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Not as Easy as It Looks: Leadership and the Church

The deep media coverage of Nelson Mandela's death (and life) in December 2013 challenges Christian leaders. How many Christian leaders in Africa and beyond would be mourned and eulogized for being an instrument of spiritual liberation? Mandela became a symbol, someone people respected and looked up to, but Christians in Africa, like all Christians, already have someone to look up to and emulate – Jesus. The 2013 Conference of the *Africa Society of Evangelical Theology* (ASET) recognized the importance of leadership and three of the papers read there are included in this AJET issue.

Elizabeth Mburu's, "Leadership - Isolation, Absorption or Engagement: Paul, The Paradigmatic Role Model" (the first ASET contribution) provides a Biblically oriented look at Christian leadership. How do Christian leaders respond to their culture? Some leaders, like the ancient Israelites, absorb too much "Canaanite" culture. Others isolate themselves like the Qumran community, while still others imitate Paul's creative engagement in Athens.

Julius Muthengi's "Effective Mentoring and Its Implications for Student Personal and Professional Development", and Lois Semenyé's "Spiritual Formation of Christian Leaders" (the second ASET contribution) demonstrate and stress the role of mentoring and spiritual formation in the life of Christian leaders, but in very different ways.

Daryll Stanton, in "Developing Good Church Leadership Habits", (the third ASET contribution) provides a swift overview of Hans Finzel's book, *The Top Ten Mistakes That Leaders Make*. Stanton believes that African leaders, being human, also make these mistakes. African readers are certainly capable of making their own evaluation and application of the ideas presented.

At first glance Danny McCain's, "Addressing Urban Problems Through Kingdom Theology: The *Apostles in the Market Place* Model in Lagos, Nigeria" doesn't address leadership at all. But it does demonstrate how Christian leaders can have a significant impact on the world around them. It is a tremendously encouraging article based on his personal field research among Pentecostal pastors who have rejected Prosperity Theology in favour of making a practical impact in a tough urban setting through Kingdom Theology.

All Christians, especially Christian leaders, including Christian leaders in Africa, will leave behind a legacy of some kind. We need to ask ourselves, "Whose Kingdom am I working for, my own or God's?" Our hope is that these articles will contribute to God's work of building His Kingdom by challenging and encouraging readers to consciously become servant leaders wherever God places them in leadership. While none of the world's media will cover our eventual passing into glory in same depth as Nelson Mandela's, all Christian leaders who faithfully follow Jesus can hope to hear an immeasurably greater accolade from the King of Kings – "Well done, good and faithful servant." I can't think of a richer reward or a longer-lasting legacy.