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MAGAZINE

June 2026



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At the Heart of Christian
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TESTIFY MAGAZINE (TELLING PEOPLE'S STORIES - AFFIRMING GOD IS ALIVE!)

IN THIS EDITION

Issue 2
June 2026

AT THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP



What lies at the heart of Christian leadership? Most would answer, "Servanthood." But why? What is the reason God has called men and women into leadership? What is the motivating factor that helps us understand the nature of Christian leadership? In the secular world's eyes the focal point of an organisation is its leader. Yet Scripture paints a very different picture, in which "Christ" is the focal point. The community, especially the Church, is the next point of reference,

while the Bible teaches us that the leader is to be found in the background, one wouldn't say this is the case when we look at many of the leaders in the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical churches of today.

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TESTIFY MAGAZINE (TELLING PEOPLE'S STORIES - AFFIRMING GOD IS ALIVE!)

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At The Heart of Christian Leadership

What lies at the heart of Christian leadership? Most would answer, "Servanthood." But why?



AT THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

What lies at the heart of Christian leadership? Most would answer, "Servanthood." But why? What is the reason God has called men and women into leadership? What is the motivating factor that helps us understand the nature of Christian leadership?

In the secular world's eyes the focal point of an organisation is its leader. Yet Scripture paints a very different picture, in which "Christ" is the focal point. The community, especially the Church, is the next point of reference, while the Bible teaches us that the leader is to be found in the background, one wouldn't say this is the case when we look at many of the leaders in the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical churches of today.

Leaders are Disciples Making Disciples.

To understand Christian leadership, the starting point must be to first understand Discipleship. In the life of the Kingdom of God, discipleship is the primary and fundamental vehicle by which we exercise influence.

Then Jesus came to [the disciples] and said, ***"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples ..."*** (Matthew 28:18)

The entire life and calling of the Church is summarised in these verses. In today's English language the word "*Discipleship*" is used in two ways. The first meaning is Evangelistic-Discipleship is the process of seeing unbelievers become Disciples.

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The second meaning refers to the daily life of following Jesus. The journey of Discipleship is the process of becoming fully dependent on Jesus in all things (as our Saviour), and fully submitted to Jesus in all things (for He is Lord of our lives).

It is a journey of increasingly knowing his love and generosity-Jesus saves us not just eternally, but is Saviour in every detail of our daily lives.

Discipleship entails submission to others in community. It manifests a commitment to righteousness, justice, obedience and commitment. Dr Michael Cassidy, world renowned Christian author and Founder of African Enterprise has often described justice as *"love built into structures."*

It is a journey in which we *"press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us"* (Philippians 3:12). It is a journey of both doing and becoming. This journey's pattern and focus is Jesus, on whom we are to *"fix our eyes [for He is] the author and perfecter of our faith"* (Hebrews 12:2). He is to define the whole meaning and shape of our lives, individually and corporately.

Discipleship doesn't allow you, like so many Christians today, to walk the road leading to two destinations and depending therefore exclusively on the Grace that has saved us from eternal death. Being a Disciple of Christ requires a far deeper intimacy (relationship) with God and a commitment that turns two roads into a singular, narrow path that leads to righteousness and holiness through Christ Jesus our Lord.

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It is through Discipleship happening that the Kingdom of God is increasingly experienced (as Christians mature in our faith and dependency of Christ) and expands (as people, become Christians).

Of importance for leaders is, firstly, this: as leaders, you and I are first and foremost followers. You cannot be a true Christian leader if you have not put Christ ahead of all your needs, desires and dreams in ministry. Even in the secular world-among politicians, corporate executives and economic leaders, they need to recognise that God comes first in every decision, plan or resolution. We must follow Jesus first, then all else will fall into place. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We cannot expect miracles when we are living a life of immorality and sin.

The primary thing that shapes our leadership is that we take His lead in all things. We are just like every other Christian in this respect. A leader stands on the same ground and on the same level as every other Christian, the ground of submission to Christ. Every Christian leader is firstly a disciple before he is given the responsibility to become a leader.

A leader cannot depend on or be recognized as a leader because of family association, level of education, financial capacity, social status, or the car that you drive.

It then follows that as leaders our primary work (duty) is to make disciples. It is to see others become followers of Christ and to see them grow in their intimacy with, and obedience to Christ.

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That is why, in Ephesians 4:12-13, Paul says that the ministry of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers and Pastors is:

...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity... and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Arrow Leadership Ministries, founded by the Evangelist Leighton Ford, has a motto which succinctly expresses these two aspects of Discipleship/Leadership: *"to be led more by Jesus, to lead more like Jesus, to lead more to Jesus."* Leading people to Jesus: this is our primary responsibility, just as our own passion in life is to draw nearer to Christ.

As we are increasingly drawn into alignment with Christ, so should our influence see others come into closer alignment with Christ (Himself and his ways).

Leaders Exist So That Their People Might Become All They Are Called To Be

As leaders, you and I do not exist for our own benefit. Like Jesus, we exist for other people's benefit and to bring glory to Christ in everything that we do.

We see this very clearly in the ministry of Paul. Although Paul could be openly critical of the churches he wrote to and even of fellow Christian apostles, he saw himself and the other apostles as in existence so that the churches (and all the saints in them) could become all that they were called to become.

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In 1 Corinthians 1-3, Paul deals with the divisions that existed in that church because of peoples' loyalties to different leaders, each of whom possessed very different personalities and strengths (himself, Cephas/Peter, and Apollos- and then there was the supposedly spiritual group who pledged loyalty only to Jesus). I would encourage you to read the next few articles that I will be publishing in order to see the flow of Paul's argument.

Firstly, Paul deals with the issue of ownership (1:10-16). No leader can claim rights to or ownership of his or her people. A lot different from what we witness in some of our modern-day churches of today.

As Spiritual leaders, Apostles, Pastor's and Teacher's we need to remind ourselves that our congregations are Christ's people. The ministry of leaders has been given solely that the people might grow in Christ. He then goes on to show that Christians should not define themselves by their loyalties to a given leader (1:31 *"Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord"*). Why? The background to these words of Paul's seems to have been the Corinthian church's unthinking acceptance of certain aspects of the surrounding Greek culture. Like many today, the ancient Greeks valued leaders who could speak and behave with great sophistication and cleverness, demonstrating their knowledge. Apollos in particular exemplified this culturally favoured skill (Acts 18:24-28 illustrates this).

Paul warns against this because human wisdom so often distracts from "divine wisdom." Leaders are human, and as such are not entirely dependable, especially when people are so easily taken by appearances.

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Sometimes a leader appears wonderfully wise but is foolish, and sometimes a leader can appear pathetically foolish, but is actually wise.

Leaders should not be the first thing on which a Christian, or community of Christians, depends for their spiritual strength and growth. Their focus should be Christ, and a good leader is pointing to Christ.

Christian leaders are measured, not by their position or status, but by their impact in the lives of other Christians. Some favoured Apollos, with his rhetorical skills. Others clearly favoured the outspoken and hot-headed Peter, a disciple who had walked personally with Jesus. And others favoured Paul, whose humility and very lack of sophistication was perhaps, winesome to some.

In Paul's mind this was all irrelevant. What mattered was the benefits received by the Corinthians:

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe-as the Lord has assigned to each his task... So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow (3:5-7).

Christian leaders are measured, not by their position or status, but by their impact in the lives of other Christians (3:10-17). This should also apply to those situations where we lead non-Christians.

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Leading by Voluntary Self-Retrenchment

Not many leaders are successful at passing the baton or delegation or even raising up other leaders that can be planted out to expand the Kingdom of God. All sorts of reasons get in the way, ranging from leaders worrying that their people are not ready to take on the responsibility, to a deeper anxiety that by working themselves out of a job, they will lose income, long-term security, status, a sense of significance, etc.

This is an uncanny reflection of Stephen Covey's theory that defensive and competitive behaviour arises out of "a false perception of the scarcity of resources." Each of these excuses is a challenge to some aspect of our faith in Jesus as Lord of his Church. Ultimately, it is Jesus that builds His Church.

There comes a point when the maturity of the people for whom we are responsible is the measure of our leadership. Paul's final words in 3:21-23 are a shock to the system of the self-enamoured leader:

So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future- [all are yours,] and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God [italics mine].

The maturity of the people for whom we are responsible is the measure of our leadership. Naturally, irrespective of one's personality or other natural inclinations.

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To give of oneself in this manner requires Godly character and, chiefly, humility. For whether I am a Pastor, Apostle, Politician, Business Manager or CEO, if I am a Christian, 'my people' are not mine. I am theirs.

Perhaps these passages can help us understand why Discipleship needs to be understood as central to leadership. A leader of the caliber of Paul describes, naturally produces leaders in the people he or she influences. They in turn naturally produce other leaders.

This is discipleship, and good discipleship is Godly leadership.

(Accreditation partly given to Jonathan Wilson, Director of African Enterprise (AE), who wrote an article for the National Development Christian Leadership Institute (ALDI). Herein are extracts of that article.)



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Psalm 1 vers 3 sê :

"En hy sal wees soos 'n boom wat
geplant is by waterstrome, wat sy vrugte gee
op sy tyd en waarvan die blare nie verwelk nie;
en alles wat hy doen, voer hy voorspoedig uit."



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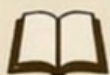
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THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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HAVE YOU ACCEPTED JESUS
CHRIST?

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Romans 3:23 ESV

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

The abovementioned verse is an extremely well used verse and many people know it and can even quote it off by heart, but the significance of it is the reality that every single person needs to contemplate.

If you have not accepted Jesus as your Personal Saviour yet or are thin king about it, you have to start here. The reality of your sin problem cancels and disqualifies you from the very presence of God and this bars you from eternal Life. Your choices are simple here, either an eternity with God or an Eternity without God. I would think that the logical answer would be an Eternity with God. Why? Well let's look at this:

2 Thessalonians 1:9

"They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might"

NASB

This is the reality of a choice that omits Jesus as your Personal Saviour -

= Everlasting Punishment

= Destruction

= Shut Out

= No Godly Presence

= And no Glory at all

This is not something to take lightly and by the way this is not scaring you into making a false decision, God is love, thus we as His followers are love, this means if I say I have the love of God, it is my duty to tell you the truth and point you into the right direction.

So in looking at the sin problem and the reality of this, what is the answer then? Let's look at this:

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

NASB

What a wonderful solution to an immense problem, God has made a way and in making the way He has also made it very clear that this is the only answer to the problem. You have to accept Jesus His Son in order to obtain Eternal Life and ward off all the destruction and other bad things spoken about in the previous Bible verse.

It also makes it very clear that this can only be done through JESUS CHRIST His Son, there is no other way to salvation or Eternal life other than through Jesus, NONE!

Let's look at this too:

John 1:12-13

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

NASB

Wow! Just look at this, not only do we get Eternal Life but we become Children of God. The impact of this is massive as it speaks to the fact that we now belong to the family of God and receive the benefits of being part of a family, and not just any family but a royal family (1 Peter 2 vs 9).

So in looking and understanding all of this, How do you accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour?

Romans 10 vs 9-10

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

NASB

Let me just make one point very clear before we look at the above verses, your salvation cannot be obtained by good works, you cannot go to Heaven or be part of God's family because you are a good person, or you do good deeds, No! The Bible makes it clear, if you want to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour then it gets done on the basis of two things. These two things are critical because it will also help you on your work with the Lord and attain righteousness and a life pleasing to God.

Firstly, you have to confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, this is very important because by your confession God will know and people in the world will know. This is significant because one does not hide a light under a bowl. Everyone must see and hear that you are a child of God.

BELIEF

And secondly you must believe in your heart, with your whole being and understanding that Jesus was raised from the dead and is alive and is your only Saviour.

So if you have read all of this and the Holy Spirit is directing you to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour please pray the prayer on the next page, God loves you so much.



ACCEPTING JESUS IS EVERYTHING!

PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Dear Lord Jesus,

I understand that I am a sinner and in need of desperate saving, The Bible tells me clearly that the only answer is for me to confess with my mouth and believe in my heart. I am now confessing with my mouth that I am accepting You as my Personal Saviour and believing in my heart that you are alive and well and dwelling within me. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of other Believers and allow me please to follow in your footsteps. Amen!

Wow! Congratulations if you have just prayed this prayer, and know that you are now part of the family of the Kingdom of God. Please tell someone about your decision, pray all the time and read and study your Bible. Find a Holy Ghost, Bible preaching church and join.

Please let us know if you have made this decision and allow us to point you in the right direction.

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