

**Jesus, have mercy on this continent in which you were a refugee!**

For one year now I have been teaching leadership at Nairobi Chapel where my family fellowships, and one of the topics that I have always enjoyed teaching is that of servant leadership. As we celebrate Christmas time this year, I have been reflecting on leadership in the world in general and Africa in particular, and so I have been lamenting before God over the misery that we continue to see on this amazing continent – this continent that welcomed Jesus and his parents as refugees when they were in danger of being killed by King Herod. Jesus, have mercy on this continent in which you were a refugee!

Several countries in Africa are going through war, conflict and oppression because of leaders who lack commitment to serve the needs of their followers like Jesus did. He came from heaven, bore the earthly body, was born in a manger, grew up in a modest family and died a cruel death on the cross so that we who deserved death would have life in abundance. Jesus was a true servant leader!

What a contrast with what we see around! In countries like South Sudan and Burundi, many people have died and others are suffering because of selfish ambition of leaders who are not willing to listen to the needs of people. This kind of leadership is contrary to Jesus' servant leadership style. For Jesus, true greatness entails caring about others. Jesus taught his disciples to forget all about rank, pre-eminence, and prominence. People in Burundi, South Sudan and several other countries suffer because of leaders who lead through manipulation, and sometimes through intimidation. That is not what Jesus expects from us servant leaders. The servant leader is one called to serve those under his leadership and leads them with love and respect. Have some of you noticed that many people are suffering in our organizations because their leaders expect their followers to congratulate, respect, and honour them? Is this not shame for leaders – and especially for Christian leaders? We servant leaders should not expect any of these, for we do not deserve any; we are just trustees of God's resources. Finally, people are suffering because their leaders think that they should control everyone and

everything. We as servant leaders, should we not rejoice when people are using their spiritual gifts and being empowered for the service in God's Kingdom?

It is my prayer that this Christmas season we will examine our leadership style. We are all leaders at different levels. Man, are you serving your wife and children? Wife, are you serving other women in your neighbourhood, church or community? Pastor, are you empowering leaders in your church? Politician, are you serving people in your community and nation? Or you are manipulating them for your personal gain!

May Jesus be truly Emmanuel – God with you-- in this reflection – Amen!