

EMINENT PERSONS GROUP OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN GHANA

High Incidence of Motor Accidents Involving Politicians

The Eminent Persons Group of the Christian Council of Ghana is deeply concerned about the seemingly high incidence of motor accidents involving politicians and their teams, as political campaigning intensifies. On Thursday, 8th October 2020 it was reported that the National Organiser of the New Patriotic Party survived a near-fatal accident. Two days thereafter, a ghastly motor accident of a party activist occurred in the Tolon Constituency of the Northern Region. Just a few days ago on the 17th October 2020, a parliamentary nominee for Yapei-Kusawgu constituency in the Savannah died in another horrid road accident with two others.

With election booked for December 2020, for those in the business of politics, it's a marathon like no other. Eight to Ten weeks of deadlines, debates, press releases and public appearances. Motives will be questioned and personalities will be judged, but politicians and their teams will have to stay alive.

Mother Ghana cannot continue to lose her finest sons and daughters, politicians and citizens alike from motor accidents.

Accidents just don't happen; they are caused. Most of the fatal accidents especially that of political figures that have claimed lives resulted from excessive speed by the vehicles in the convoys. Excessive speeding convoys portend danger especially when a defective car in the convoy hobbles midway to obstruct traffics.

We have observed that candidates travel at (reckless) speed along Ghana's dusty highways in convoys of expensive vehicles. They are accompanied by T-shirted motor cycle outriders. They overtake specially hired buses of flag-waving supporters at reckless abandon.

Road safety is a major national health issue, but one that rarely receives the attention it merits. Every year, a number of people are killed or incur non-fatal injuries through road accidents.

As religious leaders, we believe that a myriad of issues are at the roots of the problems relating to road accidents and must be addressed by the appropriate agencies. As believers a solution to these problems may be found in a vision of faith, in the relationship with God, and in a generous option in favour of

life, which is also borne out by behaviour that respects the lives of others, and the rules established to protect them, on the road.

Ghanaians, and especially our politicians and their teams, should be vigilant on the roads. They should not only think about themselves, and should not always be worried about getting to their destination in a great hurry. They should see the people who “accompany” them on the road, each of whom has their own life, their own desire to reach a destination and their own problems. They should see everyone as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of God. This is the attitude that should characterize the drivers of the politicians and their convoys.

Coexistence is a fundamental aspect of humanity and roads should therefore be more humane. Motorists are never alone when they are driving, even when no one is sitting beside them. Driving a vehicle is basically a way of relating with and getting closer to other people, and of integrating within a community of people. This capacity for coexistence, of entering into relations with others, presupposes certain specific qualities in a driver: namely self-mastery, prudence, courtesy, a fitting spirit of service and knowledge of the Highway Code. As leaders and law makers, be it aspirants or substantive, they should prove to the citizenry that they believe and respect the road safety laws that they make, by living by it.

We trust that our politicians place a high premium on life, in defence of the “thou shalt not kill” commandment, than losing or winning an election.

Our politicians on the road should be fully aware, that an accident may occur at any time in their travels to campaign, and the harm that can be caused to families of those involved in the accidents, as well as the protracted consequences for the injured, who all too often are permanently disabled, will leave an indelible pain with the affected families.

Blood should not be spilt in an absurd competition with speed and time, because of an election.

We pray that the good Lord would continue to protect the people of Ghana at this crucial period of our growing democracy as we also call on the key institutions to make our roads safe by fixing them and lightening them.

Finally we call on politicians, their followers and the good people of Ghana to respect all road regulations so as to arrive safely.

May the Good Lord guide, guard and protect us all.

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