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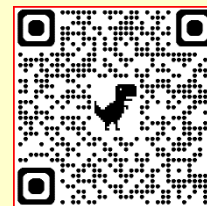
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Psychosocial Traits that Foster Accountability in Christian Religious Leadership: A Study of Bishop Ajayi Crowther

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ABSTRACT

The crisis of accountability in contemporary religious leadership often stems from a disconnect between institutional power and the moral obligations owed to the church and humanity. Across various denominations, churches are increasingly scrutinized for failures in transparency, ethical conduct, and responsiveness to the church and humanity they serve. Consequently, this study examined the life and leadership of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1809–1891) to identify the specific psychosocial traits that facilitate ethical accountability in his ministry. As the first African Anglican Bishop that navigated the volatile intersection of colonial ecclesiastical authority and indigenous societal expectations and provide a unique historical model for responsible leadership. This study adopted a biographical and thematic analysis to ascertain traits that enabled Crowther to maintain integrity amidst the systemic racism of the 19th-century Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the pressures of the Niger Mission. From the analysis, the study established that Crowther's "bridge-building" leadership was characterised by intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and an internal locus of control served as the bedrock for a steadfast commitment to his ministry which created a form of grassroots accountability. This suggested that sustainable accountability is intrinsically linked to the leader's ability to balance personal conviction with a deep, empathetic connection to serve the church and humanity.

KEY WORDS: Psycho-Social Traits, Accountability, Religious Leadership and Bishop Ajayi Crowther.

Introduction

Religious leadership occupies a unique position in society, wielding influence over spiritual beliefs, moral values, and social behavior. Leaders such as Bishop Ajayi Crowther bear responsibility not only to their immediate congregations but also to broader religious traditions, institutional structures, and ultimately to divine authority. The question of how religious leaders maintain accountability to

their followers, to their institutions, to their communities, and to their faith is therefore of profound importance. Accountability in religious leadership differs from accountability in secular contexts. Oladele (2019) argues that religious leaders must balance multiple, sometimes competing accountabilities: to their faith tradition, to their congregation, to their institution, to secular law, and to their own conscience.

Bishop Ajayi Crowther (1807-1891) stands as a remarkable

exemplar of accountable religious leadership. As the first African Anglican bishop, Crowther navigated the complex terrain of colonial Nigeria, missionary Christianity, and African cultural contexts. Aderibigbe (2018) noted that Crowther's leadership was characterized by commitment to African agency, linguistic and cultural adaptation, and institutional integrity. His life and work demonstrated how specific psychosocial traits such as psychological characteristics and social consciousness fostered accountability in religious leadership. This multiplicity of accountabilities requires particular psychosocial traits that enable leaders to navigate these tensions while maintaining integrity and credibility.

Accountability

Accountability represents one of the most critical yet contested concepts in contemporary organizational, political, and social discourse. Derived from the Latin "accomptare" (to account for), accountability fundamentally refers to the obligation of individuals and institutions to explain and justify their actions, accept responsibility for outcomes, and submit to external scrutiny (Bovens, 2007). Bovens (2007, p. 450) defined accountability as "a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences".

Mulgan (2003) identified three core dimensions of accountability: answerability (the obligation to provide information and explanation), enforceability (the capacity to impose sanctions), and responsiveness (the willingness to adjust conduct based on feedback). These dimensions distinguish accountability from related concepts such as responsibility (which may be unilateral) or transparency (which involves information disclosure without necessarily implying judgment or consequences).

The Global Accountability Project (GAP, 2005) identifies four core dimensions of accountable organisations:

Transparency: This refers to an organisation's openness about its activities, providing information about what it is doing, where and how this takes place, and how it is performing. It ensures that stakeholders are provided with the information they need to participate in the decisions that affect them.

Participation: The emphasis here is on a participatory approach to decision-making, with mechanisms at the operational, tactical and strategic levels, which enable stakeholders to input into decisions that affect them. Thus, some degree of power must be ceded to stakeholders in order for the organisation to be considered truly accountable.

Evaluation: This requirement ensures that the organisation is accountable for its performance, achieving its goals and objectives and meeting agreed standards. This is a learning process that informs ongoing activities and future decision making, providing information that enables the entity to improve performance, and thus be more accountable to its mission, vision,

goals and objectives.

Complaint and Response Mechanism - This enables the stakeholder to seek and receive response from the organisation - querying a decision, action or policy, and receiving adequate response to their grievance.

Sinclair (1995) argued that accountability is inherently political, reflecting power relationships and contested values. She

distinguishes between "hierarchical accountability" (upward reporting to superiors), "professional accountability" (peer review and disciplinary mechanisms), "market accountability" (consumer choice and competitive pressures), "political accountability" (democratic processes and public judgment), and "personal accountability" (individual conscience and moral commitment). This typology reveals that accountability operates through multiple channels with different logics and implications.

Dimensions of Religious Accountability

Ecclesiastical Discipline: Religious organizations establish procedures for investigating complaints regarding clergy misconduct and imposing sanctions including removal from office (Schillebeeckx, 1985). Ecclesiastical discipline operates through internal religious processes rather than governmental law.

Doctrinal Accountability: Religious leaders are held accountable to their traditions' doctrinal teachings, with accountability mechanisms including peer review, theological critique, and removal from leadership positions for doctrinal violations (Thiselton, 2009).

Congregational Accountability: In congregational governance structures, religious leaders are accountable to congregational members through voting and congregational meetings (Ammerman, 1997). Congregational accountability enables members to hold leaders accountable but may be limited by information asymmetries and power imbalances.

Prophetic Accountability: Religious traditions emphasize prophetic critique as a mechanism through which leaders are held accountable to religious principles and community welfare (Heschel, 1962). Prophetic accountability operates through moral critique and calls for institutional reform.

Challenges to Religious Accountability

Confidentiality and Secrecy: Religious organizations often operate with significant confidentiality regarding internal processes, limiting external accountability (Mitchell, 2007). Confidentiality protections for religious counseling and confession can prevent accountability for misconduct.

Institutional Autonomy: Religious freedom protections limit governmental regulation of religious organizations, creating spaces where accountability mechanisms may be weak (Laycock, 2010). While religious freedom is important, it can enable abuse when accountability mechanisms are inadequate.

Power Imbalances: Religious authority often creates significant power imbalances between leaders and followers, enabling abuse and limiting accountability (Johnson & VanVonderen, 2005). Followers may be reluctant to challenge leaders due to spiritual authority claims or fear of spiritual consequences.

Scandal and Institutional Response: Scandals involving abuse and misconduct have revealed inadequate accountability mechanisms in many religious organizations (Balboni et al., 2007). Religious organizations have often prioritized institutional protection over accountability to victims.

Religious Leadership

Religious leadership is practised less through harnessing people's commitment to a particular religious community, for instance by motivating members to faithfully attend and sponsor community activities often in competitive mode with other religious or non-religious communities. Therefore, religious leadership can be

defined as the process of influencing individuals and communities toward the achievement of spiritual goals through the application of religious principles and moral authority (Transformational Leadership in Religious Organizations, 2018). Unlike secular leadership, which primarily emphasizes organizational efficiency and goal attainment, religious leadership integrates transcendent values and divine purpose into its operational framework (Northouse, 2019). Rather, religious leaders motivate people to participate by engaging their spiritual journey, focusing on spiritual experience and life meaning through participation.

The Four Pillars of Christian Religious Leadership

Religious leadership operates through four interconnected dimensions that collectively constitute the foundation of spiritual authority and influence within faith communities. These dimensions include spiritual authority, moral exemplification, community stewardship, and doctrinal interpretation which represent the essential components through which religious leaders exercise their roles and responsibilities (Northouse, 2019; Rost, 1993).

Spiritual Authority: Spiritual authority represents the foundational legitimacy upon which all religious leadership rests. It is derived from the perceived connection between a leader and transcendent reality whether understood as God, the divine, ultimate truth, or sacred principles (Weber, 1947). This authority distinguishes religious leadership from secular forms of governance by grounding legitimacy in metaphysical rather than purely institutional or rational-legal foundations (Shils, 1965). Spiritual authority operates through multiple channels of legitimacy. First, it emerges from direct religious experience or mystical connection, wherein leaders claim personal encounters with the divine (James, 1902). Second, it derives from mastery of sacred texts and theological knowledge, positioning leaders as authoritative interpreters of religious tradition (Scholem, 1987). Third, it flows from institutional appointment within established religious hierarchies, wherein authority is conferred through ordination or formal recognition (Schillebeeckx, 1985).

Historically, spiritual authority has manifested in diverse forms. In ancient Judaism, prophets such as Moses, Elijah, and Isaiah claimed direct divine communication, asserting authority through mystical experience and divine commission (Heschel, 1962). Their spiritual authority transcended institutional structures, resting instead on the conviction that they spoke God's word with unmediated authenticity. In early Christianity, apostolic authority derived from direct association with Jesus Christ and claimed continuity with his spiritual mission (Johnson, 2006). The Apostle Paul's letters demonstrate how spiritual authority was established through theological argumentation, personal testimony, and claims of divine revelation. Later, the development of apostolic succession formalized this spiritual authority within ecclesiastical structures, linking contemporary bishops to the original apostles through an unbroken chain of ordination (Brown & Meier, 1983).

Moral Exemplification: Moral exemplification refers to the demonstration of ethical conduct consistent with religious teachings, functioning as a primary mechanism through which religious leaders establish credibility and influence followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). This dimension rests on the assumption that religious teachings gain persuasive force when embodied in leaders lived experience, creating what scholars term "authenticity" or "congruence" between espoused values and actual behaviour (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The concept of moral exemplification draws from virtue ethics traditions, which emphasize character

development and the cultivation of moral excellence (MacIntyre, 1981). Rather than focusing solely on rule-following or consequentialist outcomes, virtue ethics emphasizes the development of admirable character traits that enable individuals to flourish and contribute to community well-being (Nussbaum, 1986). Interestingly, moral exemplification has distinguished revered leaders from those regarded as hypocritical or corrupt. Bishop Ajayi Crowther and Saint Francis of Assisi exemplified Christian teachings through radical poverty, humility, and compassion, establishing his moral authority through lived commitment to Gospel values (Habig, 1973). His willingness to renounce wealth and social status while serving the poor created a compelling moral witness that attracted thousands of followers and influenced the development of Christian monasticism.

Paradoxically, moral exemplification presents inherent paradoxes. Religious teachings often articulate ideals of perfection or transcendence that human leaders cannot fully embody, creating inevitable gaps between espoused values and actual conduct (Niebuhr, 1932). This raises questions about whether leaders should claim moral exemplification or instead acknowledge their own moral limitations while pointing toward transcendent ideals (Palmer, 1993). So, the emphasis on moral exemplification can create problematic power dynamics wherein followers uncritically idealize leaders, projecting perfection onto flawed individuals (Johnson & VanVonderen, 2005). This dynamic has historically enabled abuse, as followers rationalize or excuse leaders' misconduct based on presumed spiritual authority or moral superiority.

Contemporary religious leadership increasingly emphasizes authentic vulnerability and acknowledgment of moral limitations rather than claims to perfection (Brown, 2012). Leaders who openly acknowledge struggles, failures, and ongoing moral development often establish greater credibility than those claiming moral superiority. This shift reflects broader cultural movements toward transparency and authenticity in leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Additionally, moral exemplification is increasingly understood as a collective rather than individual phenomenon. Religious communities collectively embody and exemplify their traditions' ethical teachings through communal practices, justice commitments, and mutual accountability (Bass, 2012). This communal approach distributes moral responsibility across the community rather than concentrating it in individual leaders.

Community Stewardship: Community stewardship refers to the responsibility of religious leaders to serve as custodians of their communities' collective spiritual welfare, functioning as trustees of sacred traditions, protectors of community integrity, and advocates for members' spiritual flourishing (Greenleaf, 1977). This dimension emphasizes that religious leadership is fundamentally relational and communal rather than individualistic or purely institutional. Since, stewardship differs from ownership or control; stewards manage resources and communities on behalf of others and higher purposes rather than for personal benefit (Block, 2013). In religious contexts, stewardship implies that leaders hold their positions in trust, accountable to both their communities and transcendent principles. This creates a fiduciary relationship wherein leaders' primary obligation is to followers' spiritual development and community well-being rather than personal advancement or institutional aggrandizement (Palmer, 1993).

In early Christian communities, bishops like Bishop Ajayi Crowther and presbyters were understood as stewards of God's household, responsible for maintaining doctrinal purity, ensuring equitable resource distribution, and caring for vulnerable community members

(1 Peter 4:10, New Revised Standard Version, 1989). The concept of "oikonomia" (household management) provided the theological framework for understanding pastoral leadership as stewardship of the Christian community. Therefore, community stewardship encompasses multiple interrelated responsibilities:

1. **Spiritual Nurturance:** Leaders serve as stewards of followers' spiritual development, providing guidance, teaching, and pastoral care that enables individuals to deepen their faith and practice (Nouwen, 1972). This involves understanding community members' spiritual needs and creating conditions for spiritual growth.
2. **Institutional Integrity:** Leaders function as stewards of their religious institutions, ensuring that organizations remain faithful to their founding principles and serve community needs rather than becoming corrupted by power or financial interests (Mitchell, 2007). This requires vigilance against institutional drift and willingness to reform structures that no longer serve their intended purposes.
3. **Tradition Transmission:** Leaders serve as stewards of sacred traditions, responsible for preserving essential teachings while adapting them to contemporary contexts (Smith, 1998). This involves balancing fidelity to tradition with responsiveness to changing circumstances, ensuring that traditions remain living and relevant rather than becoming ossified or irrelevant.
4. **Justice Advocacy:** Many religious traditions understand community stewardship as including advocacy for justice and protection of vulnerable community members (Gutierrez, 1988). Leaders function as stewards of community values, calling communities to live according to their highest principles and challenging structures that perpetuate injustice.
5. **Interfaith Stewardship:** In pluralistic contexts, community stewardship increasingly involves serving as stewards of broader community welfare beyond religious boundaries, working collaboratively with leaders from other traditions toward common good (Eck, 2001).

Throughout religious history, exemplary leaders have understood their roles as stewards of community welfare. In ancient Israel, religious leaders functioned as stewards of covenant relationship, calling communities back to fidelity with God and advocating for justice and righteousness (Heschel, 1962). Prophetic stewardship often involved confronting community leaders and institutions when they violated covenant obligations, prioritizing community spiritual welfare over institutional comfort or political expedience. Hence, stewardship is increasingly understood as extending beyond human communities to include environmental and ecological dimensions (Tucker & Grim, 2001). Religious leaders function as stewards of creation, responsible for advocating ecological sustainability and protecting natural systems that sustain all life.

Doctrinal Interpretation: Doctrinal interpretation refers to the authoritative guidance that religious leaders provide regarding the meaning, application, and implications of religious principles and teachings (Scholem, 1987). This dimension recognizes that sacred texts and traditions require interpretation to address contemporary questions and contexts, with religious leaders serving as authoritative interpreters who bridge tradition and present circumstances (Gadamer, 1975). Doctrinal interpretation is grounded

in hermeneutical theory, which examines how meaning is constructed through the interaction between texts, interpreters, and audiences (Ricoeur, 1976). Religious leaders function as hermeneutical authorities, employing interpretive methods and theological reasoning to determine how ancient teachings apply to contemporary situations (Thiselton, 2009).

For instance, different religious traditions employ distinct interpretive methodologies. Jewish tradition emphasizes midrash (interpretive expansion) and halakha (legal reasoning), enabling rabbis to derive contemporary applications from biblical texts (Neusner, 1987). Islamic jurisprudence employs qiyas (analogical reasoning), ijma' (scholarly consensus), and ijthihad (independent reasoning) to develop legal and theological guidance from the Qur'an and Sunnah (Hallaq, 2009). Buddhist hermeneutics emphasizes understanding sutras within their contexts and recognizing multiple levels of meaning (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2005). Christian theology employs exegesis, systematic theology, and doctrinal development to interpret Scripture and tradition (Thiselton, 2009).

In early Christianity, apostolic fathers such as Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch interpreted apostolic teachings for second-generation communities facing novel challenges (Johnson, 2006). Their interpretations established precedents for how Christian doctrine would develop across subsequent centuries.

Medieval Christian theology witnessed extraordinary sophistication in doctrinal interpretation, with scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas synthesizing Aristotelian philosophy with Christian doctrine (Aquinas, trans. 1948). Aquinas's interpretive methodology enabled Christian theology to engage contemporary philosophical frameworks while maintaining doctrinal continuity.

The Protestant Reformation fundamentally altered doctrinal interpretation by emphasizing sola scriptura (Scripture alone) and challenging medieval interpretive traditions (MacCulloch, 2003). Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin developed new hermeneutical approaches emphasizing historical-grammatical exegesis and direct engagement with biblical texts rather than reliance on ecclesiastical tradition (Luther, 1520). Moreover, religious leaders employ diverse interpretive methods:

Textual Exegesis: Detailed analysis of sacred texts, examining linguistic, historical, and literary dimensions to determine meaning (Thiselton, 2009). This involves understanding texts within their original contexts while recognizing their continuing significance for contemporary communities.

Systematic Theology: Integration of doctrinal teachings into coherent theological frameworks that address contemporary questions and concerns (Grenz & Olson, 1992). Systematic theology enables religious leaders to show how diverse teachings cohere and address contemporary issues.

Analogical Reasoning: Application of principles established in texts or traditions to novel situations through analogical extension (Hallaq, 2009). This enables doctrinal guidance to address circumstances not explicitly addressed in original sources.

Consensus Building: Consultation with other scholars and community members to develop interpretations that reflect collective wisdom rather than individual judgment (Hallaq, 2009). This methodology recognizes that authoritative interpretation emerges through dialogue and collective discernment.

Contextual Adaptation: Recognition that doctrinal meaning must

be adapted to address contemporary contexts while maintaining fidelity to core principles (Kraft, 1979). This involves distinguishing between essential doctrinal content and culturally conditioned expressions.

In the contemporary time, religious leadership increasingly aver collaborative and transparent approaches to doctrinal interpretation. Rather than pronouncing interpretations from positions of authority, leaders increasingly engage communities in interpretive processes, recognizing that meaning emerges through dialogue (Palmer, 1993). Many religious leaders employ historical-critical methodologies that acknowledge texts' historical contexts and development, moving beyond literalist approaches (Thiselton, 2009). This enables engagement with contemporary scholarship while maintaining theological significance of sacred texts.

Accountability in Religious Leadership

Religious leadership accountability differs from secular leadership accountability in several fundamental ways. First, religious leaders claim authority grounded in spiritual or divine sources rather than solely in institutional appointment or democratic election (Weber, 1947). Second, religious leaders exercise influence over followers' most intimate beliefs and practices, creating asymmetrical power relationships (Johnson & VanVonderen, 2005). Third, religious leaders often operate within institutional contexts that prioritize religious autonomy and confidentiality, limiting external accountability mechanisms (Laycock, 2010). The growth of churches whether spiritually, numerically, and structurally is significantly influenced by how religious leaders conduct themselves and manage resources (Jenssen, 2020). Since, leadership provides the foundation upon which trust is built from the followers (Kleynhans et al., 2022).

Sinclair's (1995) typology of accountability forms proves particularly useful for understanding religious leadership accountability. Religious leaders are subject to hierarchical accountability (to religious superiors and institutional authorities), professional accountability (to peers and professional standards), personal accountability (to conscience and moral principles), political accountability (to communities and publics), and theological accountability (to religious traditions and divine principles). These multiple accountability relationships often create tensions requiring negotiation and integration. Religious leadership accountability involve several dimensions:

Spiritual Accountability: Religious leaders are accountable to God or transcendent principles for their conduct and the spiritual welfare of their followers (Heschel, 1962). Spiritual accountability operates through conscience, prayer, and internal moral awareness rather than through external enforcement mechanisms.

Institutional Accountability: Religious leaders are accountable to their religious institutions for compliance with institutional policies, procedures, and ethical standards (Schillebeeckx, 1985). Institutional accountability operates through hierarchical oversight, disciplinary procedures, and institutional governance mechanisms.

Community Accountability: Religious leaders are accountable to their communities for stewardship of resources, protection of vulnerable members, and advancement of community spiritual welfare (Greenleaf, 1977). Community accountability operates through congregational oversight, community feedback, and community discipline.

Civil Accountability: Religious leaders are increasingly

accountable to civil authorities for compliance with civil law, including laws addressing abuse, financial fraud, and discrimination (Laycock, 2010). Civil accountability operates through legal processes and governmental enforcement mechanisms. This shows that religious organizations operate at the intersection of religious freedom protections and civil accountability requirements. Religious freedom protections enable religious organizations to operate with significant autonomy from governmental regulation, but they do not exempt religious organizations from basic legal requirements (Laycock, 2010). Keathley (2004) identified five compelling reasons for accountability in the religious leadership:

Functionality: Accountability is an essential part of a functional society, the prototype for which is the Triune Godhead itself. Though the members of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are co-eternal and co-equal, each being God of very God, Scripture gives evidence of an accountability that exists within the Godhead. The Spirit accepts His role as the Enabler or Comforter, the Son accepts His role as the suffering Saviour, and all proceed from the Father.

Biblical controls or checks and balances: Accountability helps to promote biblical controls or checks and balances. It provides the necessary discipline and support needed to see people reach godly goals. God has given the Word and the Holy Spirit as His agents of control to help provide direction and controls on our lives, but accountability to other believers becomes another key instrument to aid in bringing about self-discipline and inner controls.

Servant-like leadership: Accountability promotes servant-like leadership in keeping with the pastoral mandate to watch over the flock. One of the key requirements of a servant leader is faithfulness to the things entrusted to him.

Protective: Accountability is protective to both leaders and to the flock. The biblical model for church leadership is a collective leadership of elders which provides a structure for genuine accountability. Leadership provides close accountability, genuine partnership, and peer relationships, the very things imperial pastors shrink from at all costs.

Sheep-like attitude: Accountability is necessary because like sheep we tend to go our own way. We are all self-willed. We want to protect our comfort zones and avoid having to deal with certain issues that are important to becoming obedient Christians.

Therefore, the goal of accountability is not riding herd over people like a task master something completely contrary to Scripture. Rather, the goal is to help people grow in Christ and learn to find Him as the source, force and course of life. Leaders are accountable to God, to parishioners, to themselves, to society at large, and to the vision and mission of the church. Leaders are to be held accountable, to lead God's flock by walking personally with God and by working together to help church members do the same. They carry a responsibility (and by extension, the need for accountability) to:

1. Lead the church as ELDERS (reflecting maturity in the faith), OVERSEERS (super-intending over the affairs of the church), and SHEPHERDS (feeding, leading, guarding and restoring). They have a duty to lead by godly example and by the teaching of the Word of God;
2. Walk personally with God by maintaining a daily obedience to God's Word, living like men who will render account to God about their stewardship, encouraging their members to live lives of faith and prayer, and willing to suffer for the cause of Christ if the need arises;

3. Work together with others as part of plural leadership, each submitting to the other in humility, putting a priority on godly relationships and virtues;
4. Help those in the church to walk personally with God, keeping watch over their souls, faithfully instructing them in the Word, toiling for their joy and spiritual profit, and emphasising the grace of God in his dealings with the people.

Mechanisms of Accountability in Bishop Ajayi Crowther's Leadership

Bishop Ajayi Crowther's exemplifies multiple dimensions of accountability in leadership including accountability to God and religious principles, accountability to ecclesiastical authorities and institutional structures, accountability to African communities and their welfare, and accountability to principles of justice and human dignity (Peel, 2000). As an African bishop within the Anglican Church, Crowther operated within hierarchical ecclesiastical structures that established clear lines of authority and accountability (Peel, 2000). His accountability to ecclesiastical authorities manifested through multiple mechanisms:

Personal Moral Integrity and Spiritual Discipline: Crowther maintained accountability through personal moral integrity and spiritual discipline (Ajayi, 1965): This includes prayer and spiritual practice, moral conviction, personal example, intellectual integrity, and theological dialogue.

Prayer and Spiritual Practice: Crowther maintained consistent prayer and spiritual practice throughout his ministry, demonstrating accountability through spiritual discipline (Peel, 2000). His spiritual practice represented accountability to God and to religious principles. Crowther's spiritual practice reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for maintaining spiritual discipline (Isichei, 1995).

Moral Conviction: Crowther maintained moral convictions grounded in Christian principles and personal conscience (Ajayi, 1965). His moral conviction represented accountability to God and to moral principles. Crowther's moral conviction reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for maintaining moral integrity (Peel, 2000).

Personal Example: Crowther's life and conduct provided moral example to African and European communities (Isichei, 1995). His personal example represented accountability through demonstration of Christian commitment. Crowther's example reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for providing moral example (Ajayi, 1965).

Intellectual Integrity: Crowther maintained intellectual integrity in his scholarly work, employing rigorous methods and acknowledging limitations (Peel, 2000). His intellectual integrity represented accountability for quality and accuracy in intellectual work. Crowther's integrity reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for intellectual honesty (Isichei, 1995).

Doctrinal Conformity: Crowther maintained conformity with Anglican doctrine and ecclesiastical practices, ensuring that his ministry aligned with Church of England teachings (Isichei, 1995). His doctrinal conformity represented accountability to the Anglican tradition and to ecclesiastical authorities. Crowther's commitment to doctrinal conformity reflected his understanding that religious leaders are accountable for maintaining theological integrity and

fidelity to established teachings (Ajayi, 1965)

Liturgical Conformity: Crowther maintained Anglican liturgical practices and sacramental theology, ensuring that African churches conformed to Anglican standards (Isichei, 1995). His liturgical conformity represented accountability to Anglican ecclesiastical traditions. Crowther's commitment to liturgical conformity reflected his understanding that religious leaders are accountable for maintaining continuity with established religious practices (Ajayi, 1965).

Theological Dialogue: Crowther engaged in theological dialogue with African religious traditions, seeking to understand African religious concepts and to identify connections with Christian teachings (Isichei, 1995). His theological dialogue represented accountability to African communities and to principles of respectful engagement. Crowther's dialogue reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for engaging respectfully with community traditions (Ajayi, 1965).

Institutional Reporting and Transparency: Crowther maintained accountability through institutional reporting and transparency (Ajayi, 1965): The institutional reporting and transparency involves financial reporting, missionary reporting, and institutional records.

Financial Reporting: Crowther provided regular financial reports to ecclesiastical authorities regarding use of resources (Peel, 2000). His financial reporting represented accountability through transparency regarding resource use. Crowther's reporting reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for transparent financial management (Isichei, 1995).

Missionary Reporting: Crowther provided detailed reports to ecclesiastical authorities regarding missionary activities and institutional developments (Ajayi, 1965). His missionary reporting represented accountability through transparency regarding institutional activities. Crowther's reporting reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for transparent institutional reporting (Peel, 2000).

Institutional Records: Crowther maintained careful institutional records documenting institutional activities and decisions (Isichei, 1995). His record-keeping represented accountability through documentation of institutional conduct. Crowther's records reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for maintaining institutional records (Ajayi, 1965).

Community Engagement and Feedback: Crowther maintained accountability through community engagement and responsiveness to community feedback (Peel, 2000): The community engagement of Bishop Crowther include consultation, pastoral responsiveness, feedback and cultural preservation.

Consultation: Crowther consulted with community members regarding institutional decisions and strategies (Ajayi, 1965). His community consultation represented accountability through community participation in decision-making. Crowther's consultation reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for engaging community input (Isichei, 1995).

Pastoral Responsiveness: Crowther responded to community concerns and needs through pastoral care and institutional adaptation (Peel, 2000). His pastoral responsiveness represented accountability through responsiveness to community needs. Crowther's responsiveness reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for addressing community concerns (Ajayi, 1965).

Feedback: Crowther sought and incorporated community feedback

regarding his leadership and institutional decisions (Isichei, 1995). His incorporation of feedback represented accountability through responsiveness to community evaluation. Crowther's feedback-seeking reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for considering community perspectives (Peel, 2000).

Cultural Preservation: Crowther worked to preserve African cultural traditions while introducing Christian teachings (Peel, 2000). His cultural preservation represented accountability to African communities and to principles of cultural respect. Crowther's preservation reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for respecting community cultures (Isichei, 1995). Crowther studied African cultural traditions, learning Yoruba language and understanding Yoruba religious concepts (Peel, 2000). His cultural study represented accountability to African communities through genuine effort to understand their traditions. Crowther's cultural study reflected his understanding that leaders are accountable for understanding community cultures (Isichei, 1995).

Psychosocial Traits of Bishop Ajayi Crowther

His life and ministry demonstrated distinctive psychosocial traits that enabled him to navigate extraordinary challenges of slavery, colonialism, racial hierarchy, and institutional constraint while maintaining moral integrity, advancing African interests, and making significant contributions to African Christian theology and practice (Ajayi, 1965). The five critical psychosocial traits characterizing Crowther's leadership: intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control. These traits operated synergistically to enable Crowther to exercise effective leadership, maintain accountability, and advance justice despite facing systemic constraints and opposition (Peel, 2000). Understanding Crowther's psychosocial traits provides insights into how leaders can develop emotional maturity, cultural sensitivity, and psychological resilience necessary for effective leadership in complex, multicultural, and constrained contexts (Isichei, 1995).

Intellectual Humility: This refers to the capacity to recognize the limitations of one's knowledge, to remain open to alternative perspectives and new information, to acknowledge uncertainty, and to avoid dogmatism or intellectual arrogance (Gross, 2015). Intellectual humility represents a distinctive psychosocial trait enabling leaders to learn continuously, to engage respectfully with diverse perspectives, and to adapt their understanding based on evidence and experience (Tangney, 2000). Intellectual humility differs from intellectual insecurity or lack of confidence. Rather, intellectual humility represents secure confidence grounded in realistic assessment of one's knowledge and capabilities, combined with genuine openness to learning and growth (Davis & Thalmayer, 2016). Intellectually humble leaders recognize that their understanding is partial and provisional, that others possess valuable knowledge and perspectives, and that learning is a lifelong process (Leary et al., 2017).

Crowther exemplified intellectual humility throughout his theological and scholarly work, particularly in his biblical translation and theological interpretation (Peel, 2000). Crowther regularly consulted with other scholars regarding his translation work, seeking feedback and correction (Ajayi, 1965). His consultation practices reflected intellectual humility regarding his own knowledge and recognition that others possessed valuable expertise. Crowther's willingness to seek consultation demonstrated secure confidence combined with openness to learning (Isichei, 1995). More so, Crowther revised his biblical translations based on feedback from

other scholars and community members, acknowledging that his initial translations could be improved (Peel, 2000). His revision practices reflected intellectual humility regarding the provisional nature of translation work and recognition that translation requires ongoing refinement. Crowther's willingness to revise demonstrated commitment to accuracy over defending initial work (Ajayi, 1965). Additionally, Crowther acknowledged limitations in his knowledge and understanding, particularly regarding complex theological concepts and cultural differences (Isichei, 1995). His acknowledgment of limitations reflected intellectual humility regarding the boundaries of his expertise. Crowther's recognition of limitations enabled him to seek additional knowledge and perspectives (Peel, 2000).

Cultural Empathy: This refers to the capacity to understand and appreciate cultural perspectives different from one's own, to recognize the validity of alternative worldviews, and to engage respectfully with cultural diversity (Wang et al., 2003). Cultural empathy involves both cognitive understanding of cultural differences and affective appreciation for cultural perspectives (Choi, 2009). Cultural empathy enables leaders to build relationships across cultural boundaries, to communicate effectively with diverse communities, and to make culturally appropriate decisions (Ridley et al., 2011). Culturally empathetic leaders recognize that multiple cultural perspectives can coexist and that cultural differences need not create conflict (Hammer et al., 2003).

Crowther cultural empathy toward African cultural and religious traditions reflected his genuine effort to comprehend African worldviews and cultural logic. Crowther's understanding approach demonstrated respect for African cultural integrity (Peel, 2000). Crowther approached African religious traditions with respect rather than dismissal, seeking to understand African religious concepts and practices (Isichei, 1995). His religious respect reflected cultural empathy regarding the validity of African religious traditions. Crowther's respectful approach demonstrated that cultural empathy could coexist with Christian commitment (Peel, 2000). Moreover, Crowther advocated selective adaptation of African cultural practices within Christian contexts rather than wholesale rejection or uncritical acceptance (Peel, 2000). His selective adaptation reflected cultural empathy regarding the possibility of cultural synthesis. Crowther's approach demonstrated that cultural empathy could enable creative cultural engagement (Ajayi, 1965). Further, Crowther approached African religious traditions with respect rather than dismissal, seeking to understand African religious concepts and practices (Isichei, 1995). His religious respect reflected cultural empathy regarding the validity of African religious traditions. Crowther's respectful approach demonstrated that cultural empathy could coexist with Christian commitment (Peel, 2000).

Resilience: This refers to the capacity to maintain psychological functioning and emotional well-being despite facing significant adversity, trauma, or stress (Masten, 2001). Resilience involves both the ability to withstand difficulty without being overwhelmed and the capacity to recover and grow following adversity (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Resilient individuals maintain hope, purpose, and commitment despite facing challenges that might overwhelm others (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Resilience is not merely individual trait but emerges through interaction between individual characteristics and environmental supports (Rutter, 1987). Resilient individuals typically possess internal resources including optimism, purpose, and problem-solving skills, as well as access to external supports including relationships, communities, and institutional resources (Bonanno, 2004).

Crowther demonstrated extraordinary resilience in response to slavery and the trauma of enslavement (Ajayi, 1965). Crowther survived slavery and was liberated through British naval intervention (Peel, 2000). His survival reflected psychological resilience enabling him to endure slavery without being psychologically destroyed. Crowther's liberation provided opportunity for recovery and rebuilding (Isichei, 1995). Following liberation, Crowther engaged actively in education, demonstrating resilience through commitment to learning and self-improvement (Ajayi, 1965). His educational engagement reflected psychological resilience enabling him to move beyond trauma toward growth. Crowther's learning represented recovery and rebuilding (Peel, 2000).

Crowther's conversion to Christianity represented psychological resilience through finding meaning and purpose following trauma (Isichei, 1995). His religious conversion reflected capacity to rebuild identity and meaning following slavery. Crowther's conversion demonstrated resilience through spiritual transformation (Ajayi, 1965). This made Crowther developed into a significant religious leader despite slavery trauma, demonstrating extraordinary resilience (Peel, 2000). His leadership development reflected capacity to transform trauma into purpose and contribution. Crowther's achievements demonstrated resilience through meaningful accomplishment (Isichei, 1995). Crowther advocated for enslaved and formerly enslaved Africans, demonstrating resilience through channeling trauma into justice advocacy (Ajayi, 1965). His advocacy reflected capacity to transform personal suffering into commitment to others' welfare. Crowther's advocacy demonstrated resilience through meaningful action (Peel, 2000).

Emotional intelligence: This refers to the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence encompasses four components: self-awareness (recognizing one's own emotions), self-management (managing one's emotions), social awareness (understanding others' emotions), and relationship management (managing relationships effectively) (Goleman, 1995). Emotionally intelligent individuals can regulate their emotions, understand others' emotional states, and use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior (Brackett et al., 2011). Emotional intelligence enables leaders to build effective relationships, to communicate persuasively, to manage conflict constructively, and to inspire and motivate others (Goleman, 2000). Emotionally intelligent leaders demonstrate empathy, self-awareness, and ability to manage emotions under stress (Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

Crowther engaged in ongoing self-reflection regarding his conduct, motivations, and emotional responses (Ajayi, 1965). His self-reflection reflected emotional intelligence through capacity to examine his own emotional states. Crowther's reflection demonstrated emotional awareness (Isichei, 1995). He acknowledged his emotional responses to injustice and discrimination, rather than denying or suppressing emotions (Peel, 2000). His emotion acknowledgment reflected emotional intelligence through recognition of emotional reality. Crowther's acknowledgment demonstrated emotional honesty (Ajayi, 1965).

Crowther understood his motivations for ministry and leadership, recognizing both spiritual commitments and personal aspirations (Isichei, 1995). His motivation understanding reflected emotional intelligence through capacity to recognize complex motivations. Crowther's understanding demonstrated emotional complexity (Peel, 2000). He recognized limitations in his emotional capacity and psychological resources, acknowledging when he was overwhelmed

or emotionally depleted (Ajayi, 1965). His limitation recognition reflected emotional intelligence through honest assessment of emotional capacity. Crowther's recognition demonstrated emotional realism (Isichei, 1995).

Internal locus of control: This refers to the belief that one's actions and efforts influence outcomes, that one can exercise agency and control over circumstances (Rotter, 1966). Individuals with internal locus of control believe that outcomes result from their efforts and decisions rather than from external forces or fate (Lefcourt, 1982). Internal locus of control is associated with greater motivation, persistence, and achievement (Judge & Bono, 2001). Internal locus of control differs from denial of external constraints or unrealistic optimism. Rather, internal locus of control represents realistic belief that one can influence circumstances through effort and strategic action, even when facing significant constraints (Weiner, 1985). Individuals with internal locus of control maintain agency and responsibility while acknowledging external limitations (Peterson & Stunkard, 1989).

Crowther believed that his personal efforts could make meaningful difference in advancing African interests and Christian mission (Ajayi, 1965). His belief in personal effort reflected internal locus of control through conviction that action matters. Crowther's agency demonstrated confidence in personal efficacy (Isichei, 1995). He took initiative in establishing institutions, developing leaders, and advancing African interests rather than waiting for permission or opportunity (Peel, 2000). His initiative reflected internal locus of control through willingness to act. Crowther's initiative demonstrated personal agency (Ajayi, 1965).

Crowther approached problems as challenges to be addressed through strategic thinking and action rather than as insurmountable obstacles (Isichei, 1995). His problem-solving approach reflected internal locus of control through belief in capacity to address problems. Crowther's approach demonstrated agency (Peel, 2000). He accepted responsibility for his conduct and institutional outcomes rather than blaming external circumstances (Ajayi, 1965). His responsibility acceptance reflected internal locus of control through willingness to be accountable. Crowther's acceptance demonstrated personal responsibility (Isichei, 1995). More so, he pursued goals including African leadership development and biblical translation despite facing obstacles (Peel, 2000). His goal pursuit reflected internal locus of control through persistence in pursuing objectives. Crowther's pursuit demonstrated agency (Ajayi, 1965).

Outcomes of Psychosocial Traits on Accountability in Christian Religious Leadership

Crowther's psychosocial traits offer valuable lessons for accountability in leadership in churches today:

1. Intellectual humility directly strengthens accountability by enabling leaders to acknowledge limitations in their knowledge and judgment, to remain open to feedback and correction, and to avoid defensive rationalization of misconduct (Gross, 2015). Religious leaders with intellectual humility are more likely to acknowledge accountability failures, to seek input from others regarding their conduct, and to implement changes based on feedback (Davis & Thalmayer, 2016).
2. Cultural empathy strengthens accountability by enabling leaders to understand and respect diverse perspectives, to

recognize how accountability mechanisms may affect different communities differently, and to ensure that accountability processes are culturally appropriate and inclusive (Wang et al., 2003). Religious leaders with cultural empathy are more likely to ensure that accountability mechanisms serve all community members fairly (Choi, 2009).

3. Resilience strengthens accountability by enabling leaders to maintain commitment to accountability despite facing resistance, setbacks, or personal cost (Masten, 2001). Resilient leaders persist in accountability efforts even when facing institutional pressure to compromise accountability standards (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Resilience enables leaders to maintain accountability when accountability is difficult or costly (Connor & Davidson, 2003).
4. Emotional intelligence strengthens accountability by enabling leaders to understand and manage emotions in accountability processes, to communicate effectively about accountability, and to build relationships that support accountability (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Religious leaders with emotional intelligence navigate accountability conversations skillfully, managing their own emotions while attending to others' emotional experiences (Goleman, 2000).
5. Internal locus of control strengthens accountability by enabling leaders to take responsibility for their conduct and institutional outcomes, to exercise agency in pursuing accountability, and to maintain commitment to accountability despite external pressure (Rotter, 1966). Leaders with internal locus of control believe their efforts matter and can influence accountability outcomes (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Relevance of the Paper

Crowther's model remains particularly relevant for multicultural organizations, cross-cultural leadership contexts, institutional accountability reform, rebuilding institutional trust, justice-oriented leadership, and prophetic witness.

Contemporary religious, corporate, educational, and nonprofit leaders can apply Crowther's model by developing intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control. While systemic barriers and tensions limit implementation of Crowther's model, his example demonstrates that psychosocial development and authentic accountability are possible even in constrained circumstances. Crowther's legacy provides hope, model, inspiration, and vision for contemporary leaders seeking to exercise accountability that serves community welfare and advances justice.

For religious leaders facing unprecedented accountability challenges, Crowther's psychosocial model offers a timely and compelling framework. By developing intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control, contemporary leaders can strengthen accountability in their organizations and communities. By implementing Crowther's model, leaders can address contemporary accountability failures, rebuild trust in institutions, and exercise transformative leadership serving community welfare and advancing justice. Crowther's enduring legacy demonstrates that authentic accountability grounded in psychosocial maturity remains possible and necessary for leadership

today.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Individual leaders must develop intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control to exercise authentic accountability.
2. Mentoring relationships with psychosocially mature leaders that enable emerging leaders to learn from experienced ones and to receive personalized guidance in psychosocial development is need in all churches.
3. Accountability boards composed of psychosocially mature members is need to help exercise effective oversight and model accountability leadership. Therefore, institutions should select board members based on demonstrated intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control.
4. Leaders should establish personal spiritual practices including prayer, meditation, contemplation, or other practices aligned with their faith traditions. The spiritual practices should be regular, intentional and support reflection on values, purpose, and accountability.
5. Institutions should establish clear accountability policies addressing conduct standards, accountability procedures, and consequences for misconduct. These policies should address abuse, financial misconduct, discrimination, and other accountability concerns. Policies should be accessible and understandable. Since, transparent mechanisms strengthen public trust and demonstrate commitment to accountability.
6. Leadership development programs that include curriculum addressing intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control should encourage. It also should include theoretical content, case studies, practical exercises, and reflection activities.

Contributions to Knowledge

1. The paper established how psychosocial traits work synergistically to enable accountability. For instance, rather than viewing traits as independent, this paper demonstrated that traits work together to create comprehensive accountability leadership. Following the fact that intellectual humility enables cultural empathy, resilience is supported by emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control is balanced by intellectual humility.
2. The paper showed that accountability is fundamentally relational and contextual rather than merely institutional. Example, Crowther's accountability leadership demonstrated that authentic accountability emerges through relationships with community members, colleagues, and institutional authorities, and is shaped by cultural context and institutional constraints.
3. This paper offered understanding of African leadership, specifically Crowther's leadership, as valuable model for contemporary leadership. This demonstrated that

Crowther's leadership exemplifies sophisticated psychosocial development and accountability that can serve as model for contemporary leaders across contexts. The understanding of African Christian leadership advances African Christian history by demonstrating that African Christians made original contributions to Christian theology and practice.

4. This paper validated the notion that accountability is a mechanism that serve as an enabler rather than merely constraining. Crowther's accountability leadership offered insight that accountability mechanisms can enable leaders to exercise authentic accountability rather than merely constraining misconduct (Ajayi, 1965). This understanding challenges models viewing accountability as external constraint.
5. This paper established that transparency as foundation for trust in accountability. Crowther's commitment to transparent reporting and communication-built trust with community members. This understanding demonstrated that transparency is not merely compliance requirement but is essential to building trust.

My recommendations and contributions to knowledge to the political arena of Nigeria based on principles identified in Bishop Ajayi Crowther leadership (accountability, integrity, empathy, resilience, and responsible stewardship) are also essential for democratic governance and public leadership. Here are they :

1. Development of ethical political leadership :

That leaders develop intellectual humility, cultural empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control can apply to Nigerian political leaders. In the words of Dr Olusegun Aganga former Nigerian minister of industry, trade, and investment," there is no shortage of competent leaders in Nigeria. What we lack, however, is competent political leadership. The truth is that there is an acute shortage of quality political leadership with the national interest at heart at every level of public life. "

Politicians who possess these traits may become more open to criticism, less defensive, and more willing to correct mistakes when being confronted.

Political contribution: It provides a psychological framework for moving from leadership based on power and personal interest toward leadership based on service and public responsibility.

2. Strengthening accountability in governance :

That accountability is relational and contextual rather than merely institutional has strong relevance for Nigeria's democracy. Nigeria lacks leadership capital which has inhibited its growth and development. Nations dies as a result of the deficits of leadership capital as stated by Dr Linus Okorie leadership experts and CEO, GOTNI Leadership Centre.

Government officials are not only accountable to laws and institutions but also to citizens and communities.

Political contribution: It supports stronger practices such as:

- transparent decision-making,
- public reporting of resources,
- responsiveness to citizens,
- acceptance of public evaluation.

This aligns with the need to reduce corruption and rebuild trust in public institutions.

3. Promoting servant leadership in public office :

My discussion of community stewardship in religious leadership can be transferred to political leadership. In the words of Dr Bayo Busari Academic and Don at Lead City University, "it is the responsibility of leaders to provide directions, hence the bane of development in the country is the leadership. Lack of good, visionary leadership had corrupted the fellowship who tend to copy the ways of their leaders."

Political offices can be viewed as a trust held for the people rather than personal possession.

Political contribution: It encourages leaders to see themselves as custodians of national resources who must prioritize citizens' welfare.

4. Improving ethnic and cultural relations :

My finding on cultural empathy is especially important in Nigeria's multicultural environment. In periods where there is no political leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."

A leader who understands diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural experiences is better positioned to promote inclusion.

Political contribution: It can help address:

- ethnic tensions
- marginalization
- exclusion in governance
- poor representation.

5. Building resilience for national development :

My emphasis on resilience shows how leaders can remain committed despite challenges.

Political contribution: Nigerian political leaders need resilience to pursue long-term reforms instead of abandoning policies due to pressure or opposition.

6. Reforming leadership training in Nigeria :

My recommendation for leadership development programmes that include psychosocial maturity can extend beyond churches to government institutions.

Political contribution: Political parties, civil service institutions, and leadership academies can include training in:

- emotional intelligence
- ethical reasoning
- conflict management
- accountability culture.

7. Strengthening democratic institutions :

My contribution that accountability should be an enabler rather than merely a restriction can influence political thinking.

Political contribution: Accountability mechanisms such as oversight bodies, anti-corruption agencies, and citizen participation can be viewed not as obstacles to leadership but as tools that improve governance.

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