of religion as much as one can in a concise research, with the aim of providing some discernment for victims and those who stand the chance of becoming victims of merchants of religion. Gullible persons can be seen to abound in Nigeria, as in many parts of the world. Dan Korem (1989, p. 25) observes that "age, education, status in the community, and intelligence are not factors when it comes to being taken in". The harsh economic situation in Nigeria appears to have heightened the level of gullibility. The ingenuity of the merchants of religion must therefore be studied and x-rayed.

Commercialization of Religions Through the Mass Communications Media in Nigeria

Historically, Christianity came into Nigeria from Europe and from Europeans who had relocated to America. Many scholars believe that the Western world adopted Christianity "as a camouflage to attract many other societies of the world to her commercial enterprise and material well-being" (Abas, 2003, p. 11). Many Christians who took part in the ancient crusades were accused of looting even fellow Christians (Schreck, 1995, p. 57*f*). And the Arabs who carried out Jihads in the name of Islam were suspected of having done so, for the opportunity to conquer fertile lands and improve their economic situation. Hence they always refused to give-up the rulership of any land that they might have "conquered for Islam" (Fajana and Biggs, 1987, p. 161). Thus, financial or commercial motif has almost always been behind many Christian and Islamic programmes. Priests and Priestesses of Afrel also have their own ways of using their religion to make money; the fake ones in particular are said to be good at prescribing sacrifices that would be of benefit to them and not what the oracle orders. But, many interviewees believe that there is greater strictness and fear in Afrel than in Christianity and Islam.

It seems that there has always been commercialization of religions in human history. As a primal religion, one can set Afrel as a typical example. In Yorubaland, for instance, some devotees of some divinities, such as Shango, Orisa-nla and Yemoja do go round praying for people in the name of their divinities, to earn money. Some adherents of Ogun do it poetically and musically. During and outside of Egungun (masquerade) festival, some masquerades would pray, sing and dance for pecuniary purposes.

When commercialization of Christianity started in Nigeria, it followed a similar pattern, somehow. In an experience dating back to seventies and eighties, pastors, prophets and evangelists could be seen visiting homes and market places, preaching and praying for people, Sometimes people may give them money voluntarily, or as it happens in buses and market places, the "man of God" may sell books or ask for donation in support of "the mission"⁷. Even where tracts are distributed free of charge, the tracts contain invitation to the appropriate address, where those who respond will eventually contribute money, one way or the other, toward the production of "free tracts" and keeping "the mission" going. As Fidelis K. Obiora (1999) notes;

When you go to see a 'man of God' who develops power, sees past, present and future, you pay the 'gate fee' and also the 'consultation fee'. That is only the pre-able (p. 57).

It is necessary to remark that the situation is not different, when compared with Islam. Abubakar Gimba's admonition of his fellow Muslims is very apt. He notes;

The other *kabaair* of the *Ummah* is laziness. Our attitude to work is far from satisfactory. And begging, which is far becoming the most visible profession especially in the townships of Muslim communities is an offshoot of this poor attitude to work ethics. Begging is not a virtue, but toiling hard to earn one's livelihood is (2002, p. 16).

Indeed, when one sees Arabic pupils (*almajirai*) and some adult Muslims begging particularly on Thursdays and Fridays, the impression is that Islam encourages a culture of begging. Y. A. Quadri (2002, pp. 2, 3 & 7) explains that although Prophet Muhammad introduced *sadaqah* (charity), "to inculcate the spirit of brotherhood and caring for the needy, and the poor among Muslims", Islam "discourages Muslims from taking to begging while it extols dignity of labour". Yet, since the begging is done in the name of Allah (Islamic name for God) and Prophet Muhammad, and some of the beggars hold the *tesbiu* (Islamic beads), one can regard it as a form of commercialization of Islam. Religion is commercialized whenever a religious activity is motivated by financial consideration.

Many Nigerians are currently involved in commercialization of religions, and many of them do so through the mass media.

A history of mass communications media is presented in a book edited by Wilbur Schramm., titled: *Mass Communications*, According to Schramm (1975, p, 5ff) bits and pieces developed down the ages in various parts of the world, until the media attained the current stage of massive development. There is no doubt that the Western world is the most advanced in terms of the mass media. Relevant equipment and gadgets are imported therefrom, as well as from some Asian and Australian countries. Probably because Christianity was introduced into Nigeria from the West, and it is still very much influenced by happenings over there, the mass media were first made use of by merchants of Christian faith and practices. The purpose has been to popularize and sell their services, whether genuine or counterfeit services, to the greatest number of Nigerians possible, far and near.

Commercialization of religion through the mass media might have started with Christianity, but many merchants of Islam have joined the fray. In the past, though the motivations were different Muslims realised that they had to start building schools to arrest the conversion of their children to Christianity through the mission-established schools.

Many Muslims now commercialize Islam through the mass media. Like their Christian counterparts, they would buy airtime on radio and television to project and advertise their programmes and activities. They would sell audio and videotapes containing music, drama, homilies, worship, revivals

and prayer. They would distribute tracts, launch and sell books. One also read about them in the dailies, weeklies and magazines.

Religion is commercialized whenever it involves individuals and organizations that do everything for the purpose of making a living, whether on the short or long term. What one heard was that many traditional churches and mosques have also adopted commercial strategies, and their members are thoroughly sapped. Many lay persons said they could no longer cope with numerous levies, demand for donations, requesting members to do thanksgiving for birthdays and family harvests, launching pastors' books, and celebrating their birthdays and anniversaries of ordination. Every religious item in the mass media is suspected to be for commercialization, if only because such items have advertorial and projectionary possibilities.

One could see through the mass media that, while merchants of Christianity try to sell their ministrations by appealing to the power of God through the name and blood of Jesus Christ, many merchants of Islam preach that miracles do happen by the grace of the Holy Qur'an, *tesbiu*, and prayer to Allah by an appeal to the honour of Prophet Muhammad. Generally, in Nigeria, an Islamic *alfa* is perceived as a priest in Afrel who takes care of people's spiritual, magical, and medical problems. Their most popular practice is to write with ink some Quranic verses on a slab, and wash it for their clients to drink. They are also known for giving *lira*, *inter alia*, to people with spiritual problems.

One discovered that many merchants of Christianity do read some portions in the book of Psalms (in the Bible) over water for their clients to drink. Then, they would give or sell holy water and sacred oils, and prescribe fasting for their clients. Sometimes, they would ask a person to go and bathe in a river late in the night. The "man of God" may or may not go with the person. An example of that is found in an edition of *the Global Excellence* (April 9, 2002 p. A2f), in a report titled: "Nike Oshinowo's Spiritual Secrets Exposed: Bathes Naked in Public to Win Men". The magazine gathered that: "Whenever the prophet works for the leggy Oshinowo, she immediately storms Abuja to test the 'work' by wooing and winning juicy contracts through her influential lovers, who after eating the forbidden fruit, compensate her by granting her request."

Coincidentally, more women than men could be seen patronizing merchants of religion, in Christianity, Islam and Afrel. But a major lesson that one can deduce from the report just related (above) is that only people of fortune can sponsor commercialization of religion through the mass media. According to *Global Excellence* (June 18, 2002, p. 8), when T. B. Joshua (a Pastor) celebrated his 39th birthday, his guests included a governor, an ex-minister, and ten traditional rulers, among other dignitaries. And when Kris Okotie (another Pastor) launched his book: *The Last Outcast*, he said a man and his family gave him five million naira, not just for the book, but also because the man and his family "have been blessed by our programme on the TV called *Apocalypse*" (Oniyokor, 2002, p. 4). The fact that the donor craved anonymity makes him a suspect. It is not possible to know what he does for a living to be able to donate five million naira in one fell swoop. A Yoruba adage says: *hale oro I'egbin* (the origin of wealth is corrupt). That is abundantly demonstrated in the story of Nike Oshinowo (above). The adage is also apt in the case of "Christ Embassy", that is founded and run by Chris Oyakhilome. In essence, it was reported by *Global Excellence* (April 22, 2003) that:

In March, a Pastoral Assistant with Christ Embassy, Lawrence Agada, who's also a staff of Sheraton Hotels and Towers, Ikeja, was held over the fraud totaling £439 million. When he was interrogated by the police, Agada confessed that he used the larger amount of the money in helping the gospel in Christ Embassy (p. 30).

Another pastor, Akano, was quoted by the same magazine (p. 30) as explaining that Christ Embassy, being a large congregation, it would be impossible for Pastor Chris to keep tabs on everyone. He adds that since "the money was given for the work of God and not to Pastor Chris Oyakhilome as a person, whoever wants the money Lawrence Agada stole and gave to the church should go and ask God for it. He, however, admits that what Agada had done was wrong. He concluded by advising Oyakhilome "to show magnanimity of heart and see what can be done to assist Lawrence Agada". Isn't it amazing that Pastor Akano expressed no sympathy at all for the Sheraton Hotels? He reminds one of the adage: "Birds of the same feather flock together".

It seems that merchants of religion, whether in Christianity, Islam, or Afrel, are after money, and very often, it, does not matter how they get it or from whom. And when this is related to the mass media, where a lot of money is needed to prosecute commercialization, then, there is hardly any limit to the extent the merchants can go in their search for money. There is the reported case of a Pastor who admitted being a patron to a gang of

armed robbers. The report has it that:

Pastor Omoregie ... denied going out for any robbery himself, but admitted enjoying from the loots, adding 'I sold two of the vehicles to some people. I normally give any vehicle brought to me to a spray painter to change the colour immediately' (Abubakar, 2003, p. 7).

Co incidentally, a Pastor, Okotie (2001, pp. 4 & 5) alleged that Pastors T. B. Joshua and Chris Oyakhilome were "in fraudulent business", fronting for certain organisations, and so, they were "spending money that nobody knows where they are getting it from". Okotie made the allegation in the year 2001, while the story of the stolen money that was given to Oyakhilome's "Christ Embassy" happened in 2003. The principal claim of Okotie, then, was that the two friends (Joshua and Oyakhilome) were plotting to assassinate him.

Some other headlines include: "Fight in the House of God" over "proceeds of a thanksgiving" (Mordi, 2003, p. 3); "Delta Police Nab Woman Pastor for Robbery", she said "this is devil's work" (Abubakar, 2003; p. 10); and: "He was taken to Church for Healing, But He was killed: His Eye was Plucked, His Nose Sliced", the Pastor told the police "that rats in the church must have eaten up the eye" (Williams 2003, p. 11).

A fact discovered in this study is that successful merchants of religion do not have to indulge in armed robbery or homicides that are related to money-making rituals. In America, where the "prosperity gospel" is said to have, originated, the approach has been to teach that prosperity has been won for Christians by Jesus Christ, and a Christian only needs to claim it by giving to God. According to a study by Gloria Copeland, as quoted by Paul Gifford (1990), the teaching is summarized thus:

You give \$1 for the Gospel's sake and \$100 belongs to you. You give \$10 and receive \$1,000. Give \$1,000 and receive \$100,000. Give one airplane and receive one hundred times the value of the airplane. Give one car and the return would furnish you a lifetime of cars. In short, Mark 10,30 is a very good deal (p. 15).

As Gifford (pp. 14 & 15) further notes, in practice, giving to God means giving to "the man of God" who is preaching the message. And "this doctrine of prosperity-through-giving has proved very effective in persuading people to meet the expenses of very costly ministries", such as using the mass media, the television in particular.

Another effective approach has been identified in the Nigerian context, by Wale Abiodun (2003). He notes how Samson Ayorinde would say at his monthly anointing services, for example:

There is somebody here tonight whose business has collapsed due to evil forces. God has touched your business. Expect a big contract very soon... In the following anointing night, a man came to testify from Ebonyi State how he got a N605 million contract (p. 25).

To speak in general terms, with loaded language, as Ayorinde is reported to have done, while addressing several thousand of individuals, is to touch one person or the other accurately, and the person would think: "the man of God has known my secret", while in actual fact, what was involved was exploitation of life possibilities - saying things that sometimes happen to human beings in life, with the assumption that it must have happened to one person or the other in a big and gullible crowd. One can notice an identical approach in some other media evangelists, such as Enoch Adejare Adeboye, of the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

The realization emerged that merchants of Christianity are much more visible in the mass media in Nigeria than merchants of Islam and Afrel. Yet, there are near-innumerable *alfas* and Afrel diviners in nooks and crannies of Nigeria, whose activities are not exposed in the mass media. On many occasions, however, Islam is commercialized on television, radio, and marketed audio and video tapes. Some *alfas*, like many diviners in Afrel, are said to dupe their clients, and ensure that they have a carnal knowledge of some of the women that go to them for solution to some problems. Similarly, a traditional healer may tell his yellow fever client, for instance, that along with yellow fever, some complications have been added by evil forces (an allusion to witches and wizards), whereas the problem may not be more than yellow fever (a plot to

dupe!).

In a film by some Muslim youths on television (NTA, Ilorin, 2003), a particular *Alfa* was depicted as a greedy person who used wicked charms to kill his opponents. On radio and television, one could hear an *alfa* asking Muslims to approach *alfas* for solution to all their spiritual, physical, mental and social problems. Y. A. Quadri (2002, p. 9) notes that many *alfas* "render spiritual services to their clients and commercialize some Islamic functions, such as '*aqiqah* (naming ceremony) and *janazah* (funeral service)". One may add *Wattimatim-Nikah* (Marriage ceremony), *Walimatu 'I-Qur'an* (Arabic pupils' graduation ceremony), and *Walimatu-Sahadah* (graduation ceremony to the status of an *alfa*).

With specific reference to Afrel, it is probably right to aver that play wrights and theatre groups commercialize the religion through the mass media much more than any other person or association. That happens when they review their plays in newspapers, advertise or display them on radio and television, and as they sell them in videotapes. Plays, such as *Shango*, by Duro Ladipo; *Aiye* and *Jaiyesinmi* by Hubert Ogunde, and *Kunrunmi*, by Ola Rotimi, are outstanding, but many other fantastic plays produced in Nigeria also contain some aspects of Afrel, in songs, incantations, proverbs, worship, divination, and so on. Secular playwrights, such as Wole Soyinka, and many theatre groups very often portray Afrel in positive terms, while most Christian and Islamic plays more often than not depict the religion negatively. Yet, Tasie (2003, p. 14), observed that: "Whenever we have the so-called religious clashes in Nigeria, I would dare to posit that it is either because of bad Christianity and bad Islam, bad Christians and bad Muslims or all of the above".

Another group that tends to commercialize Afrel through the mass media consists of merchants of African traditional medicines who advertise their wares on radio and television. Very often, they would claim that they inherited the medicines or "powers" from their ancestors, to whom they pay homage to ensure the effectiveness of the products. That is pure African religious tradition. According to Ayanlola (1995, p. 5), Olubiyide Ogunyemi noted that: "We pay homage to elders. We take instructions from them. We prepare medicine, but they perfect it". Interestingly, many Christians and Muslims are involved in the trade.

The experience in Yorubaland leads one to affirm also that many African traditional singers, such as Lasisi Ayanyemi (Atokowagbowonile), Ayinla Adegoke (Adegator), Ogunlowo and Motewo-ola of Ado-Awaye, and some others, such as Sunday Adeniyi (Sunny Ade) in his early years in the musical industry, commercialize Afrel, through the mass media. With particular reference to Sunny Ade, the phrase "in his early years " is used because one is not sure if he will still sing about Ogun (the Yoruba patron divinity for those dealing in iron and steel), as he did in the past.

Headlines that indicate commercialization of Afrel include: "There is no Magic in Ifa;" (Moreland, 2003, p. 20); "Americans Attest to Ifa's Power" (Abimbola, 2003, p. 35); and "All Religions are Ifa-compliant" (Olanrewaju, 2003, p. 19); (Ifa is the Yoruba traditional divinatory system of Orunmila, God's minister in charge of human destiny). On regular bases, some Afre! festivals are publicized annually in the press, on radio and television, with the intention of attracting many people from far and near, with all the financial benefits that can accrue from pilgrims, tourists, or a carnival. Tumultuous number of persons coming into a town or village can create considerable commercial opportunities. Describing the events at the Osun Oshogbo festival of the year 2003, Olapade (2003) reported that:

The indigenes got a full taste of the clamoured dividend of tourism. Buy and selling went on for hours even at the dead of the night, traders and little children trading on petty things like packaged (pure) water, bread, cigarette, etc. were still outside at past midnight... the revenue generated during this period cannot be realised or come by in a month or two (p. B6).

He also touched succinctly on the pilgrimage aspect of the festival when he noted that:

Even before the festival was kicked off, people have rushed to the Osun shrine to perform private sacrifices and collect quantity of the Osun river

water believed to be a remedy to all kinds of illness. Also some spiritualists who have been patronizing the grove for years too were been visited by their believers and I tell you this people also reap from the fruit of tourism, as the seekers drop money for prayers to be said for them (p. B7).

Olapade fails to distinguish between tourism and pilgrimage. Nevertheless, his report is reminiscent of the river at Lourdes in France, where the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, is said to have appeared in 1850s. The water of the river is believed to have "healing effects". According to O'Carroll (1994, p. 528) "Lourdes is the most frequented shrine of our Lady in Europe, drawing many more than five million pilgrims annually". What is more, Olapade (p. B7) also has it that at the Osun Oshogbo festival, "foreigners outnumbered local tourists within Nigeria and the host state, Osun". That is predicable of several Afrel festivals in Nigeria, such as Eyo in Lagos, Olojo in Ife, Argungu fishing festival in Argungu, Kebbi State, and Mmanwu festival in Enugu.

Effects of Commercialization of Religions Through the Mass Media in Nigeria

There can hardly be any doubt that **commercialization** of religions through the mass communications media has been very effective in Nigeria. Not only because the merchants of religion have been able to reach Nigerians *en masse*, but also because there is no better way of presenting gimmicks and manipulations as reality than in the mass media, particularly in film and television choreography. Even those who sell religious music and homilies in tapes, have the chance of packaging their points neatly for the consumers, and they advertise them on radio and television.

In essence, through the mass media, merchants of religion in Nigeria have been able to attract a lot of followership and patronage. What is more, many of them have achieved financial breakthroughs. Many merchants of religion have moved from rags to riches, living in the "comfort of God" or the gods, as the case may be. As one views many of the merchants of religion on television or video, one could see that they are not among the poor, even when they appear to dress simply. Some of them can be seen to be really rich, when judged by their gorgeous appearances. Indicative headlines include; "Prophet T. B. Joshua's Synagogue Splashes N18m on 38 Plots of Land: Plans to Build Multi-million Naira Cathedral" (Global Excellence, June 18, 2002, p. 8); "Pastors Bimbo & Taiwo Odukoya Buy M250 Million Land" (Global Excellence, December 10, 2002, p. 5); "Bishop Mike Okonkwo Renovates Church with Millions of Naira" (Global Excellence, November 19, 2002, p. 8); and "Kris Okotie Squanders 1430m on Presidential Project. Can't Pay His Workers." (Global Excellence, April 15, 2003, p. 4). It is said that Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, is a "highly respected and humble man of God" but his son Adeolu, is said to live extravagantly in London, sparing no cost at all. The *Fame* magazine (October, 2003, p. 8) has it that he "Acquires 500m pounds home, cruises in big cars with special Reg. Nos.", for instance.

It may be that the mass media houses have not focused much on the financial fortune of merchants of Islam and Afrel, but, there is no doubt that many of them are materially successful. Very often, they are polygynous and have a fleet of vehicles, aides and houses.

Many of those who commercialize religion through the mass media in Nigeria do not address matters relating to causes of poverty and underdevelopment, such as mismanagement, corruption and other forms of social injustice and wickedness. With specific reference to merchants of Christianity, **Gifford (1990) notes that:**

The gospel of prosperity tells the peoples of the world's poorest continent that material prosperity will be provided by 'a miracle-working God'...

Thus the gospel of prosperity functions by diverting all attention **from** the economic and social situation (p. 16).

Probably because many of the merchants of religion divert the people's attention from the causes of

their plight, with particular reference to corrupt government functionaries, they usually enjoy governmental patronage, and support. Very often, people who follow merchants of religion try to justify their action by saying that they believe because the "man of God" that they are following has effected this or that miracle. But, somehow, none of the investigated cases happened as reported. For instance, a man who was said to have ceased using medicated eye glasses after being prayed-over by a "woman of God" was found using glasses still. A lame person was said to have stopped using crutches, but it was not true. When I asked him about the miracle, the man replied: "All I can say is that I am still living in hope and trust in God".

The greatest challenge before those who commercialize religion through the mass media in Nigeria, is probably that their nefarious activities are more readily exposed through the mass media. That often mortgages their success, and diminishes their followership, to some extent. No wonder Christianity is said to have drastically reduced in number of adherents in the Western world of Europe, America, and Australia, where the mass media work even better. Efforts at resuscitating the past glory of Christianity in the Western part of the world are reflected in such books as: *Christ in Eclipse: A Clinical Study of the Good Christian* (Sheed, 1978); *Lost Christianity* (Needleman, 1980); *Claiming the Centre: Churches and Conflicting Worldviews'* (Rogers, 1995); and *Reclaiming the Church: Where the Mainline Church went Wrong and What to Do about It.* (Cobb, 1997) Consequently, the West already describe the present age as a post-Christian era.

In the Nigerian context, apart from scandalous reports, such as: "Unholy Deal: Pastor, Conmen Trade Words over ^6m Scam", and those cited earlier in this write-up, there have been major studies on atrocities committed by some merchants of religion in Nigeria. Such studies include: *Heralds of Capitalism or Christ?* (Boer, 1984) and *The Divine Deceit: Business in Religion* (Obiora, 1999).

Even though Christian examples have been mostly cited, many merchants of Islam and Afrel are not any better. A report has it, for instance, that some traditional rain makers that were contracted for J42m by Lucky Igbinedion, the Edo State Governor, to ensure a rain-free time for the concluding ceremony of the National Sports Festival, held in Benin, ran away with the money, after realizing that "their power could not subdue the down-pour". (Obyede, 2002, p. 5) These reports, and many others regarding monetary and sexual criminal acts can only ridicule many merchants of religion. The reports seem to have put religion in a critical and skeptical box. When combined with personal experiences, it was said that the reports have caused many Nigerians to distance themselves from religion altogether.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that many religions are commercialized through the mass media in Nigeria, particularly, but not exclusively, Christianity, Islam, and Afrel. Among some other religions. One came to realise that a section of the media practitioners are not comfortable with the activities of many of the merchants of religion who patronise the media. Through the mass media, many religious bodies project themselves. But media practitioners also report tricks and vices committed by many of the merchants, and that affects their long and short-term fortunes, to a great extent.

Based on the findings of this research, it appears that gullibility has been part of humanity from time immemorial, and so bad merchants of religion can always have a field-day. Yet, this study also identifies some good merchants of religion who patronise the media, such as some genuine preachers, singers, poets, playwrights, and so on. On the whole, the public is advised to be watchful and discerning of the pronouncements and deeds of merchants of religion who reach-out through the mass communications media.

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