Jesus Christ: The Quintessential Model in Leadership and Accountability

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https://doi.org/10.56201/jpslr.vol.12.no11.2026.pg100.108

Abstract
Various research findings on Jesus Christ leadership styles, this study examined Jesus Christ, the Quintessential Model in Leadership and Accountability. The purpose was to explain the Jesus leadership and accountability in Christian churches. The study adopted exploratory research design. Information was sourced from existing literatures. Jesus leadership styles were through Jesus' accountability to the Father by Obedience, Jesus Accountability by Integrity and Sincerity, Jesus Accountability and the Discipleship and Jesus' Cross-Cultural Model. Findings established that Jesus was accountable to the father by obedience, accountable to the disciples, was accountable by integrity and sincerity. From the findings, the study recommends that the need for churches to realign leadership practices with the biblical model of Jesus, fostering integrity, humility, and servant leadership. Strengthening character development and implementing structured leadership systems are essential steps toward resolving the leadership crisis and embodying Christ-like shepherding in the church context and the need for a theological corrective to success-oriented models of discipleship and proposes a relational, process-oriented framework, contributing to biblical studies and practical theology by reframing failure as essential to authentic Christian formation.

Keywords: *Jesus Christ, Leadership, Accountability, Discipleship*

Introduction

Leadership exists in every sphere of life be it social, economic or political. It is not a quality endowed to some people and denied to others. Each and every individual has the capacity to lead. A person may be a leader in some situation and a follower in another. This is because different qualities are usually required for leadership over different groups. As such a member of the subordinate staff in an organization such as a messenger can be a leader in the church while his/her chief executive is just a worshipper without any leadership role in the same church. Jesus leadership is an instrument for service to God and his creation. Man in the image of God and his likeness were created with the primary aim of serving his creator, God and his creations (fellow human beings and the environment). Ojakaminor (2021) opined that leadership must not be seen as an opportunity for self-aggrandizement, but an opportunity to serve. This is the gospel ideal to which the politician must feel called. The spirit of service together with necessary competence and efficiency make virtuous or above criticism the activity of persons in public life which is

justly demanded by the rest of the people. Therefore, it is imperative for all human beings to become aware of this fact and do their best to fulfill this obligation by faithfully serving their creator and his creation. It is important to always remember that we are created to serve, but not to be served. Jesus is the quintessential leader., epitomizing servant leadership.

Putting religious and spiritual beliefs aside no one in history has been discussed more, worshipped more, had more songs and books written about and inspired more artwork. During His life on earth, he turned three and half years of ministry into a worldwide movement that changed history. Today, more people follow Him than any other leader in the world. As a model leader, Jesus practiced the most vital principles of leadership and he provides an example for leaders to imitate. Scriptures on accountability are practical discipline and require ministers and laities to commit to studying, memorizing, and applying such biblical principles, while holding ourselves and one another accountable for living out those truths. It involves mutual support, encouragement, and correction based on the teachings of Scripture. The idea of accountability in the Bible is woven throughout the entire text, often presented as fellowship or discipleship. Jesus' accountability helps us stay on the path of righteousness, preventing us from falling prey to sin, compromise or apathy. Chronologically, the first key aspect to Christ's leadership and accountability was His calling. He empowered His followers through this instruction and leadership, both encouraging and discipling them. Empowering of the disciples natural followed the training from the Master and formed an integral part of Jesus' servant-leadership model. Through His miracles, Jesus freed people from their infirmities and empowered them to start a new life, physically and spiritually. Jesus also led with integrity by His example. Respected leaders live what they preach, relying on principles, not popularity. Jesus could have won the nation through popularity. He did not. But he left an indelible mark in sand of time for coming generations. Effective spiritual leaders should do the same. Texts on leadership speak of leaders having a profound vision they can "sell" to their followers. Jesus passionately believed His message, and, with integrity, He taught with authority. He was so committed to His vision that He died for it. Vision with commitment is a winning combination which inspires others to action. Outstanding leadership is a coveted and rare commodity in our world. Servant leadership is a form of leadership that has recently gained popularity, although many of its characteristics can be found exhibited as early as Jesus. His model of leader as servant (Lk 22:26, Jn 13:13-17), and the contemporary notion of servant leadership, contribute to outstanding leadership that is effective across cultures. The culture in which Jesus lived embraced a patron-client cultural construct which supports an unequal power distribution amongst members of society (deSilva, 2004), known as a high-power distance culture. Power distance and servant leadership relate directly to Jesus' teaching on leadership in Luke 22:24-30. This article presents a socio-rhetorical interpretation of Luke 22:24-30 illuminating an approach to the 'leader as servant.' This model of exceptional leadership can be used across many cultures irrespective of power distance. Research on servant leadership and power distance seems to confirm that Jesus' form of leadership is appropriate to use in cultures across the world, contributing to outstanding leadership that is desirable to people all over the world. This study examined Jesus Christ, the quintessential model in leadership and accountability.

Review of Related Literature

Concept and overview of Christian leadership

The word leadership comes from the root word "lead," which means to carry, direct, or guide toward a specific goal (Language Development Center, 1993). Leadership in English comes from

the verb "to lead," which means "to guide," "to direct," or "to move" people toward a set goal (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Christianity and leadership are essentially two interrelated concepts, and therefore, in its development, the term Christian leadership has emerged. John C. Maxwell (2022) stated that Christian leadership is influence used not for personal gain, but to bring others closer to God's plan for their lives, where effective leadership is rooted in a spirit of service, not personal ambition. Tozer (2021) emphasized that Christian leadership is a divine calling that prioritizes godliness, humility and complete dependence on the Holy Spirit, so that leaders do not rely solely on skills but also on holiness of life. Christian leadership can simply be understood as leadership based on the truth of God's Word, and in His ministry, Jesus Himself often demonstrated His leadership qualities. Some literature emphasizes that Jesus' leadership in the Gospels is holistic and encompasses three main dimensions: character, relationships, and ministry strategy, and these three things can be seen in the Gospel of John. Although Christian leadership cannot be separated from the leadership that Jesus exercised, in reality today, many contemporary Christian leaders exercise their leadership in a way that is not in line with what Jesus did. Arifianto (2023) revealed a leadership crisis in the church environment that has led to a decline in the quality of ministry. He noted that church leadership today is often rife with corruption, arrogance, lack of integrity, and an inability to accept criticism, which is far from Jesus' example as a shepherd who serves and is willing to sacrifice. Issues related to Christian leadership also occur and based on initial observations and informal interviews with several church councils and members; several problems were identified that reflect a failure to fully implement the values of Christ's leadership. These issues include a crisis of exemplary character, where church leaders, despite being structurally active and capable of managing ministry programs, often fail to demonstrate a life that reflects Christ's principles. Church members have expressed a spiritual distance between leaders and the congregation, particularly in aspects of prayer life, sanctification, and commitment to cultivating a personal relationship with God. Leaders tend to act as administrators rather than shepherds who know and love their sheep.

Henry and Richard (2011) emphasized that Christian leadership is the process of guiding others to recognize and walk in God's calling on their lives, with a leader who continually seeks God's will, not merely relying on human logic. In the same spirit, Gene Wilkes (2012) asserted that the core of Christian leadership is service, where a leader must be willing to set aside personal ambitions to serve the needs of others for Christ's sake. Furthermore, Bill Hybels (2023) underscored the importance of integrity and authenticity in a leader's character in consistently realizing God's vision (Yeniretnowati & Perangin, 2022). Based on the thoughts of these experts, it can be concluded that Christian leadership has distinctive characteristics that set it apart from secular leadership. A Christian leader is an individual who focuses their life on service, fully relies on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, possesses high integrity, is willing to sacrifice, and guides others to grow in likeness to Christ. Christian leadership is not about pursuing positions or popularity, but about how to live as a channel of God's love, truth, and will in this world.

Characteristic and Accountability of Christ's Leadership

The character of a Christian leader is the main pillar in building leadership that is pleasing to God and effective in guiding the people. A leader in a Christian context is not only required to have administrative skills or good communication skills, but more profoundly must reflect the characteristics of Christ in every aspect of his life. Christian leaders are called to emulate Christ, the Great Leader, who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for

many (Mark 10:45). Therefore, character is not optional but essential for a Christian leader. **Table 1 presents Jesus leadership and accountability.**

Table 1: Jesus Leadership and Accountability

Character	Accountability
Integrity	John C. Maxwell (2022) emphasized that integrity is the foundation for all relationships, including leadership relationships, because that is where trust is built. In today's world, which is full of compromises in values, Christian leaders are required to have the courage to uphold the truth even if it means personal risk.
Humility	In the current context, Timothy Keller (2019) emphasizes that true humility is not about belittling oneself, but rather forgetting oneself in the light of God's grace. A humble leader will always prioritize God's will over personal ambition and continue to serve with a pure heart.
Having Love	Christian leaders are required to love the people they lead sincerely, including those who are difficult or oppose them. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of love as the core of everything in Christian life (1 Corinthians 13:1–3), and without love, all service becomes meaningless.
Having loyalty	Loyalty is also an integral part of the character of a Christian leader. This faithfulness is not only to people, but first and foremost to God and the calling He has given. In the world of ministry, there are many temptations that can distract a leader from their mission. However, faithfulness to God's Word and to the divine vision must be maintained. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2015) reminds us that following Christ means being willing to be faithful even unto death
Having perseverance	Perseverance is the fruit of loyalty tested in the journey of ministry. A leader will face challenges, criticism, and even betrayal. However, perseverance distinguishes those who only endure in easy seasons from those who remain faithful in all circumstances. The Apostle Paul himself experienced various sufferings, yet he said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).
Self-control	Self-control is another very important character trait. A leader who is unable to control his emotions, ambitions, or desires will bring destruction not only to himself, but also to the congregation he leads. The Bible emphasizes that self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) and should be a hallmark of a spiritual leader's life.
Always relying on God	Absolute dependence on God, or always relying on God, is another characteristic that distinguishes Christian leaders from secular leaders. Christian leaders do not rely solely on human wisdom, but depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all decisions. As taught in Proverbs 3:5–6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding,” this dependence becomes the source of true strength and wisdom.

Wisdom	Wisdom is an inseparable characteristic of Christian leadership. Wisdom is not merely knowledge, but the ability to apply divine truth in real-life situations. King Solomon, in his prayer, asked for a wise heart to lead God's people (1 Kings 3:9). In this world, Christian leaders must seek and receive wisdom from above to guide the people on the right path.
Having a vision	Spiritual vision is an essential component of the character of a Christian leader. A leader without vision will lead the people in circles without direction. Vision must be born out of prayer, meditation on the Word, and spiritual discernment that penetrates the reality of the world with the eyes of faith. True vision is not for one's own glory, but to fulfill God's purpose in this world. Bill Hybels (2022) states that vision is the source of energy for all meaningful ministry efforts.
Willingness to sacrifice	True ministry always demands the sacrifice of time, energy, comfort, and even reputation. Just as Christ gave Himself for the salvation of humanity, so too is a leader called to sacrifice their own interests for the advancement of God's Kingdom.
Patience	Patience is a vital character trait, especially when facing slow spiritual growth among the congregation or internal church issues. A patient leader can see with eyes of grace, give time for the spiritual growth of the congregation, and not judge quickly or give up.
Willingness to Forgive	The willingness to forgive is a sign of a leader's spiritual maturity. No ministry is free from wounds, betrayal, or injustice. However, just as Christ forgave even from the cross, Christian leaders must have a heart that is willing to forgive others' mistakes (Luke 23:34).
Justice	Justice is also an important character trait in Christian leadership. Leaders are called to act justly toward all people without favoritism. The Bible repeatedly teaches that God hates injustice and loves leaders who rule with truth and justice (Micah 6:8).
Having spiritual sensitivity	Spiritual sensitivity, which is the ability to sense the will and movement of the Holy Spirit, is something that should not be overlooked. A sensitive leader will be able to guide the congregation not only based on rational analysis, but also based on the living guidance of God.
Having a humble attitude in receiving instruction	Having a humble attitude in receiving instruction and formation from God is also important. A true leader is aware that he is still in the process of growth, and is willing to be corrected by the Word of God or by fellow believers whom God has sent to rebuke him.
Living in holiness	A leader must maintain holiness in thought, word, and deed. Holiness grants spiritual authority and protects the leader from scandals that could destroy the ministry.
Setting an example	The example of one's life is a tangible proof of a leader's character. A leader is called not only to teach the truth but to be a living model of that truth. The Apostle Paul said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1), highlighting the importance of personal example in leadership.

Source: Eliezer Andelta Sinukaban, 2025

Methodology

This study adopted exploratory research design to analyze the Quintessential Model in Leadership and Accountability. Data were sourced from existing literature. To ensure reliability, the study relied on multiple sources of literature while Validity was strengthened by critically evaluating the credibility, authenticity and consistency of sources. Literature that was biased, unverifiable, or politically motivated was cross-checked with independent sources before inclusion.

Analysis of Findings

Jesus accountability to the Father by Obedience

Jesus' obedience is evident throughout His ministry, both in His teachings that refer to the will of the Father (John 7:16-18), in His actions that glorify God, and in the difficult choices He made, including the path of suffering. In John 6:38, Jesus reiterates, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me." This shows that Jesus' entire existence on earth was directed toward fulfilling the plan of salvation that God had designed from the beginning (Köstenberger, 2024). The pinnacle of Jesus' obedience to the Father is clearly seen in His suffering and death on the cross. In John 10:17-18, Jesus declares that no one took His life, but that He laid it down of His own accord as an act of obedience to the Father: "The Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again... This is the command I received from My Father." This obedience was not passive as Jesus did not simply allow Himself to be arrested and killed but actively and consciously. He chose the path of the cross as an expression of true love and obedience, for the salvation of humanity (Borchert, 2016; Eliezer, 2025).

Jesus Accountability by Integrity and Sincerity

Theologians see a close connection between these Greek words and Jesus' teachings in the Gospel of John. N.T. Wright (2016) in Jesus and the Victory of God emphasizes that the word ἀλήθεια (alētheia) reflects Jesus' authentic character, whose words and deeds are always in accordance with the will of the Father. Wright also points out that Jesus not only proclaimed the truth but also lived in that truth, linking His integrity to His mission to save humanity. Henri Nouwen (2019) in In the Name of Jesus argues that sincerity (which can be understood through the Greek concept of ἀκακία (akakia)) is the primary characteristic of true Christian leadership. Nouwen argues that sincere leadership is leadership that does not seek power or worldly recognition, but focuses on service that is entirely driven by love. Jesus' sincerity, as described in Greek, is a call for Christian leaders to live in unity between words and deeds, and to serve with pure and untainted intentions.

Jesus Accountability and the Discipleship

From a biblical-theological perspective, the prominence of failure serves both narrative and theological purposes. Mark shifts the reader's focus away from the competency of the disciples toward the identity and faithfulness of Jesus (Emilia et al., 2025). Discipleship, therefore, is not grounded in the disciples' capacity to understand or remain faithful, but in Jesus' unwavering commitment to them (de Campos, 2021). This reorientation challenges performance-based paradigms of discipleship and reframes it within the logic of grace that operates precisely in the context of human weakness. Notably, Mark leaves this tension largely unresolved; underscoring that authentic discipleship remains inseparable from the risk of failure (Geddert, 2004). In

contemporary contexts, Bonhoeffer's insights remain highly relevant, particularly where discipleship is often formalized into structured programs with measurable outcomes. His theology challenges such reductionism by recentering discipleship on a living relationship with Christ one that is both personal and communal, and inherently open to the risks of failure. When read in dialogue with the Gospel of Mark, Bonhoeffer's thought reinforces the understanding that failure is not an anomaly to be avoided, but an integral aspect of following Christ. Discipleship does not progress linearly from imperfection to perfection; rather, it unfolds as a grace-sustained journey shaped by Christ's faithfulness. In this light, Bonhoeffer provides a robust theological framework for reevaluating contemporary discipleship practices. By affirming that failure is not the end but a formative space within the journey, his perspective calls the church to embody a model of discipleship that is relational, sacrificial, and patiently faithful to the example of Jesus, who forms His disciples through shared life, enduring commitment, and transformative grace (Berg, 2009). This reduction raises a significant theological concern, particularly when discipleship fails to produce disciples who actively participate in making other disciples. While many church members receive both foundational and advanced teaching, they often remain disengaged from the process of discipling others (Yeniretnowati dkk., 2021). This phenomenon indicates a gap between contemporary ecclesial practices of discipleship and the pattern demonstrated by Jesus during His ministry. Addressing this gap requires careful biblical reflection, especially on the Gospel of Mark, which distinctively portrays discipleship through relational dynamics and the recurring failure of the disciples.

This dialogue is further deepened when placed in conversation with other theological voices. Dallas Willard's critique of "non-discipleship Christianity" highlights the tendency to separate belief from lived formation, echoing Mark's portrayal of disciples who fail when discipleship is reduced to conceptual understanding (Willard, 2006). Likewise, James K. A. Smith's emphasis on formative practices and habituated desires clarifies why discipleship in Mark unfolds through shared life and embodied experience, where failure becomes integral to the reorientation of love and identity (Smith, 2016). Scot McKnight's insistence on the communal nature of discipleship further reinforces this synthesis, challenging individualistic and outcome-driven models by emphasizing character formation within community (McKnight, 2025).

Jesus' Cross-Cultural Model

Hannay (2009) proposed that high power distance cultures will not naturally gravitate towards servant leadership since it has a high level of empowerment which is innately in opposition to high power distance. This proposition aligns with the findings in the globe study about power distance and leadership. Hannay fails to note that these cultures often desire and value the characteristics of servant leadership even though they do not naturally enact them in their culture. In a quantitative study of servant leadership in two countries, servant leadership was perceived to be culturally universal in Australia and Indonesia. However, the different attributes perceived to make up servant leadership were not all rated as equally important (Pekerti & Sendjaya, 2010). Servant leadership was valued in Australia (moderate power distance) and Indonesia (high power distance) but the cultural values in each culture influenced which attributes of servant leadership were most valued. Although both cultures valued servant leadership, they valued some attributes of servant leadership more highly than others and this varied according to cultural values. Through a qualitative study of Peruvian pastors, Irving (2010) finds that the pastors highly valued servant leadership and saw it as an effective form of leadership. Irving also found servant leadership to be difficult to implement in Peruvian culture

and cited power distance as the major obstacle. This is a modern-day example of Christian pastors in a high-power distance culture struggling with the servant leadership Jesus taught in Luke. Although these pastors believe in Jesus' servant leadership and value it greatly, they struggle to find ways to implement it in a high-power distance culture where it goes against the culturally determined norms of leadership. This article gives a modern-day example of the difficulty of enacting servant leadership in a high-power distance culture while noting that people within the culture deeply value this form of leadership. These studies illustrate that servant leadership is universally valued, although different aspects of servant leadership are valued differently in each culture. Also, there is consistent evidence that high power distance cultures resist servant leadership even though they simultaneously value its characteristics. The book of Luke is situated in a high-power distance culture (deSilvia, 2004) and Jesus' message of leading as a servant certainly challenges cultural norms.

Conclusion

The shepherd leadership model in the light of the Gospel of John shows that Jesus became an example as a good Shepherd through personal relationships, sacrifice, and character building of disciples. Christ came, transformed, and expanded leadership beyond the humanistic figure often depicted in textbooks. He was the Model of perfection in every area, including Christian leadership. The heart of a Christian leadership is service. Jesus Christ teaches that service constitute greatness and leadership. Authority and greatness come from the desire to serve. This work opines that if church leaders should imbibe the qualities of shepherds to the church, the church would fulfill her mandate. Some church leaders are found displaying oppressive traits at every given opportunity. These have resulted from self- centeredness, greed, avarice and oppression. They are compared to those Jesus considered as the rulers over the gentiles who lord over them. Thus, the paper postulates that church leaders must pattern their leadership style after that of Jesus Christ as a good shepherd and also exhibiting humility in their service.

Recommendations

i. The study recommends the need for churches to realign leadership practices with the biblical model of Jesus, fostering integrity, humility, and servant leadership.

ii. Strengthening character development and implementing structured leadership systems are essential steps toward resolving the leadership crisis and embodying Christ-like shepherding in the church context.

iii. The study also recommends the need for a theological corrective to success-oriented models of discipleship and proposes a relational, process-oriented framework, contributing to biblical studies and practical theology by reframing failure as essential to authentic Christian formation.

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