# LEADERSHIP ISN'T WHAT YOU THINK IT IS

*Posted on June 12, 2017 by Eddie*

Leadership comes with massive privileges, but it isn't all about exciting times planning for the future. It involves hard grind, some extremely difficult situations and a bucketload of responsibility.Â

**Category:** Politics

At first glance, being a leader in a mission organisation seems to be an attractive option, well to some personality types anyway.

In most situations, the title 'director' doesn't come with an increased salary, but there are all sorts of perks. Mission leaders get to go to travel a great deal as they attend conferences and make pastoral visits to missionaries on location. Travelling around the world on economy tickets isn't the most glamorous of things, but many mission leaders fly often enough that they get all sorts of frequent-flyer privileges. Then you get invited to speak to (sometimes very large) groups about the work that you do, this is great for the ego and if you are passionate about the work that you are involved in, it's hugely exciting. Mission leaders also get to work with teams of hugely talented, enthusiastic people, solving problems and planning for the future. Above everything else, being a mission leader gives you a broad view of what God is doing through your agency and through others and gives you the responsibility of helping to guide your organisation in line with what you see God has for it. It's exciting, it's interesting and it is a massive privilege.

Of course, not everything is quite so positive. In my time in mission leadership, I faced a number of difficult issues:

- One day, while we were on holiday, I received the news that a good friend and colleague - the mother of two small children - had died unexpectedly. I had to quickly travel to support her husband.
- One Christmas holiday, when we were in a neighbouring country, we learned that there had been a military coup in Ivory Coast. All of our staff were safe, but staying in contact and supporting the teams through the whole thing was 'interesting'.
- A few weeks after the coup, we received a phone call late at night telling us that the plane carrying my regional director and his wife had crashed into the sea off Abidjan. We'd just spent the day with them and Sue and I had dropped them at the airport a few hours earlier. I was responsible for identifying their bodies so they could be repatriated.
- Sitting in a board meeting, I received notice that one of my colleagues had been killed in a terrorist bombing. By then I was back in the UK and had to spend hours fending calls from the national press who wanted to make a big story of the event.
- There was a couple who, for reasons best known to themselves, accused me of embezzling mission funds and wrote to people all around the world accusing me of dishonesty.
- Then there are innumerable personality clashes, disciplinary issues, the odd law suit (in two countries) and so the list goes on.

Leadership comes with massive privileges, but it isn't all about exciting times planning for the future. It involves hard grind, some extremely difficult situations and a bucketload of responsibility. What's more, some of the most difficult issues are often confidential. Leadership can be a lonely place and being blamed for decisions that you have made by people who don't know the full facts is a heavy

burden to carry.

So why am I saying this? Well, I reckon that being a mission director is easy compared to being prime-minister of the United Kingdom and being a mission director is tough. Whatever one thinks of Theresa May, she has an incredibly difficult job. We may not like her politics, her leadership style or her decision making but we do have a responsibility to pray for her and for those around her.