

Beliefs and Character: Theology and Ethics of Road Safety in Nigeria¹

by

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“The driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi—he drives like a madman.”²

In 1989 Chief S. Olu. Falae, the then Secretary to the Federal Military Government wrote:

It is highly improvable that any family exists today within our Nigerian nation, which has not experienced the anguish of the sudden loss of a beloved one as a result of *accidents that could have been avoided*, on our highways. And if we broaden our search to embrace the traditional framework of the extended family, we can go even further and declare that no day passes without each such family undergoing the agony of the premature loss of one of its members.³ (Emphasis added).

Falae goes on to say that violent interruption of an ordered, secure existence has become common place so that even the briefest journey is a nightmare. “The routine greeting of ‘Safe Journey’ is silently or loudly augmented by fervent prayers for a successful conclusion of this plunge into the unknown.”⁴

One of the important points in Falae’s message is that the accidents witnessed in the nation could have been avoided. But since 1989 when Falae wrote this special message there appears to have been no improvement. I recently typed in the words “road accidents in Nigeria” into Google and the search engine revealed **1,370,000** possible sites where information about these words could be found.⁵ Some of the headlines in those sites read: “Road accident in Nigeria leaves 15 dead - OnlineNigeria.com; 40 Killed in Road Accident in Nigeria; Eleven killed in road accident in Nigeria - Yahoo! India News; Eleven killed in road accident in Nigeria- Hindustan Times.”

According to S. E. Asogwa, “Based on data that are at best conservative estimates, Nigeria is a country with a serious and growing road accident problem that is about the worst in the world.”⁶ He took the trend for a 15 year period (1971-1985) and said that all measures taken to curb the ugly trend proved ineffective. It is to assist in this direction that the Federal Road Safety Commission was introduced in 1988 as a national body entrusted with the responsibility of traffic accident control.⁷

So what is wrong? As Adewumi Bankole Isaac rightly says, “The situation is all the more regrettable as accidents do not just happen, they are caused.”⁸ While the Federal Road Safety Commission’s efforts to curb road accidents using their technical knowledge of road use are commendable, this writer suggests that the problem of road accidents in Nigeria has the other side: beliefs and character. These, it is believed, play greater significant role in road mishap than ignorance about road signs and outward behavioral problems, which, in my mind, are mere symptoms of a more intrinsic malady embedded in the psyche of Nigerians. And unless the root problems are addressed other solutions are merely cosmetic.

The paper examines the dual role of belief and character on road safety in Nigeria. It is the writer’s crusade to save lives, believing that not much will be achieved if the church does not get involved, and that theologians in particular are strategic in igniting the fire of change in society. The premise here is that not only is every road user a stakeholder in ensuring that our roads are accidents free⁹ but that the church should be primary stakeholder as character and

beliefs are better shaped in it. The paper focuses on drivers of all classes of vehicles and motorcyclists since these appear to be the major problem.¹⁰

Beliefs

A belief is what one holds true, especially as part of his/her religion. It is a passionate confidence in or about something or someone, such as belief in God. Beliefs are particularly dominant and responsible for some road accidents in Nigeria. These include fatalism, magic, witchcraft, and demons. We shall examine them in this order.

Fatalistic Worldview

According to Gidado Idris, “Africans and, indeed, Nigerians have been deluded to believe that road traffic accident is an integral element of human fate.”¹¹ This belief, as he says, creates indifference in the minds of people who hold that death and injury from accident are part of human destiny.¹² We shall therefore consider fatalistic worldview and road use.

Worldview may be defined as the mental grid through which one sees the world. Charles H. Kraft defines worldview as “the central systematization of conceptions or reality to which the members of the culture assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stem their value system.”¹³ W. Andrew Hoffecker also defines an individual’s worldview as “the collection of his presuppositions or convictions about reality, which represent his total outlook in life.”¹⁴ According to him, underlying all we think, say or do are these basic assumptions.¹⁵ He stresses how intrinsic worldview is and says they are so fundamental to what we believe and that they actually precede our conscious acts of thinking. “Like sunglasses, they ‘color’ how we perceive the rest of the world. But unlike sunglasses, which we consciously put on or take off as we choose, our worldview is such a part of us that we rarely reflect on how it shades our perception of all things.”¹⁶ He also believes that world view is religious in nature because it is all-encompassing, affecting every aspect of life.¹⁷ In the same manner, Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw and Tite Tienou say that worldviews “are the most encompassing frameworks of thought that relate belief systems to one another... They are the fundamental givens with which people in a community think, not what they think about.”¹⁸

Fatalism is defined as “The doctrine that every event is predetermined by fate and inevitable.”¹⁹ Such events are determined by forces that human beings cannot control.²⁰ In fatalistic worldview all events are predetermined as part of a universal plan or order. All events are destined to occur as they do. Just like past events that cannot be changed, future events are unchangeable.²¹ Also known as determinism, the disposition to accept every event as preordained is in line with some theological, scientific and philosophical dispositions. The paper is limited to the theological and philosophical dispositions.²²

In Greek and Roman mythology three goddesses called the Fates “ruled people’s lives” and controlled human destiny.²³ These gods determine what will happen to every person. These goddesses spun and cut the thread of life. The Romans called them *Parcae* and the Greeks named them *Moirai*. “Clotho was the spinner of the thread and Lachesis decided how long it was to be. Atropos cut the thread... The Fates were stern and gloomy goddesses. Nothing could make them change their minds. People offered them gifts to escape death, but never to thank them for any kind of blessings.”²⁴

In Islamic theology everything is ordained by *Allah*, either good or bad. In this reasoning no one should attempt to change the things that have been ordained by *Allah*. This follows that the course of one’s life is predetermined; therefore whatever one does is in perfect accord with the foreordained will of *Allah*. In northern Nigeria the popular phrase *Allah ya kadara* or *kadararar Allah* is used on almost every unfortunate event that takes place. A saying to this

effect is *kadarar Allah ta riga fata* (Allah's predestination precedes hope, that is, it is too late to hope after Allah has predestined). It is like praying, "O Lord, may this not have happened."

Fatalistic theology in Islam is traced to Qur'anic verses such as 6: 35; 10: 25; 6:125.²⁵ The last verse reads, "Those whom Allah wills to guide, He opens their breasts to Islam; those whom He wills to leave straying, He makes their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies: thus does Allah lay abomination on those who refuse to believe." In giving the context of this passage Caner and Caner said,

Although the Muslim scholar reminds the reader of the Qur'an over and over about human responsibility, this passage clearly demonstrates that Allah desires to leave some straying, although he has no obligation to do so...Muslim scholar, Ibn Hazn, wrote, 'nothing is good but Allah has made it so, and nothing is evil, but by His doing.'²⁶

Morris S. Seale alludes to what Caner and Caner say about the existence of determinism and free will side by side in the Qur'an (18: 28; 76: 29, 30).²⁷ But it is to be noted that free will does not hold once Allah has predetermined.

Perhaps all other tribal groups in Nigeria express fatalistic worldview in some ways. Among the Waja tribal group in the eastern part of Gombe the concept is *nyangu* (meaning *day*, like the Hausa *rana*). A recent example may help clarify this. Two of my brothers who are alcoholics went out with our uncle and got drunk. When they came back home a quarrel ensued and our uncle beat my brother with a heavy stick. My brother pushed him and he fell. Our uncle's son took the matter to police. He also took his father to a local clinic because he was said to have been injured in one of his ribs. My brother (not one of the drunkards) and I went to see him in the clinic. My brother asked him why they did that shameful thing, knowing that they had lived peacefully together for such a long time. His answer was, *to nyangu kono* (meaning "it is fate, uncle"). He gave no other explanation. In his mind nothing could be responsible other than *nyangu*. Therefore their drunkenness, their personal responsibility to tame their temper, and their shameful conduct could be simply blamed on fate (*nyangu*).

In Christian theology the doctrine that comes close to Islamic fatalism is the doctrine of divine decrees in which God has, "from all eternity past, decided and chosen and determined the course of all events without exception for all eternity to come."²⁸ He is said to have "sovereignly determined from all eternity whatsoever will come to pass."²⁹ The decree is from his sovereign will. Some refer to it as theological determinism. D. M. MacKay says, "Theological determinism is the doctrine that the form of all events is determined according to 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God' (Acts 2: 23)."³⁰ But it must be pointed out that the Biblical teaching of moral responsibility of man as having free will and is responsible for the choices he/she makes are overwhelming. Although it is impossible to study the New Testament critically without coming to grips with issues like election, God's decrees, and foreknowledge nowhere is a person exonerated for his wrong actions.³¹

In philosophy, determinism means that every action has an antecedent. There is always the past as the source of constraint. Those who hold to this philosophy charge that the reason indeterminists do not think that every action has a cause is that when people are making choices they usually look at the future consequences, never toward the past with possible sources of constraint.³² But for the determinist, the choice may merely be an effect. The feeling of freedom is because one is not aware of the thing acting on him.³³ In this philosophy freedom of choice is illusory.³⁴

Since worldview determines behavior, by holding to a fatalistic worldview safety measures on the road are ignored because ultimate reality is determined by impersonal forces outside one's control.³⁵ This is manifested in the attitude of many road users in Nigeria. A fatalistic worldview frees them from personal responsibility and accountability. Holding to

such worldview, some drivers care less about vehicle condition, traffic regulations, load limits, and so on, since what will happen must necessarily come to pass.

Let us examine other beliefs that also have profound influence on road use.

Magic,³⁶ Witchcraft,³⁷ and Demons³⁸

Edward M. Blaiclock says that the word *magic* was originally used to mean the “science or art of the magi, the Persian priestly caste, who like the Levites, were devoted to the practice of religion.”³⁹ But it gradually acquired broader significance and “came to mean all occult rituals or processes designed to influence or control the course of nature; to dominate men or circumstances by the alliance, aid, or use of supernatural powers; and generally to tap and to employ the forces of an unseen world.”⁴⁰

Therefore magic is beyond the comprehension of ordinary human beings; it can be understood only by the initiates. Its operations are clouded by the secrecy involved. The purpose is to influence and control the course of nature. The workers of magic believe that they have the power to influence and control nature and events.

In Nigeria many people still believe in magical powers. Some vehicle drivers believe that wearing charms or amulets will protect their vehicles from accidents or that they themselves will escape miraculously when the accident occurs.⁴¹ They therefore believe that their imprudent behavior on the road has no negative consequences on their personal lives. Armed with their amulets, deafened by their insensitivity and disregard for the lives of others, and driven by the intense desire to make quick money, some of these (commercial) drivers speed excessively, paying no attention to common sense or the plea from passengers to slow down or exercise some care. The popular charm used for this is known as *layan zana* or *layan bata* (meaning a charm that makes one to disappear) in Hausa. The charm is believed to cause someone to disappear at any time one is stricken with excessive fright or at the sight of danger. Customers of *gidan boka* or *bokaye* (medicine men’s houses) for such a charm are said to be thieves, drivers, warriors, and so on.

Some people believe that witches, wizards, secret society and demons are responsible for some road accidents. That is why prayers are said at the beginning of a journey for the binding of witches, wizards, and demons.⁴² Some would rather take a fatalistic approach and believe that whatever happened there was nothing one could do about it. For instance, there is a sharp and sloppy bend called *Kwanan Mai Saje* (the corner of the bearded one) in Lafiya Lamurde, Adamawa State. That bend is notorious for road accidents, especially for long and heavy vehicles. It is believed that one demon with a long beard lives there and would often stand or sit in the middle of the road. As the driver tried to dodge him he would fall in the deep ditch. It is believed that no precaution could save a driver from *Mai Saje*.

Having seen the role of beliefs we shall now consider character as another major factor in road safety.

Character

Character in this paper is used for moral strength or the qualities that make up a person. It is the disposition and nature that are manifest in behavior, actions, attitude or manners. In other words, it is the “combined moral or ethical structure of a person or group.”⁴³ Belief determines character and inclination because a person’s disposition is largely shaped by his/her convictions. Only a few key character flaws witnessed daily on our roads shall be reflected here.

Perhaps ranking first among the very serious problems with our society in regards to driving is ethical and moral problem of lawlessness. The term *lawlessness* means without the law or refusal to be controlled by the law. This is manifested in a variety of ways. For instance, the law of the land forbids the use of cell phones while driving. But this law is disregarded by many drivers. And this has often caused accidents since concentration on the road is turned to conversation.⁴⁴

Under-aged driving is also a common phenomenon on our roads, although it is against the law as well. According to the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) people between the ages thirteen and seventeen are under-aged.⁴⁵ It is noted that within this period, the endocrine and neurological system changes drastically as a result of the secretion of the gonotropic hormone of the pituitary and thyroid glands. This in turn manifests itself in emotional turbulence such as restlessness, anxiety and quick temper.⁴⁶ In their illogical thinking they do not realize that what holds as a rule may not always work under certain circumstances. They refuse to give way whenever they think they are the rightful claimant of the road.⁴⁷

Not only do these people disobey and challenge constituted authorities; they are usually inconsiderate to other road users. The situation is even worse when they handle heavy and bigger vehicles in which they display horsepower supremacy.⁴⁸ And the situation worsens as some rich people think that one of the ways to display how wealthy they are is to allow their under-aged children to drive their flashy cars around town as they wish.

Lawlessness, disorder, and confusion in our cities seem to have been accepted as the normal order by the chaotic and jumbled manner of the motorcyclists who ride in a scattered form on every lane on the road. It is becoming strange to ask for order. It appears that what matters is a space wide enough to pass, not the right lane to follow.

Disregard for law is also manifested in using intoxicants and stimulants before or while driving. Night drivers are said to be more susceptible to the temptation of using substances such as drugs or wine in order to keep awake. Driving under the influence of these substances often caused road accidents, maiming and killing innocent people, adding sorrow, trauma, and hardships to many families.

Breaking the law on our roads is also directly or indirectly promoted by the Road Safety Commission, a body entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order on the roads. This is in the area of the issuance of learner's permits and new driving licenses. In our context people can obtain both without personally appearing before the officers in charged, let alone getting tested. All they need is to send their car particulars with money and they are qualified to go on the road. Many of such road users spend less than a week in learning to drive, and then venture on to the highway. They also promote lawlessness by accepting gratification from guilty motorists, thereby encouraging them.

The second moral and ethical defect in our society is impatience on the road. Perhaps the first place in which patience is tested is on the road. It is said that Nigerians are generally patient and kind people until they get behind the wheels. Then they suddenly become possessed, ready to swear and curse at the slightest provocation. Impatience is synonymous with lack of self-control. As the Bible says, "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control,"⁴⁹ we are gradually losing grips on this virtue. Lack of self-control manifests itself in a variety of ways such as over speeding, wrong overtaking, indiscriminate parking, and so on.

The third character defect common on Nigerian roads is the blatant display of self-centeredness and arrogance. Such a cavalier attitude is well illustrated by the FRSC that "Many drivers think that when they drive official vehicles, particularly ones with government and

diplomatic registration numbers, they can drive recklessly, at any speed, and must have the right of way.” In addition, it is like the bigger or flashier one’s car is the more rights one has on the road. Others must be careful or face the consequences of hitting an expensive car. Some people have more rights on the road than others because of the type of car they own. It is in accordance with the values of the society—the richer you are the more important you are and the freer you are to break the law.⁵⁰ This nonchalant disregard of rules and over-aggressiveness to claim rights is assuming a dimension of a value system in our society and therefore “encouraging and strengthening the selfish and animal impulses that are present in all of us.”⁵¹

The fourth problem of character on Nigerian roads is lack of common sense. Road users are urged: “Never do anything contrary to common sense, whether you are a pedestrian, a driver, a conductor, a passenger, a cyclist, or a motorcyclist.”⁵² People who drive in the night often run into vehicles moving on the road that have no brake lights or head lights. These have always proved dangerous to other road users. Another indication of lack of common sense is that in many dangerous sharp bends and corners where warning signs have been posted stipulating the speed limits, the same spots keep on witnessing increasing number of accidents. Others run at high speed even when the visibility is poor due to heavy rainfall, harmattan dust, or mist. As the word of the Lord says, “A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.”⁵³ This might be illustrated with the shipwreck in Acts.⁵⁴ Since the winds were against them Paul advised that they should not sail from Crete. But the centurion refused to listen to him, going by the ill advice of the pilot and the owner of the ship. The result was an avoidable shipwreck.

The fifth character problem on our roads is haste and carelessness. Faseyi says, “Nigerians in the main are in a hurry. We usually want to get to our destinations even before we set off.”⁵⁵ Carelessness is a serious threat to lives and property on Nigerian roads. It is manifested through lack of checking the condition of the vehicle. Careless driving can also be a symptom of disregard for one’s life or the life of others. Disregard for life and the rights of others is clearly manifested in overloading, over speeding with passengers on board, and disregarding other traffic rules. According to Afamdi O. Ezenwa, “Unsafe acts (reckless and dangerous driving, driving without a license, excess speed, alcoholism, faulty pedestrian attitude, etc.) constitute the major causes of RTAs in Nigeria.”⁵⁶

The last serious moral problem on Nigerian driving is uncivilized manner and culture manifested in abusive language such as, “You de craze,” “goat,” “*ubanka*,” “*uwarka*,” “*alade*,” “*mumu*,” “*jaki*.” These are intended to cause deep feelings of worthlessness, pain and anger. It usually takes lots of grace to be calm and not to get even. For instance, one day I was driving and a commercial motorcyclist (known as *okada*, *achaba* or *going*) crossed my way, and I nearly hit him. I was about to ask: “Why did you...?” but he was the first to say, “*Ubanka*.” The instinctive reply from my heart was, “*Kai kuma kakanka*.” My wife quickly read my mood and cautioned me immediately, “Don’t talk.” Incidentally we were on our way to a revival conference for which I was the guest speaker.

Conclusion

The point of this paper is that the Nigerian society is indubitably infested with superstitious beliefs and bedeviled with character defects that are manifest in driving habits that cause serious calamities on people. There is therefore a need for a new social order based on a new worldview and reformed character that will reflect in our values, resulting in right thinking and actions. Such a mindset that can shape our society for better, in my thinking, is only possible when Christians take the lead in changing the mindset of our day and by showing, in practical terms, what it is to drive well and to show good manners on the road. In other

words, the most needed transformation of our society in the area of road use must come from those that are “the light of the world.” The wordings of a sticker that says “How Would Jesus Drive?” should stick in the minds of Christian drivers as good examples of road users. Believers need to set example of patience, maturity, obedience of rules and regulations, tolerance, road sense, and maintenance culture.

In addition, Christians need to also set an example of love, respect, and courtesy on the road. The teaching of Jesus on being our neighbor’s keeper needs to be put in practice. Not only should we watch out for the Jehus, but we must also consider that it is our responsibility to protect them in love. This means also that Christian drivers should have the attitude of submission and shun the attitude of wanting to get even with the evil person or the self-centeredness of wanting to always claim rights.

Moreover, the church must educate members on road safety. On 19th June 2007 while working on this paper I heard from the BBC radio that the Vatican issued instructions to church members on safe driving. I thought that was a good step forward for the church. Instead of the church to be the constantly holding funeral services and mourning for road accident victims, it should be a place for regular awareness on road safety. A good start might include inviting road safety personnel and specialists on automobile mechanism for seminars in the local churches.

Finally, the church should disenchant the minds of Christians from all superstitious beliefs and help them to rely on good judgment while on the road. Let believers know that while on the road nothing saves like good judgment. Similarly, as you drive back home tonight, please apply good judgment and watch out for Jehus on the wheels.

¹ This paper was first presented at the Jos-Bukuru Theological Society on October 8, 2007.

² II Kings 9: 20b (NIV).

³ Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), *The Revised Highway Code* (Nigeria: Federal Road Safety Commission, 1989), ii. S. Olu. Falae writes this “Special Message” as an introduction to the Highway Code of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as secretary to the then military government.

⁴ Ibid

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<http://www.google.ca/search?hl=en&q=Road+Accidents+in+Nigeria&btnG=Google+Search&meta=> (accessed September 5, 2007).

⁶ S.E. Asogwa “Road traffic accidents in Nigeria: a review and a reappraisal,”

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=1558622&dopt=Citation (accessed September 5, 2007).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Adewumi Bankole Isaac, “Safety First, Live and Let Others Live,” *Road Sense* (A Biannual Publication of Federal Road Commission Kaduna State Command, 2005), 12.

⁹ Ogo A. Ogo, “Causes of Road Accident: An Accident Free Society,” *Road Sense*, 13.

¹⁰ Road users are in two categories. They are the exposed and the unexposed road users. Exposed road users are motorcyclists, pedestrians and cattle grazers. The unexposed road users are the drivers of all types of vehicles.

¹¹ Federal Road Safety Commission: *The Revised Highway Code* (January 1997), v. He writes this as Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979), 53. It is interesting that the thrust of Kraft’s work is that theologizing is never done without cultural perspective.

¹⁴ W. Andrew Hoffecker, *Building a Christian Worldview*, vol. 1: God, Man and Knowledge (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1986), ix.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Hoffecker, *Building a Christian Worldview*, vol. 2, xi.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xii.

¹⁸ Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999), 40.

¹⁹ *New Standard Encyclopedia Dictionary*, s. v. "fatalism."

²⁰ *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1995 ed., s. v. "fatalism."

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² But one might read M. MacKay on scientific determinism. According to him, determinism in science "stands strictly for the hypothesis that the form of every physical event is determined uniquely by the conjunction of events preceding it." What science does here is to find out the pattern of interdependence of physical events and express that in "law." (See MacKay, "Determinism," *New Dictionary of Theology* [Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988], 195). MacKay treats this concept in detail in his book, *The Clock Work Image: A Christian Perspective on Science* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974). See also Brand Blanshard, "The Case for Determinism," *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science*, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: Collier Books, 1958), 19-30. According to him, "By an event I mean any change or persistence of state or position. And what is meant by saying that an event is caused? The natural answer is that the event is so connected with some preceding event that unless the first had occurred the second would not have occurred." In other words, all events are caused.

²³ *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1995 ed., s. v. "fatalism."

²⁴ *Ibid.*, "Fates."

²⁵ Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, *Unveiling Islam: An Insider's Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 242. In this appendix the authors look at free will, fatalism and the Qur'an. As the title of the book suggests, these insiders understand these doctrines so well and the Qur'an so that they gave the verses cited with the context to avoid misrepresentation.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Morris S. Seale, *Muslim Theology: A Study of Origins with Reference to the Church Fathers* (London: Luzac, p. 1964), 21.

²⁸ James Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 163.

²⁹ L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1941), 100. The difference between Calvinism and Arminianism is highlighted in Berkhof on whether the decrees are conditional or absolute.

³⁰ MacKay, "Determinism," *New Dictionary of Theology*, 195.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Blanshard, "The Case for Determinism," 21.

³³ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 195.

³⁵ See Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou, 64.

³⁶ Magic is here used in a general sense to mean any art involving supernatural powers. Magic is classified as white and black. White magic is supposedly practiced for good purposes to protect from evil, while black magic is for evil purposes such as harming others. These are to be differentiated from magic for entertainment which is usually an illusory feat, considered magical by naïve observers.

³⁷ The term is used broadly to include “secret society.” A witch (female) or wizard (male) is a person believed to have evil powers and is able to cast a spell on someone and to kill the person or cause some harm. “Secret society” appears to be the modernized form of witchcraft.

³⁸ Demons are said to be evil spiritual beings that are able to harm human beings.

³⁹ Edward M. Blaiclock, “Magic,” *New International Bible Dictionary*, edited by J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), p. 612.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ A. A. Badawi, “Under-Aged Driver: The Traits of an Under-Aged Driver,” *Road Sense*, 36. He says that under-aged drivers are more inclined to superstitions more than those within other age bracket. They believe in charms and means of preventing accidents. Many of these people share stories about their magical escape, and openly praise their powerful charms. These so-called escapes encourage them to drive more carelessly and encourage other drivers to look for this kind of “protection.”

⁴² It is unfortunate that some Christian drivers seem to believe that even prayer or the wordings of a sticker such as “I am covered by the blood of Jesus” works in a magical way. They may not be right with God, yet they believe that their prayers at the start of the journey or the stickers will perform some magic.

⁴³ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Second College edition, s. v. “character.”

⁴⁴ The FRSC considers the use of the mobile phone while driving a traffic offense. See J. A. O. Faseyi, *Road Sense*, 11.

⁴⁵ Badawi, *Road Sense*, 35.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁹ Proverbs 25:28 (NIV).

⁵⁰ Federal Road Safety Commission: *The Revised Highway Code*, 2.

⁵¹ Harold H. Titus, *Living Issues in Philosophy: An Introductory Textbook* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970,) 353.

⁵² *Highway Code*, 1.

⁵³ Proverbs 22:3; 27:12 (NIV). It is significant that the verse is repeated verbatim. The emphasis intended is clear.

⁵⁴ See Acts 27: 3-44.

⁵⁵ *Road Sense*, 11.

⁵⁶ Afamdi O. Ezenwa, “Trends and Characteristics of Road Traffic Accidents in Nigeria,” *The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, Vol. 106, No. 1, 27-29 (1986). <http://rsh.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/106/1/27> (accessed September 5, 2007). He takes our memory lane to the past in a study of road accidents in Nigeria from 1974-1983. According to him the study showed that there have been increasing trends in the cases of fatality rates and injuries. There have also been increasing trends in the severity of the accidents. During those ten years (1974-1983) the number of accidents increased by 10.4%, injured cases increased by 43%, cases of deaths increased by 110.6%, total casualties increased by 57.1% while the human population increased by 27.2%. The mortality pattern showed that for every five fatal accident victims one subsequent death occurred outside the accident scene. The majority of the accident victims in Nigeria are young adults of the age group 22 to 30 years and about 75% of the accident victims are males. Although Ezenwa gives a true picture on the increase of road accidents the situation about the ratio of male and female victims may not be the same today because women are more and more involved in all ramifications of the social life. They travel as do the men for business, education, politics, and so on.