

# Reflections on Science, Service, and the Stewardship of Knowledge

## EDITORS' REFLECTIVE ESSAY

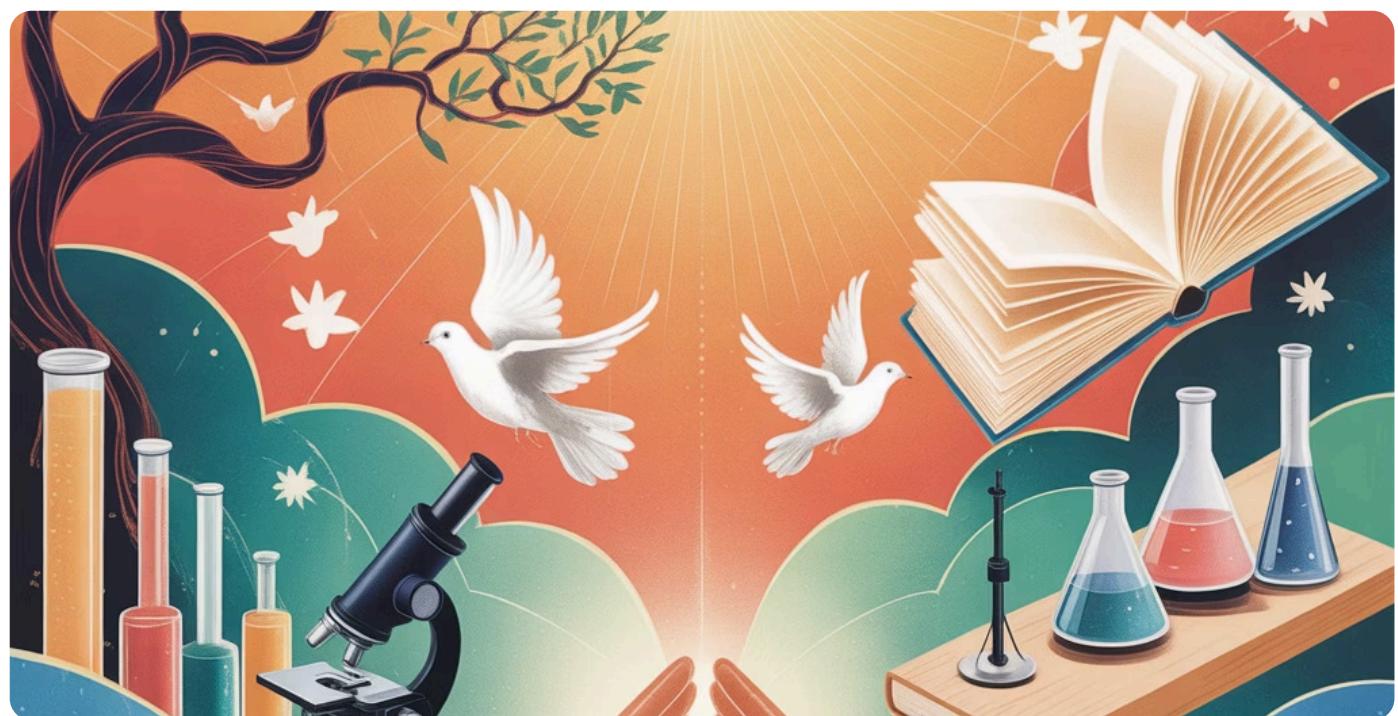
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*This essay explores the intersection of scientific inquiry, ethical leadership, and community service through the exemplary career of a distinguished academic leader and faith-based educator.*



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# INTRODUCTION

Leadership in academia and society is most impactful when it harmoniously blends scientific inquiry, ethical governance, and a commitment to community service. This reflective essay explores how these three facets - science, service, and the stewardship of knowledge - intersect in practice, drawing inspiration from the life and contributions of Rt. Rev. Prof. Samuel Sunday Obeka. Prof. Obeka is a rare exemplar who straddles the worlds of higher education and faith leadership: he serves as the Vice-Chancellor of Wesley University, Ondo (a faith-based Nigerian university) and is also a Bishop in the Methodist Church. Through his career, he has demonstrated that advancing scientific knowledge and educational excellence can go hand-in-hand with ethical leadership and community service. His journey offers a case study in how a visionary leader can use scholarship and spirituality together to uplift an institution and its society.

One useful lens to view Prof. Obeka's approach is a classic definition of leadership by Joe D. Batten. Batten defined leadership as "the development of a clear and complete system of expectations in order to identify, evoke and use the strengths of all resources in the organization to achieve results". In essence, great leadership sets a coherent vision that mobilizes every resource - especially people - toward common goals. Prof. Obeka's tenure vividly illustrates this principle. Since assuming office as Vice-Chancellor in January 2021, he has articulated a bold vision for Wesley University and harnessed the talents of faculty, staff, students, and the support of the Methodist Church to realize it. His leadership is characterized by clarity of purpose and inclusive teamwork, reflecting Batten's emphasis on aligning strengths of all members of an organization. More importantly, Obeka's leadership philosophy is grounded in integrity, service, and knowledge-sharing, aligning with what modern scholars call *ethical leadership* - making decisions based on what is right for the common good. In the sections that follow, we delve deeper into how scientific inquiry, ethical service, and knowledge stewardship have each played a role in Prof. Obeka's career and how they converge in the ongoing transformation of Wesley University, Ondo.

## Leadership Philosophy

Integration of academic excellence with ethical governance, combining scholarly rigor with faith-inspired service to community

## Dual Identity

Unique position as both university Vice-Chancellor and Methodist Bishop, bridging secular education with spiritual leadership

## Transformational Vision

Clear commitment to elevating Wesley University to global recognition while maintaining its faith-based mission and values

# CHAMPIONING SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY AND EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Under Prof. Obeka's leadership, Wesley University has undergone a remarkable academic transformation, underscoring his commitment to science and knowledge. His own background is rooted in scientific inquiry: Prof. Obeka earned a Ph.D. in Geographical & Environmental Science Education and distinguished himself as a researcher in climate and environmental education. As a faculty member at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, he rose from assistant lecturer to full professor over the years, conducting studies on improving students' understanding of environmental issues. For example, he investigated innovative teaching techniques (like concept mapping and games) to enhance secondary school students' achievement and interest in climate change topics. Such research not only contributes to academic literature but also addresses real-world problems - in this case, the urgent issue of climate change education in Nigeria. By pursuing scientific inquiry in the classroom and laboratory, Obeka has exemplified how knowledge can be generated and applied to benefit society (here by equipping young learners to understand and tackle environmental challenges). This dual focus on rigor and relevance is a hallmark of his academic career.



Figure 1: Modern research laboratory equipped with advanced microscopy equipment.

As Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Obeka has expanded this spirit of scientific inquiry throughout Wesley University. A core part of his vision upon taking office was to elevate Wesley University to a **globally recognized** institution that balances academic excellence with research innovation and community impact. In practice, this meant broadening the university's academic offerings and strengthening its research capacity. Under his administration, Wesley University's programs grew from just 22 at the time of his appointment to over 55 programs spanning a wide range of disciplines. This dramatic academic expansion included the establishment of entirely new colleges and departments in cutting-edge fields. Notably, Prof. Obeka oversaw the creation of a College of Medical and Allied Health Sciences (introducing courses such as Nursing Science, Medicine and Surgery (MBBS), Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory Science, and Community Health), a College of Law, a College of Education, and a School of Postgraduate Studies. These additions were strategic, reflecting both global trends and local needs: for instance, launching Medicine and Nursing programs helps address Nigeria's need for healthcare professionals while placing Wesley University on the map for medical education. Indeed, in 2024 the university obtained formal accreditation from Nigeria's National Universities Commission to begin its medical programs (Medicine & Surgery, Pharmacy, etc.), a milestone achieved under Prof. Obeka's guidance. Each new program area represents an investment in scientific and scholarly inquiry - from health sciences to legal studies - thereby turning Wesley into a more comprehensive center of learning.

1

2

### Academic Expansion

Grew university programs from 22 to over 55, establishing new colleges in Health Sciences, Law, and Education

### Research Excellence

Enhanced research capacity through international collaborations and improved ICT infrastructure

3

4

### Global Recognition

Positioned Wesley University for international acclaim through strategic partnerships and quality programs

### Innovation Culture

Fostered environment of critical thinking, research innovation, and collaborative academic excellence

Beyond new courses, Prof. Obeka has championed a culture of **research and innovation** at Wesley University. He has actively sought global research collaborations, partnering with top universities internationally so that Wesley's faculty and students engage in world-class research and academic exchanges. Such partnerships expose the university community to cutting-edge scientific developments and best practices worldwide. Domestically, he has encouraged interdisciplinary research and an increase in research output; it is reported that under his tenure Wesley University is "witnessing a surge in research output [and] academic collaboration with other great universities across the globe." This global orientation in scholarship fulfills his aim of putting Nigerian education on the global map and creating "citizens of the world" among Wesley's graduates. By expanding postgraduate programs and research centers, Prof. Obeka also ensures that Wesley University not only transmits existing knowledge but actively generates new knowledge - a key role of any scientific institution.

# Infrastructure and Research Support

Crucially, the pursuit of academic excellence under Obeka's stewardship has been matched by improvements in academic infrastructure and resources. Cutting-edge laboratories, a well-equipped Institute of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), and e-learning facilities have been enhanced to support teaching and research. In fact, Wesley's ICT center is now regarded as one of the best-equipped among Nigerian universities, illustrating Obeka's commitment to providing the technological tools needed for modern scientific inquiry. He also introduced robust Distance and Online Learning programs, as well as entrepreneurship training, which not only broaden educational access but also encourage innovation and practical problem-solving among students. Modern science and scholarship thrive in an environment that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and the free exchange of ideas. Under Obeka's leadership, Wesley University has fostered exactly such an environment - "an enriching learning environment that fosters innovation, critical thinking, and collaborative opportunities, empowering students to thrive academically and personally." By prioritizing investments in faculty development, student learning facilities, and research support, he demonstrates a belief that *excellence in science and education is a pillar of societal progress.*

## Recognition and Validation

In their separate remarks at the last University convocation ceremony, the Chancellor of the University, Senior Pastor Dr. Paul Enenche, and Deputy Governor of Benue State, Dr. Barr. Samuel Ode, said that Wesley University Ondo is blessed to have Prof. Obeka Samuel S. as Vice-Chancellor, because under his visionary leadership, they are confident that the University will continue to flourish and provide the needed educational environment for academic excellence. Such endorsements reflect how his personal virtues have tangibly benefitted the institution's trajectory.

In summary, Prof. Obeka's tenure exemplifies a deep dedication to scientific inquiry and educational excellence. His own scholarly work in environmental science education and his expansion of Wesley University's academic horizon both reflect a view that knowledge is a powerful tool for improving lives. This commitment aligns with the idea that faculty and academic leaders have a stewardship obligation toward knowledge - to seek new understanding and responsibly impart it to others. In the next sections, we will see that Obeka pairs this passion for knowledge with equally strong commitments to ethical leadership and community service, ensuring that the fruits of science and education are guided by values and shared widely for the common good.

# ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND FAITH-INSPIRED SERVICE

Scientific and educational achievements alone do not define Prof. Obeka's impact; it is the ethical and faith-informed leadership behind those achievements that truly sets him apart. As a Vice-Chancellor who is also an ordained Bishop, Prof. Obeka operates at a unique intersection of academia and theology. This dual identity has imbued his leadership style with a blend of vision, integrity, and compassion that one might describe as *servant-leadership* - a leadership philosophy centered on serving others and upholding moral values. Colleagues and observers note that Prof. Obeka has "consistently displayed unwavering integrity and dedication to education", breaking from the conventional, self-serving leadership stereotypes that sometimes plague higher education. Instead, he leads by example with humility and accountability, reflecting the ethical tenets of his faith. In practical terms, this means transparent governance, emphasis on merit and fairness, and a zero-tolerance stance on corruption or misconduct - traits that build trust within the university community.

One hallmark of Obeka's leadership is his clear vision coupled with inclusive decision-making. As noted earlier, he set out a vision to transform Wesley University into a globally acclaimed institution balancing excellence and societal relevance. But crucially, he did not pursue this vision in isolation or autocratically. He actively involved faculty and staff in strategic planning and encouraged the use of every individual's strengths in achieving institutional goals, very much in line with Batten's notion of aligning all organizational resources to a clear system of expectations. People who work with him often remark on his consultative and empowering approach - he identifies talent and gives his team members responsibility and support to innovate. This approach evokes the idea in management literature that effective leaders "*develop a clear vision and share it with others*", instilling competence and full commitment in their followers. Prof. Obeka's ability to inspire and mobilize others stems from his genuine concern for their development, a trait likely influenced by his pastoral background. Indeed, his leadership style has been described as combining "*spiritual wisdom and dynamism*," retaining core academic values while also adapting to the changing needs of students, staff, and society. By merging the ethical guidance of a clergyman with the strategic acumen of an academic administrator, he has cultivated a campus culture where **values** and **vision** go hand in hand.

## **Servant Leadership Model**

Combines pastoral care with academic administration, emphasizing service to others and ethical decision-making in all aspects of university governance.

## **Inclusive Vision Implementation**

Involves faculty and staff in strategic planning while maintaining clear direction, fostering collaborative achievement of institutional goals.

## **Values-Based Campus Culture**

Creates environment where integrity, transparency, and moral principles guide both academic pursuits and administrative practices.

Being a faith leader, Prof. Obeka brings a strong moral compass to his role. His decisions often reflect the Christian principles of stewardship, justice, and service to others. For example, as a Methodist Bishop he once served as the Connexional Secretary for Evangelism and Discipleship of the Methodist Church Nigeria, where he not only provided spiritual leadership but also edited educational and devotional materials (such as daily reflection guides and training manuals) for the church. This experience indicates a commitment to spreading knowledge and guiding others in ethical living. It also honed his skills in communication and mentorship - skills he now applies in running a university. The discipline and compassion required in ministry have translated into a pastoral approach to university leadership, where the welfare and growth of students and staff are paramount. In interviews, Obeka emphasizes holistic development, saying that Wesley University aims to produce not just good scholars but *good citizens* imbued with values. He has insisted on maintaining an environment where everyone - irrespective of background - feels valued and heard. Under his tenure, Wesley University has actively promoted diversity and inclusivity: "students from diverse backgrounds thrive, learn, and grow" on campus, as the university has fostered an inclusive environment that welcomes all. Such inclusivity in practice might include scholarships for underprivileged students, support for students with disabilities, and hiring practices that encourage equal opportunity. These steps not only fulfill social justice imperatives but also create a richer learning environment aligned with the Methodist ethos of love and respect for all persons.

Importantly, Prof. Obeka's ethical leadership also manifests in a forward-thinking but *values-anchored* institutional strategy. He recognizes that while methods and curricula may modernize, the core values of truth, integrity, and service should remain non-negotiable. In his own words, "*education today must be dynamic*", but it should also be guided by enduring principles. This outlook resonates with the broader understanding that ethical leadership in education involves making choices that benefit not just the institution, but also the wider community and future generations. Studies note that ethical university leaders often stress accountability, community trust, and the greater good over short-term gains. Prof. Obeka exhibited such accountability early in his tenure: upon appointment, he "hit the ground running" with reforms and publicly committed to high standards of administration. For instance, he tackled administrative inefficiencies and longstanding challenges at Wesley, from ensuring financial prudence to improving staff welfare, thereby building a reputation for transparent and principled management. This approach has enhanced stakeholders' confidence in the university's leadership. It is telling that at a recent convocation, distinguished figures like the university's Chancellor (Dr. Paul Enenche) and a state Deputy Governor openly praised Prof. Obeka's "visionary leadership" and passion for excellence, affirming that under his guidance the university will continue to flourish in line with its core values. Such endorsements reflect how his personal virtues have tangibly benefitted the institution's trajectory.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE: LOCAL IMPACT WITH A GLOBAL VISION

A defining feature of Prof. Obeka's career is his unwavering commitment to **community service** and the idea that a university should actively contribute to society's well-being. He understands that knowledge and leadership carry a responsibility beyond campus walls. Since taking the helm at Wesley University, he has launched and supported numerous initiatives aimed at bridging the "town and gown" divide - i.e., using the university's expertise and resources to uplift the local community and address societal challenges. This approach aligns with the growing emphasis on **University Social Responsibility**, where institutions of higher learning engage with their communities to drive social and economic development. Under Obeka's leadership, Wesley University has indeed embraced this role as a stakeholder in regional and national progress.

One area of impact is **educational outreach**. Prof. Obeka has encouraged faculty and students to be involved in outreach programs such as free workshops, mentorship for secondary school students, and adult education in the Ondo community. In an interview, he noted that the university has "launched educational outreach programs [and] social impact projects" to benefit not just the campus but the broader society. For example, Wesley students and lecturers might visit local schools to hold science clinics or career guidance sessions, thereby sharing knowledge with younger learners and inspiring them toward higher education. Such programs foster a culture of learning beyond the university and help raise the educational standards of the host community. Additionally, the university reportedly runs health awareness campaigns and free medical services in the community (leveraging its new health science programs), demonstrating how academic expansion under Obeka directly serves public health needs. By introducing courses like Community Health and Nursing Science, Prof. Obeka ensured that Wesley University would produce professionals who can serve in local clinics and hospitals, thereby immediately addressing community healthcare gaps. In this way, academic program development was strategically aligned with community service objectives. It's a practical example of how **science (in this case medical and health science)** is put in service of society.

1

## Educational Outreach Programs

Faculty and students conduct free workshops, science clinics, and mentorship sessions for local secondary schools and community members.

2

## Healthcare Service Delivery

New medical programs provide community health services while training professionals to address local healthcare gaps and needs.

3

## Agricultural Empowerment

Training programs for farmers and agricultural workers to improve local food production and economic sustainability.

Infrastructure and development projects are another facet of his community engagement. Recognizing that a thriving town benefits the university and vice versa, Obeka has worked on improving campus facilities in a way that also aids the surrounding area. Under his guidance, Wesley University has been developing its permanent site with modern facilities, in partnership with entities like Nebalola Farms. This not only provides better laboratories, classrooms, and student housing, but likely creates jobs for local contractors and invites investment into the region. Furthermore, previously unfinished buildings on campus were renovated and completed during his tenure. A well-maintained and expanding campus often becomes a source of pride and economic activity for the host town, attracting visitors, conferences, and commerce. By accelerating infrastructural projects, Obeka has signaled that the university is growing in tandem with the community's development. Local businesses (from food vendors to housing providers) have felt the positive ripple effects of a vibrant university environment. In essence, the growth of Wesley University under Obeka is intertwined with the growth of Ondo city's social and economic fabric.



**Figure 2: Modern infrastructural development**

Perhaps most importantly, Prof. Obeka's vision of service is not confined to local impacts; he consistently frames it within a global context. He often speaks of creating "citizens of the world" at Wesley - graduates who are globally aware and can contribute solutions to worldwide challenges. This global vision has driven him to form international collaborations that benefit the community indirectly by raising educational quality and exposing students to global best practices. It also reflects in initiatives such as encouraging students to undertake projects related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or other global issues, thereby sensitizing them to serve not just their immediate community but humanity at large. For instance, a Wesley University student might work on a project to provide clean water technology in a rural village (addressing SDG 6), blending technical knowledge with service. These kinds of student-led social innovation projects have reportedly been encouraged as part of Wesley's entrepreneurship and leadership training under Obeka's administration. Moreover, by partnering with foreign institutions, Wesley University can participate in international service-learning programs and cultural exchanges, broadening the horizons of its students and staff. All these efforts underscore a philosophy that service has both local and global dimensions - one should "think globally, act locally," and vice versa.

Prof. Obeka's own life story also illustrates service leadership on a broader scale. As a clergyman, he has served congregations and overseen community-building efforts such as church planting and establishing schools in underserved areas. Early in his career, he worked as an Inspector of Education for local governments in Benue State, a role focused on improving schooling at the grassroots level. This blend of experiences - from local educational officer to church leader - gave him firsthand insight into community needs and the ways institutions can respond. It is likely why, as a Vice-Chancellor, he remains attuned to societal issues such as youth unemployment, poverty, and health disparities. His administration's projects often aim beyond campus: for example, entrepreneurship development centers at Wesley train not only students but also youths from the community in business and vocational skills, thus tackling unemployment by fostering self-reliance. As another example, the university has been "empowering farmers in the city through free workshops and training programmes". These efforts reflect a conscious strategy to make the university a *"solution hub for national and global challenges,"* as Prof. Obeka himself described. The idea is that universities should be problem-solvers in society - generating research-based solutions, guiding policy through expertise, and directly intervening through volunteerism and innovation. Wesley University under Obeka's leadership has visibly moved in this direction, aligning with what experts suggest about university-community engagement: it can mitigate social and economic challenges and keep the institution relevant to societal needs.

# STEWARSHIP OF KNOWLEDGE: INTEGRATING EDUCATION, FAITH, AND SUSTAINABILITY

The concept of **stewardship of knowledge** refers to the careful and responsible management of knowledge - how it is acquired, used, and shared for the greater good. In Prof. Obeka's life and work, we see a powerful commitment to being a *steward* of knowledge in multiple senses. As a scholar and educator, he has been dedicated to advancing knowledge through research and then imparting that knowledge to students. As an administrator, he has worked to build an institution that preserves knowledge (through libraries, publications, archives) and promotes its dissemination in society. And as a faith leader, he views knowledge (both scientific and spiritual) as a gift from God that carries ethical responsibilities in its use. This integrated perspective enables him to bridge any perceived gap between **science and faith**, using both as complementary sources of insight and guidance.

One of the most striking illustrations of Obeka's knowledge stewardship is his role in publishing and editorial work. During his years in the Methodist Church's Evangelism and Discipleship department, he served as editor for various church literature - including daily devotionals, Sunday school manuals, and training booklets. In these roles, he was effectively curating and distributing knowledge (biblical teachings, theological reflections, moral lessons) to a wide audience of readers. The care he took in that task reflects a respect for truth and clarity, knowing that these materials shape people's beliefs and actions. The parallel in his academic career is his work as a journal editor and conference chair at ABU Zaria. There, he oversaw scholarly publications and research conferences, again handling knowledge with a sense of responsibility - ensuring quality, accuracy, and relevance. This twin experience in religious and academic publishing shows Prof. Obeka's understanding that knowledge must be **nurtured and shared conscientiously**. In both domains, he functioned as a gatekeeper and disseminator of knowledge, striving to uphold high standards. As the NC State University research policy notes, faculty are expected to be *"responsible in the stewardship of public resources, dedicated to advancing knowledge, and maintain the highest standards of conduct in research."* Prof. Obeka has embodied these expectations throughout his career, maintaining integrity in research and using academic resources (grants, labs, etc.) judiciously. This integrity is particularly crucial in a developing country context, where resources are scarce and the impact of research can significantly steer development policies. By being a faithful steward of research funds and projects, Obeka contributes to a culture of trust and excellence in Nigerian academia.



## Knowledge Curation

Editorial work in both religious and academic publishing, ensuring quality and accuracy in knowledge dissemination across diverse audiences.

## Environmental Stewardship

Research in climate and environmental education, integrating scientific understanding with moral imperatives for creation care.

## Holistic Education

Character formation alongside intellectual growth, ensuring knowledge serves ethical and socially beneficial purposes in society.

Another dimension of knowledge stewardship in Obeka's leadership is his emphasis on sustainable development and environmental responsibility. Given his expertise in environmental science education, Prof. Obeka is acutely aware of humanity's duty to be good stewards of the natural world. He has incorporated this awareness into Wesley University's ethos. For instance, his administration has prioritized programs like Agriculture and Environmental Management (which Wesley University offers) and likely integrates sustainability topics across the curriculum. The Methodist tradition also increasingly emphasizes care for creation, and Obeka stands at that intersection of faith and science. He exemplifies what a Vatican report described regarding theologians: *"In exercising their stewardship of knowledge, theologians have the responsibility to locate modern scientific understandings within a Christian vision of the created universe."* In other words, it is part of faith leadership today to embrace scientific knowledge (such as ecology, climate science) and frame it within moral and spiritual imperatives to care for the Earth. Prof. Obeka's career as an environmental educator and a clergyman uniquely positions him to do this. It is reasonable to surmise that he champions initiatives like campus tree planting, sustainable farming (perhaps in collaboration with Nebalola Farms), energy conservation on campus, and community education on environmental issues - all as acts of faithful stewardship.

Indeed, his research on climate change education was ultimately about fostering a populace that is informed and motivated to act on environmental issues. By teaching students to understand climate impacts and empowering teachers with better methods, he contributed to the long-term stewardship of environmental knowledge in Nigeria's education system. Thus, *sustainability* is a theme that runs through his scientific inquiry, his educational reforms, and his spiritual outlook.

Knowledge stewardship also means ensuring that the knowledge one passes on is used ethically and constructively. Prof. Obeka consistently stresses character formation alongside intellectual growth. The holistic education model at Wesley (as promoted under his watch) encourages students to apply their knowledge in socially beneficial ways - be it through entrepreneurship that creates jobs, technology that solves local problems, or research that influences positive policy changes. For example, Wesley's Entrepreneurship Development Centre under Obeka not only teaches business knowledge but also instills ethical entrepreneurship, urging students to consider community needs and ethical practices in their ventures. Likewise, in fields like Law or Political Science, the university under his guidance emphasizes ethical reasoning and service (aligning with Wesley University's faith-based mission). By doing so, Obeka ensures that the knowledge imparted does not become a mere tool for individual success, but a shared resource for societal good. This approach is akin to viewing knowledge as a commons that must be tended and used responsibly - which is precisely what stewardship entails. As one commentary on Christian higher education puts it, everyone in a university (from professors to support staff) participates in a "network of stewardship" with the goal of producing graduates who will serve their families, communities, and nation effectively. Prof. Obeka's emphasis on producing graduates who are both intellectually competent and socially responsible aligns well with this philosophy of communal stewardship of knowledge.

Finally, as a **legacy of knowledge stewardship**, Prof. Obeka is helping to institutionalize these values at Wesley University. Initiatives like strengthening the university library, establishing archives for research and local history, and encouraging faculty mentorship programs all contribute to an infrastructure where knowledge is preserved and passed to the next generation. He has also encouraged faculty to pursue further training and bring back knowledge (for example, through study leave or partnerships), thereby continually refreshing the institution's knowledge base. By supporting younger academics and building robust academic programs, he ensures that when his tenure eventually ends, the culture of inquiry, integrity, and service will persist. In a sense, he is **mentoring future stewards of knowledge** - whether they be scholars, teachers, or civic leaders emerging from Wesley University. This might be his most enduring contribution: not only the tangible growth of a university, but the seeding of a mindset in its people that **knowledge is a trust** to be used for God and for humanity. As a scholar-bishop, he personifies this ideal, reminding us that **science and faith** both seek truth and when united in the heart of a leader, they can powerfully drive progress with purpose.



**Figure 3: ICT certification centre**

## **Institutional Legacy Building**

Prof. Obeka's approach to knowledge stewardship extends beyond his immediate tenure to building lasting institutional capacity. Through strategic investments in library resources, research infrastructure, and faculty development programs, he creates systems that will continue to serve future generations of scholars. His emphasis on mentoring younger faculty members and supporting their professional growth ensures continuity of academic excellence and ethical leadership.

Moreover, his integration of faith and learning creates a distinctive educational model that addresses the whole person - intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. This holistic approach prepares graduates not just for professional success but for meaningful service to society. The knowledge they gain is thus stewarded not merely as information to be consumed, but as wisdom to be applied for the common good.

01

### **Knowledge Preservation**

Strengthening institutional infrastructure including libraries, archives, and research centers to preserve and transmit knowledge to future generations.

02

### **Faculty Development**

Investing in continuous learning and professional growth for academics, ensuring institutional knowledge base remains current and relevant.

03

### **Ethical Integration**

Combining scientific rigor with moral principles, demonstrating that faith and learning can work together to address societal challenges.

04

### **Legacy Mentorship**

Training future academic leaders and scholars who will continue the mission of responsible knowledge stewardship in their own careers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Rt. Rev. Prof. Samuel Sunday Obeka's life and work present a compelling narrative of how **science, service, and the stewardship of knowledge** can be intertwined to create meaningful impact. His journey from a young academic in the sciences to a professor, and from a lay preacher to a bishop and university administrator, has equipped him with a rare combination of skills and values. In reflecting on his contributions, several key themes emerge. **First**, a relentless pursuit of knowledge and excellence - evidenced by his scholarly research and the academic renaissance he spearheaded at Wesley University - demonstrates how scientific inquiry can elevate an institution and address societal issues like healthcare and environmental education. **Second**, his mode of leadership underscores that ethical principles and compassion are not just moral choices but practical necessities for sustainable success. By leading with integrity and inclusive vision, he transformed a university culture and earned the trust of students, staff, and external stakeholders. **Third**, his devotion to community service shows that a university's greatness is measured not only by its internal achievements but by its external relevance. Under his watch, Wesley University became a more engaged and socially responsible institution, touching lives in its community and contributing to national development goals.

Crucially, these threads are not separate in Prof. Obeka's approach but tightly interwoven. He has illustrated that the pursuit of scientific knowledge is most noble when guided by ethics and deployed in service of others. In a world often vexed by the dichotomy of science and religion or the divide between ivory tower academics and real-world problems, Prof. Obeka stands as a **bridge-builder**. He shows that faith can enrich science with purpose and ethics, while science can enrich faith with knowledge and tools for better stewardship of creation. By stewarding knowledge in both the laboratory and the pulpit, he has helped form individuals and policies that are grounded in truth and goodness. In Nigeria's tertiary education sector, which faces its share of leadership and quality challenges, his tenure is a "milestone of transformational leadership" - one that colleagues believe will "redefine the narrative of leadership" in the sector. As praised by the Chancellor during a convocation, Prof. Obeka's "visionary leadership" and dedication to excellence ensure that Wesley University will continue to flourish and provide an environment for academic excellence.

**55+** **2021** **1st**

<b>Academic Programs</b>	<b>Tenure Start</b>	<b>Historic Appointment</b>
Expanded from 22 to over 55 programs across multiple colleges and disciplines	Began transformational leadership as Vice-Chancellor in January	First Methodist Bishop in Nigeria to serve as university Vice-Chancellor

In honoring Prof. Obeka, we are reminded of the broader lesson that **knowledge comes with responsibility**. Whether one is a university president, a professor, or a student, to engage in the world of ideas is to hold a torch that can light the way for others. The story of Wesley University under Obeka's stewardship is a testament to what becomes possible when that torch is carried with wisdom and love for humanity. It affirms that educating minds and nurturing souls can go hand in hand. Prof. Obeka often attributes any success to "*the grace of God*" and the collective effort of the university community, reflecting a humility that itself is instructive - it's not about personal accolades, but about **building institutions and people** that will outlast one's tenure. As we reflect on his example, may it inspire other educators and leaders to similarly integrate **scientific rigor, ethical leadership, and selfless service** in their vocations. In doing so, we not only honor the stewardship of knowledge entrusted to us, but we also extend the legacy of leaders like Prof. Obeka who have shown us the way.

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