

Evangelist: Gospel Profoundly Affected Nelson Mandela

One of South Africa's leading evangelists says he believes the gospel profoundly affected **Nelson Mandela's** outlook as he re-entered politics after his years in prison.

Evangelist Michael Cassidy said **Billy Graham** asked him to visit Mandela in 1992 in response to a letter Mandela had written to Graham after he left prison.

He said he personally took a signed copy of Graham's book, *Peace with God*, to Mandela.

"I remember him telling me that when he was in prison he never missed Bible study or church service or Sunday nights. I was very impressed by that," Cassidy said.

"I personally like to believe that the Christian gospel also informed his responses. It wasn't just pragmatic politics. These were principles in his heart and soul and mind that he had come to believe were right," he continued.

At Mandela's request, Cassidy went to network with other church leaders to press for reconciliation, both before and after Mandela's election in 1994.

"He was saddened that there were portions of the church that had given explicit or implicit support for the apartheid system and had legitimized it theologically," he reminisced.

"But it was not lost on him that the church was a very important player in the whole process whereby apartheid was brought to an end," Cassidy added.

Cassidy said Mandela wrote a letter to Graham saying he was touched by one of Graham's TV broadcasts while in prison.