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# Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Church Growth in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Yera Keita

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Church Growth in

Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia

by

Yera Keita

MA, Walden University, 2014

BS, Kent University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

July 2019

## Abstract

Even though millions of Americans attend church, church worship practices have declined in recent years. Also, church leaders lack understanding of transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant leadership styles and their potential to promote the growth of church membership. Gaps exist in the literature regarding the connection between development and efficacy, organizations and outcomes, and church leaders' styles and church membership growth. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perception of church leaders (pastors, deacons, ministers) and members of congregations regarding leadership styles and how the implementation of those styles influences the growth of church membership. The conceptual framework of this study was Bass's full-range leadership theory and Greenleaf's servant leadership theory. The data collection methods were semistructured, face-to-face interviews with 40 church leaders and members of 4 congregations, a focus group interview with 5 of those participants, and review of church documents. Transcript review and triangulation increased the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. Thematic analysis was used in data analysis. Data analysis yielded 12 themes: ideal church leadership styles, church leadership management, church leadership motivation, leadership that ensures church growth, effective leadership communication, leadership practices, developing leaders, perceptions of leadership, church attendance growth and decline rates, leaders' roles, church administrator's handbook, and vision and mission statements. The findings of this research may influence social change for leaders of Pentecostal churches who function as leadership mentors and believers within their church environment.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Adama Wurie Keita, and my children, Lans Keita, and Zainab Keita. You were such a wonderful team that gave me all the support and encouragement throughout this long and difficult journey. Last but certainly not least, God, for giving me a favor, grace, and mercy to finish this journey.

## Acknowledgments

I sincerely acknowledge and say thank you to the Walden University Research Committee that helped me with the development of this dissertation document. First, I thank my committee chair and mentor, Dr. Teresa Lao, for all of her inspiration, patience, support, and constant encouragement to keep going till the end. Second, I thank Dr. Terry R. Halfhill, my second committee member, who was willing to provide valuable feedback. Lastly, I thank Marguerite E. Barta, my University Research Reviewer, for her readiness to offer advance feedback.

I do realize that the implementation of research and the completion of this paper were possible because of the Lord God, who gives blessings of health, strength, and ability as well as placing individuals who are always ready to help in all terms and time. God has taught me everything I know that is good including Col. 3:23 “Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.” God will always give more according to his will and giving it more than one request. Therefore, the author gives praise and gratitude to the Lord God Almighty.

I give sincere thank you from my heart to my wonderful wife Adama Keita for her modeled patience, trust in God, and emotional temperament that brings calm and faith. Always offering words of encouragement like “Don’t worry; you will get this done, and everything will go great” in every situation. To my two wonderful kids, Lans Keita and Zainab Keita, for their continuous support, help, and comfort at all times. I must thank Dr. Sam Kargbo, who carefully directed me at the start of the dissertation process when I was completely lost as to how to commence the study. I am indebted to my

family, mother Madam Bambeh Kumalah Keita, all my Brothers and Sisters and the entire Keita family. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to all who helped me in one way or the other in the process of this research. I ask God to bless you all!



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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Leadership consists of characteristics such as intellect, fluency, confidence, emotional intelligence, stature, vigor, and cordiality (Northouse, 2013). These characteristics are ways leaders influence their subordinates or followers by paying attention and appreciating their opinions, actions, and thoughts and supporting them to work effectively on their given objectives (Northouse, 2013). These characteristics are some of the most vital factors that can assist leaders in encouraging and influences individuals to achieve a common purpose in the organization (Northouse, 2013). Church leaders' duties include preaching, teaching, guiding the church congregation, and managing and directing events of the church (Franck & Iannaccone, 2014). The focus of this qualitative case study was to explore the perceptions of church leaders' and members of congregations regarding leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

The results of this study will enlighten leaders of Pentecostal churches about how their leadership practices help build their organizations efficiently and enable their members to create a positive impact that will change their communities and cities. Chapter 1 includes the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, and limitations of the study. Finally, this chapter offers a description of the method of data collection procedure and process from leaders, deacons, and ministers within the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

## **Background of the Study**

The growth of a church as a nonprofit organization depends considerably on its leadership. The leader is a proponent of change who has to customize management styles conforming to the attributes and conduct of his/her followers (Băeșu & Bejinaru, 2013). Many components impact a leader's style as observed from the management stance (Băeșu & Bejinaru, 2013). The leader of the church makes decisions, communicates with stakeholders, and deals with the process of change. The positive impact of the church leaders on the growth of churches has not recently been evident in churches in the United States because churches have experienced a decline in membership and a resulting closing of many churches (Rainer, 2013). Data on church attendance indicated an unequal distribution of opinion among adults on the significance of going to church; 49% assumed it is somewhat or very significant, and 51% assumed it is not at all significant (Barna Group, 2014). These data reflected a stark disagreement between the people who are faithfully active and people who are resistant to attending church; this discrepancy has affected American culture, morality, politics, and religion (Barna Group, 2014).

This study was an exploration of the different leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant of pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of the congregation of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and the influence of those styles on church membership growth. An investigation of these leadership styles may present church leaders with the knowledge to formulate policies for effective leadership and membership growth in the church.

Although churches may be described using several different metaphors or models from a theological perspective, in basic terms, a church is just like any other nonprofit organization in that it is a group of people who come together to work toward a common, specific purpose (Banks, 2013). An organization's structure consists of components such as vision, mission, values, goals, and beliefs, which provide understanding and purpose to its existence (Banks, 2013). In other words, all types of organizations possess these elements, and all leaders impact these components through the inevitable process of change for an organization

Continual growth is an important factor in shaping the future of a church, and the role of the church leaders is also significant. Church leaders must design organizational and leadership structures of church groups with the purpose of facilitating growth, change, and production for the church (Banks, 2013). In recent years, churches have experienced a decrease in membership and attendance, and 59% of churches in the United States have fewer than 100 members and supporters (White, 2015). To remedy this decline, church leaders may need to change their leadership style and methods to reach the people of the church and community. Leadership structure varies among churches, and no standard or static form of leadership exists. Implementation of a leadership style or form depends upon the situation or needs of the church (Banks, 2013). Leadership types or styles for a church may change based on its needs, and leaders must address the needs of the future church by considering trends and change so that the church may continually grow and expand (Banks, 2013).



## **Problem Statement**

The aim of this qualitative case study was to explore church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and examine how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership. The aim of this study was to help leaders understand their leadership practices, build their organizations efficiently, and enable their members to create a positive impact that will change their communities and cities. In the past two decades, church attendance has declined in Christian churches in the United States (Bruce, 2011; Coleman, Ivani-Chalian, & Robinson, 2004). Several factors, including a lack of leadership, vision, and communication and an inability to reach millennials contributed to this decline (Barna Group, 2014; Rainer, 2013).

Also, church attendance by individuals with religious connections continues to decline in these technological times. Fewer and fewer Americans attend a church or any house of worship (Yates, 2014). Advances in technology such as computers, mobile devices, and the Internet, are creating significant changes in the social lives of Christians and the ways they worship (Yates, 2014). Pervasive reliance on these devices is eliminating the individual need for traditional religion and attendance at traditional houses of worship (Yates, 2014).

Between 2004 and 2014, the percentage of Americans who regularly attended church decreased from 43% to 36% (Barna Group, 2014). Among churches in the United States, 50% averaged under 100 individual worshippers, 40% averaged between 100 and 350 worshippers, and 10% averaged more than 350 worshippers. The smallest category included growing churches with the largest memberships, while the lower 90% included

the declining churches with smaller numbers of members (Rainer, 2015). In any church, the leader is the change agent, and readiness for change is more likely to occur in organizations with leaders who employees/members trust and respect (Allen, Smith, & Da Silva, 2013). The leadership style represents the views of subordinates regarding the leadership traits of a single individual (Allen et al., 2013).

The general problem was that even with tens of millions of Americans attending churches every weekend, church worship practices have declined in recent years (Barna Group, 2014). According to Allen et al. (2013), the problem may be an indication that church leaders are not ready to accept or adjust to change. The specific problem was that church leaders, such as pastors, deacons, and ministers, lack the understanding of the different leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) and how their implementation can promote the growth of church membership in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

In trying to control the problem of decreasing membership in churches, the present leaders must be ready to promote and accommodate change (Allen et al., 2013). Given the challenges that churches are currently facing, creative problem solving and change efforts by leaders may be vital for organizational longevity (Allen et al., 2013). The aim of this study was to fill a gap in the literature regarding the connection between development and efficacy, organizations and outcomes, and church leaders and church membership growth (McCleskey, 2014).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore four leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) of church leaders (pastors, deacons, and ministers) and the influence of these styles on the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The qualitative approach offered an all-inclusive structure for a comprehensive exploration of complex issues related to human behavior, human perception, and lived experience (Khan, 2014; Schwandt, 2015). Also, the central aim of this study was to contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge on the leadership styles of church leaders and the extent to which they influence membership growth. The findings of this study can be used in churches to strengthen the leadership styles of leaders and members and to expand knowledge and understanding of leaders in the church. A single interview protocol for semistructured, face-to-face interviews were used to collect data from church leaders.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching research question for this case study was What are church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles, and how does the implementation of these styles influence the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia? Two subquestions provided a focus for this inquiry:

RQ1. What are the leadership styles commonly employed by church leaders to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia?

RQ2. What is the church leaders' (pastors, deacons, and ministers) knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The central phenomenon of this study was to contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge of the leadership styles of church leaders and determine the extent to which these styles influence membership growth. The problem of the decline of church membership and its connection to church leadership styles was the focus of this qualitative case study. The conceptual framework of this study was the full-range leadership theory by Bass (1996) and Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership theory. The full-range leadership theory (Bass, 1996) places leaders at the heart of the group process and argues that their efforts influence followers (Oberfield, 2014).

The full-range leadership theory has been embraced by scholars and practitioners across a range of disciplines and organizations and has achieved a level of public acclaim that is rare for academic concepts (Oberfield, 2014). The full range leadership theory (Bass, 1996) derived from the concepts of the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Transformational leaders influence their members to transcend their self-interests for the benefit of the organization (McCleskey, 2014). Transactional leaders focus on the roles of supervision, organization, and group performance (Cherry, 2016). Laissez-faire leaders avoid responsibility, delay decision making, and provide no feedback to church members (Allen et al., 2013).

The full-range model presumes followers accomplish well in a transactional connection with the leaders, although compensation alone is not sufficient in all circumstances. Thus, it is essential for the leader to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors to motivate great success, inspiration, and dedication among followers (Antonakis & House, 2014). The full range of leadership theory, therefore, includes elements of transformational leadership theory, the transactional leadership theory, and the laissez-faire leadership theory (Luo, Wang, Marnburg, & Øgaard, 2016). The full-range leadership theory served as a theoretical foundation to guide this study in exploring the broader leadership approach.

Greenleaf (1970) defined servant leadership not only as a management technique but also as a way of life that begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve and to serve first. The central idea in Greenleaf's (1970) theory was that leaders should serve with flair, kindness, and bravery, and followers would answer to capable servants as leaders. Thus, the idea of the servant as a follower was as important as the servant as leader. Individuals may encounter these two roles at a certain time, stressing the desire for discernment and determination, two significant features of the servant as leader or follower (Greenleaf, 1977).

Together, Bass's and Greenleaf's theories provided basic explanations of the roles of leaders in a nonprofit organization such as a church. In the context of organizational change, these theories offered insight into the assessment and analysis of leadership styles and their influences on growth in an organizational setting. Leaders use variations of transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant leadership styles in their

various churches. These leadership styles will lead to various decision-making procedures for resolving individual and group problems.

Therefore, these theories also provided a foundation for this study; the participants were able to answer the research questions and other subquestions to address the issue of leadership styles of the leaders of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Participants received definitions of the various leadership styles or attributes referenced in this research to achieve a coherent understanding. The goal of this study was to employ a qualitative research method to explore the different leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, of pastors, deacons, and ministers, of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and those styles' influence on the growth of church membership. A detailed discussion of the theories will appear in Chapter 2.

### **Nature of the Study**

A qualitative methodology with a case study research design was appropriate for this study. Qualitative examination supports the study of how individuals and groups establish significance. This qualitative investigation involved gathering data in the form of interviews, observations, and documents to identify substantively relevant patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). Qualitative methods supported identification of the whole phenomenon in its natural, organic setting. Rather than aiming to achieve comparable understanding and law-like generalizations, I was more interested in establishing comprehending and holistic gratitude for the addition of knowledge (Morden et al., 2015). By examining details and narratives from participants' perspectives (Yin, 2014),

qualitative researchers devote substantial awareness to deciding what data is relevant to the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015).

In contrast, the quantitative research methodology was not appropriate for this study because it underlines objective measurements, gathering numerical data, and generalizing the data to provide clarifications on a specific issue (Bryman, 2015).

Quantitative researchers employ statistical methods to gather numerical data and produce an additional group of data for review (Quick & Hall, 2015). Furthermore, numerical and statistical methods do not permit participants to provide specific statements about their experiences (Morgan, 2015). The mixed-method technique employs concurrent gathering, examination, and clarification of qualitative and quantitative data (Zohrabi, 2013). Additionally, the mixed methodology improves the validity, reliability, and clarification of information from different resources. A mixed method was not suitable for this study, however, because as quantitative data was neither essential nor required for this study.

Qualitative researchers stress the social nature of reality, and because the focus of this study was social organizations, the exploratory case study design was appropriate. A case study research design stands on its own as a detailed and rich story about a person, organization, event, campaign, or program (Patton, 2015). This method ensured that the subject was not observed from a single viewpoint but through a variety of different perspectives, which permitted disclosure and understanding of various aspects surrounding the problem (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014). In a qualitative case study, I could gather the perspectives of church leaders and members of congregations to explore four

leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, and how those styles influenced the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

A case study is an empirical inquiry into a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident (Yin, 2014). The scope and features of a case study comprise three aspects. The first aspect is that the study deals with technically distinctive situations. The second describes that several informational resources merge by triangulation, and the third aspect holds that the case study method can direct the collection and analysis of data by setting up theoretical propositions (Yin, 2014). Further, Yin (2014) described the case study method as an all-encompassing approach that can be applied in both quantitative and qualitative research. However, a case study is usually classified as a qualitative method because it emphasizes the in-depth understanding acquired predominantly by qualitative methods (Yin, 2014).

A case study concentrates on the development within a group, resulting in a complete examination with an existing broad picture of subjects from varied information resources (Yin, 2014). An exploratory case study involves a single association and setting, or a comparative case study includes multiple associations and settings (Yin, 2014). Other techniques would not meet the purpose of this research, including grounded theory, narrative, content analysis, ethnography, and phenomenology. A phenomenological or ethnographic study was not helpful for this research as the design focused on a cultural group from a definite information source, without a procedure in a



group of persons (Morgan, 2015). The grounded theory could not accommodate the incorporation of numerous wide-ranging responses from participants within an organization (Mellon, 2015). Also, the narrative design is an author's narrative and may, therefore, involve omitting details and issues from the providers (Wolgemuth, 2014). Furthermore, these specific study methods cannot describe as well as distinguish the powers and distinctiveness of the case study research (Merriam, 2014). To a certain extent, the distinctiveness of case study research established the kinds of inquiries raised with the connections established among the studied phenomena.

The case study design incorporated numerous methods of collecting information with the capacity to make ordinary dynamics of the data (Merriam, 2014). Once the data collection and transcript review processes were complete, I used NVivo software to help generate themes and inscribe the purpose of the research (Brandão, 2015). In this study, I conducted individual face-to-face interviews with the participants, 10 pastors, 10 deacons, 10 ministers, and 10 members of the congregations and one focus group of five of those participants, from four Pentecostal Churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. I generated an interpretation of the information, reviewed ideas or themes that appeared, evaluated information with each participant, and asked additional questions to elicit clarification if needed.

### **Definitions**

This section presents important terms to explain or interpret a familiar understanding and bring coherence to the wider scope of this research study.

*Case study:* A qualitative case study a demanding, holistic account and examination of a bounded phenomenon, for example, a plan, an organization, an individual, procedure, or a social entity (Merriam, 2014).

*Coding system:* An instrument that contains the possible codes and organizes them into categories (Busjahn, Schulte, & Kropp, 2014).

*Deacon:* Individuals chosen and situated within the Pentecostal church who are responsible for evaluating the members' desires within the church and for gathering and allocating monetary and other possessions (Wiersma & VanDyke, 2009).

*Laissez-faire:* The obvious lack of leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

*Leader effectiveness:* Determination of whether leaders have the skills to bring about preferred outcomes. Effectiveness entails meeting secondary professional matters and adding to the efficiency of organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

*Leadership:* The procedures of persuading others to appreciate and consent on the issues about what needs to be completed and assisting individual and combined attempts to achieve divided purposes (Yukl, 2013). Leadership is a procedure by which an individual, guides other individuals to accomplish an ordinary goal (Northouse, 2013).

*Servant leadership:* The leaders in this style of leadership share power and invest in the wants and growth of the individuals they guide and serve their communities (Laub, 2014).

*Transformational leadership:* A leadership method that appeals to the good values of followers by trying to uplift their awareness concerning moral matters as well as to prepare their vigor and resources to improve organizations. Followers perceive a feeling

of hope, admiration, loyalty, and respect and are motivated to exceed the expected levels of performance (Yukl, 2013).

*Transactional leadership:* A leadership method that involves inspiring followers by appealing to their self-interest and interchanging benefits. The result might require benefits significant to the interchanging procedure, such as truthfulness, equality, control, and mutuality (Yukl, 2013).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are ideas or conditions that exist beyond the researcher's control; nonetheless, they may significantly impact the research (Baranyi, Csapo, & Sallai, 2015). The first assumption was that the qualitative case study was suitable to explore the elements connected to this research study. The second assumption was Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia was a geographical area of suitable size to yield good data for this research study. The third assumption was that the pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of congregations would have knowledge of the different leadership styles and how they were practiced within the Pentecostal churches and that these participants would provide correct, thoughtful, and pertinent information. Also, the individuals who participated in the research study would be aware that the purpose of the study was to determine the most appropriate leadership styles practiced in the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Finally, I assumed that the church leaders or administrators and the participants would offer their consent and total support as this research aimed to help their nonprofit organizations in discovering the appropriate/suitable leadership style.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of the research consisted of pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of the congregation as participants of their various Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. I conducted face-to-face interviews with a sample from the target population: 10 pastors, 10 deacons, 10 ministers, and 10 members of the congregations from four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Yin (2014) stated that the aim or reason for choosing a specific sample size is to achieve a group of participants who will provide significant and pertinent information, considering the research topic. The rationale was that this number of participants could be accurately connected to the depth of thoughts and diverse accounts of an issue (Kaczynski, Salmona, & Smith, 2014).

Delimitations reflect the limits of a study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). In this study, some issues described the borders of the study's techniques and purposes, questions, conceptual framework, and population. The population included leaders and members of congregations within the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The population did not include leaders and members of congregations outside the Pentecostal denomination, congregations situated outside of the geographical borders of this study, or members of other religious nonprofit organizations. Even though related to the study, the bureaucratic, democratic, and charismatic leadership theories were not reviewed in detail; however, references to them will be used to distinguish leadership styles and characteristics. With regards to transferability, my intention was for this study

to benefit other Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches in other geographical locations and cultures.

### **Limitations**

A study's limitations are potential weaknesses that exist outside the control of the researcher (Depoy & Gitlin, 2015). The design of this study created some limitations. First, the data collection methods for this study were individual face-to-face interviews with a sample from the target population, 10 pastors, 10 deacons, 10 ministers, and 10 members of the congregations, and one focus group interview five of those participants from four Pentecostal Churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Also, the study was limited to church leaders and members of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia; these limits meant that findings of this study would apply only to churches in this geographical area.

Another potential limitation of this study was that bias from the researcher might limit the findings of this study, because personal bias may emerge from a researcher's previous affiliations or relationships. It is significant to mention that researchers performing case study research are prone to bias because the method entails that the researcher determines the basis of the topic in advance (J. Smith & Noble, 2014; Yin, 2014). Even though I am a member of a local Pentecostal church in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, the leaders and members of the congregation of my church did not participate in this research study. Additionally, I had no private or professional connection with any of the sample participants. I protected the confidentiality of the research participants' identities and communication and employed ethical procedures to

eliminate any bias. Checking for and recognizing biases via continuous reflection supported the achievement of sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis (Wegener, 2014).

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study derived from several sources. Its findings may reveal the consequence of leadership styles, operations, and reliable components among leaders in church organizations. The findings may guide church leaders to secure a sound understanding of how church leadership styles relate to the prosperity of the church as a nonprofit organization. The data may also provide notable information on prevailing leadership styles and how they aid in the future of the church in a nonprofit organizational setting. The results of this study could be used in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, to strengthen the leadership styles of leaders and members and to expand a better knowledge and understanding of their role as leaders in the church.

Findings of this study may also prove useful as the church continues its efforts to serve as the cornerstone organization for meeting the needs of diverse communities (Watkins, 2014). After the completion of this study, the administration of upper and mid-level church leadership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, may become more relevant in a culture that threatens to leave the church behind. Also, in this study, Pentecostal church leaders could gain a new outlook on their leadership practices, obtain tools that will help them build their organizations effectively, and

support their members' efforts to create a positive influence that could change their communities and cities.

### **Significance to Practice**

The study aimed to present an improved awareness of leadership and organizational procedures in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and the level at which leadership styles influences church growth. This study may prove to be important to the senior pastors and other church leaders, especially the leaders who participated in the research study. These leaders may develop into more effective church leaders, thus achieving a meaningful appreciation of their capabilities, activities, and organizational results. The leaders in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, who are concerned with creating a more comprehensive and pleasant atmosphere for church members, should positively appreciate these qualities and offer leadership possibilities for members to further their leadership goals. Finally, the results of this study may encourage other members of the Pentecostal churches to learn how to be leaders and understand what it will take to fulfill a leadership position within the church.

### **Significance to Theory**

The problem of the growth of church membership and its connection to church leadership styles was the focus of this qualitative case study. For this study, the elements that may influence church leaders and membership growth include leadership, church vision, communication, and outreach to millennials. The conceptual framework of this study was the full-range leadership theory (Bass, 1996) and servant leadership theory

(Greenleaf, 1970). The theories explained important details of leadership function within a nonprofit organization such as a church. In the context of organizational change, these concepts provide awareness of the evaluation and study of leaders' leadership styles and influences on growth. These concepts served as a foundation for identifying the leadership styles of leaders in a church environment.

### **Significance to Social Change**

Churches have a special responsibility to the communities they serve, and church leaders' duties are vital to creating an impact on the members of those communities. Individuals look for protection within the church and put their faith in church leaders. The impact of the church leaders within the communities can help to motivate and raise awareness of the leadership styles of leaders and the care and services they give to individuals within the church environment. Moreover, churches continue their efforts to act as the cornerstone and meet the needs of diverse communities (Watkins, 2014). If a connection exists between leadership styles and organizational growth, numerous changes in the education, recruitment, and professional development of churches need examination. In this study, the direction for midlevel church leadership in the United States can become more applicable in a society that threatens to leave the church behind, rendering it unfruitful and unsuccessful at a time when its members are in desperate need of a powerful signal of pertinent, relevant values, and scope for guidance.

Furthermore, with information regarding the effectiveness of church leaders and churches, the lives of individuals within the communities can be changed through a process of social transformation. Individuals will no longer be hungry as they will be



provided for, protected from abuse and neglect, and have their lives transformed for the better. With this study, leaders in churches in America will understand their leadership practices to help build their organizations efficiently and empower their members to make a positive impact that will change their communities and cities.

Also, with the help of good and generous church leaders, the communities will go on to benefit from required services, and individuals will be supported to develop their abilities to become effective leaders. The creation of strong leaders within the church environment may lead to more direct and organized help while communities experience unexpected challenges. Therefore, leadership is an important factor in preparing members for the turbulent change in the future. Such change includes technological advancements, political change, and new ways of meeting the demands of the future church due to social change.

### **Summary and Transition**

In this study, I explored the various leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant of church leaders and those styles' impact on church growth within the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. This study is important because it is an examination of the effect of leadership styles, process, and dependable mechanism among leaders in church organizations. Qualitative data collection methods allowed church leaders to display their beliefs about how church leadership styles connect to the success of the church as a nonprofit organization. The data may offer important information on current leadership styles that will help in the prospects of the church in a nonprofit organizational setting. The results of this study will

help churches and their leaders to promote leadership development efforts and offer extensive implications for social change within church communities. Also, strong organizations will appeal to and connect more individuals in leadership by creating and expanding individuals through the development of communities and exhibiting legitimacy (Laub, 2014).

Chapter 1 of this study included a summary of this research study, comprising the background of the study, the problem statement, the research questions, conceptual frames of the study, scope and limitations, delimitations of the study, and definitions of the key terms of study. Chapter 2 contains a comprehensive literature review concerning transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant leadership styles, and their impact on the growing membership within Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Also, Chapter 2 examines the basis for applying the full-range leadership theory (Bass, 1996) and the servant leadership theory (Greenleaf, 1970). The literature review will discuss leadership styles and how they impact membership growth in churches.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This qualitative case study of leaders of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, presented church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influenced the growth of church membership. The aim of this study was to help leaders understand their leadership practices and help build their organizations efficiently and to enable their members to create a positive impact that will change their communities and cities. Over the past two decades, attendance has declined in Christian churches in the United States (Bruce, 2011; Coleman et al., 2004). Reasons for reduced attendance include lack of leadership, vision, and communication and an inability to reach millennials (Barna Group, 2014; Rainer, 2013).

Also, church attendance by individuals with religious connections continues to decline in these technological times. Fewer and fewer Americans make an appearance at a church or any house of worship (Yates, 2014). Advances in technology such as computers, mobile devices, and the Internet have created significant changes in the lives of Christians and the ways they worship (Yates, 2014). Therefore, the widespread acceptance of mobile devices, like iPhones, iPad, and other social media devices have caused a profound social change. Reliance on these devices is eliminating the individual need for traditional religion and attendance at traditional houses of worship (Yates, 2014).

Between 2004 and 2014, the percentage of Americans who regularly attended church decreased from 43% to 36% (Barna Group, 2014). Among churches in the United States, 50% averaged under 100 individual worshipers, 40% averaged between 100 and

350 worshippers, and 10% averaged more than 350 worshippers. The smallest category included growing churches with the largest memberships, while the other 90% included the declining churches with smaller numbers of members (Rainer, 2015). In any church, the leader is the change agent, and readiness for change is more likely to occur in organizations with leaders whom employees/members trust and respect (Allen et al., 2013). The leadership style represents the views of subordinates regarding the leadership traits of a single individual (Allen et al., 2013).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Chapter 2 will present a discussion of the full-range leadership model and a review of literature related to leadership styles and characteristics, leadership in the Pentecostal church, church growth, and the relation between those factors.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

I searched for peer-reviewed articles using these academic databases: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, EBSCO, and Sage. I also used the Google Scholar search engine. Most literature on leadership came from management, business, and nonprofit organizations. The literature addressed the most significant concepts, ideas, and constructs relevant to my research questions. Review of peer-reviewed articles, scholarly journals, and academic texts was useful in finding academic approaches to link the different leadership styles with church membership growth.

The following is a list of search terms used to locate the articles: leadership styles, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire, servant leadership styles. Additionally, church vision, communication, growth, leadership effectiveness, church attendance, decline, vision, leadership styles, worshippers, millennials, decreasing membership, church membership, and church membership growth.

Also, I limited the search for literature related to this study to the last five years. In topics such as leadership styles in nonprofit organizations like the church, the literature search yielded a small quantity of previous research. Further, I developed a literature matrix that summarized every article's research question, method and study design, sample, analysis and results, and recommendations for the study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The central purpose of this study was to contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge on the leadership styles of church leaders and the extent to which they influence membership growth. The problem of the decreased growth of church membership and its connection to church leadership styles was the focus of this qualitative case study. The conceptual framework for this study was the full-range leadership theory by Bass (1996) and the servant leadership theory by Greenleaf (1970). Bass's theory places leaders at the heart of the group process and argues that their efforts influence followers (Oberfield, 2014). This theory by Bass has been embraced by scholars and practitioners across a range of disciplines and organizations and has achieved a level of public acclaim that is rare for academic concepts (Oberfield, 2014). Bass's full-range leadership theory derived from the concepts of the transformational,

transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Transformational leaders influence their members to transcend their self-interests for the benefit of the organization (McCleskey, 2014). Transactional leadership focuses on the role of supervision, organization, and group performance (Cherry, 2016). Laissez-faire leaders avoid responsibility, delay decision making, and provide no feedback to church members (Allen et al., 2013).

Greenleaf (1970) defined servant leadership theory not as a management technique but as a way of life that begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve and to serve first. Bass's (1996) and Greenleaf's theories provide basic explanations of the role of leadership in a nonprofit organization like a church. In the context of organizational change, these theories offered insight into the assessment and analysis of leadership styles and influences on growth in an organizational setting. These theories also formed a foundation for understanding the leadership styles of leaders in a religious setting. The goal of this study was to employ a qualitative research method to explore the different leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, among pastors, deacons, and ministers, of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and those styles' influences on the growth of church membership.

The qualitative research approach offered a method for exploring complex issues related to human behavior, human perception, and lived experience (Khan, 2014; Schwandt, 2015). Various theorists offered guidance for this type of inquiry. Antonakis and House (2014) stated that leaders should not only concentrate on guiding followers to accomplish new goals but also acquire leadership skills that relate to knowledge at

creating plans for dealing with difficult issues. Bass and Avolio (1990) maintained that each leader exhibits features of each of these leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire.

Summerfield (2014) portrayed leadership from a very simplistic perspective in describing the main purpose of leadership is to make things better. Summerfield emphasized that the concept to make things better includes other important elements, such as transforming leadership, project-based goals, the pursuit of personal happiness, and emergent leadership, implying that everyone can make a difference. The expectation was that exploring the components of these leadership styles would contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge on the leadership styles of church leaders and members of the congregations and explain how those styles influence membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

## **Literature Review**

### **Defining Leadership**

The variety of research in the field of leadership revealed a difficult, multifaceted process involved in defining this basic term. Bass (1990) suggested that several of these views define leadership as the center of group procedures. Further definitions of leadership describe it as a person's trait, an act or behavior, a transformational procedure, a collection of skills, or conditions of power relations (Northouse, 2013). Another definition characterized leadership as a method wherein an individual can impact a set of individuals to attain a mutual objective (Northouse, 2013).

Aritz, Walker, Cardon, and Li (2017) explained that most descriptions incorporate some essential parts of the leadership experience, including that (a) it is a process, (b) it involves influences, (c) it occurs in a group context, and (d) it involves goal attainment. Aritz et al. (2017) also stated that leadership is not a trait that resides in an individual; rather, it is a temporal event that occurs in the interaction between the leader and his or her followers. Kanyandekwe and Boateng (2013) defined leadership as the process through which an individual influences the behaviors of followers to achieve organizational goals. The followers perceive those influences as legitimate either through election or by virtue of the leader's position in the organizational structure. This understanding of the concept of leadership assigns a pivotal role to a leader in an organization, giving him or her various powers to fulfill his or her responsibility to lead followers or employees towards the achievement of stated goals (Kanyandekwe & Boateng, 2013).

Leadership is also a process of social interaction, in which the leader has an influence on the behavior of his or her followers and strongly influences their performance (McCleskey, 2014). It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to have a meaningful discourse on leadership, leadership styles, and outcomes without an operational definition of leadership (McCleskey, 2014). Further, it is paramount to understand the research that demonstrates the attributes of an effective leader. Without an understanding of these fundamental attributes, it is difficult to define the purpose and set goals for leadership development and growth, making the outcomes of any adopted leadership style far less valuable to leaders and organizations (McCleskey, 2014).



According to Gandolfi and Stone (2016), leadership refers to how a leader chooses to lead and how his or her behavior impacts an organization and its people. Gandolfi and Stone also suggested that an operational definition of leadership requires five components: there must be one or more leaders, leadership must have followers, leadership must be action-oriented, leadership must have a legitimate course of action, and there must be goals and objectives. Leadership is further defined as having many facets, dimensions, and aspects (Allen, 2013). It also includes the simple paradigm that leadership is good management, the semantic description that leadership is the process of leading, the transactional definition that leadership is a social exchange between leaders and followers. Allio (2013) also defined leadership as complex, invisible forces that act on the leadership process, the expectations of the followers, and the culture of the organization and the circumstances.

M. C. Taylor, Cornelius, and Colvin (2014) stated that leadership assists an organization in adjusting to its surroundings by removing unproductive patterns of behavior and replacing them with new ones. Leaders offer focus, support, direction, and help to the organization so it can reach its goal. Leaders play a significant role in the effectiveness of an organization, and their actions can result in positive perceptions of workers, which increase the possibility that the organization will obtain lasting achievements. Leaders are influential in initiating the vision of the organization, bringing about and maintaining quality, and preparing and directing the way to prosperity (M. C. Taylor et al., 2014). People in positions of authority need to have a strong understanding of leadership, organizational change, and effectiveness.

Nonprofit organizations such as churches face a quickly changing world and should adapt to the rapidly changing realities of how other nonprofit organizations conduct their activities (M.C. Taylor et al., 2014). Leaders within a church as a nonprofit organization face a variety of pressures from increasing numbers of agencies seeking support, shifting government funding, and the presence of for-profit organizations in human services. Consequently, to answer to changes in the marketplace of nonprofit organizations, decision-making directors need to be innovative and adaptive when adjusting to their diverse funding sources, changing services for clients, and seeking increased governmental accountability (M. C. Taylor et al., 2014). Despite their high level of transformational leadership roles, decision-making directors also demonstrate high-level affiliation with productive leadership roles (M. C. Taylor et al., 2014). The ability to negotiate and communicate is vital to leaders and remains the most significant leadership behaviors in the universal context (Yukl, 2013).

A qualitative method with a case study research design was appropriate for this research study. The qualitative approach supported the study of how individuals and groups establish significance. The qualitative investigation involved data collection via interviews, observations, and documents and the analysis of data to discover substantively relevant patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). Qualitative researchers dedicate substantial awareness in determining what qualitative data is relevant to the research problem (Patton, 2015).

A case study research design stands on its own as a detailed and rich story about a person, organization, event, campaign, or program, regardless of the focus of the study

(Patton, 2015). This method certifies that the subject is not observed through a single viewpoint but rather through a variety of different perspectives, which permit disclosure and understanding of various aspects surrounding the problem (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014). During this qualitative case study, I gathered the perspectives of church leaders and members of congregations to explore four leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, and to determine how those styles influenced the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

### **Leadership Styles**

Management experts have expressed a revised definition of leadership and explanation of their approaches toward it. They have moved from a classical autocratic approach to a creative, participative approach. According to Srivastava (2016), identifying an individual leader's style is central to evaluating leadership quality and effectiveness, especially as it relates to organizational goals. Mauri (2017) stated that leaders must tap into different leadership styles to learn quickly and cope in a world in flux; for example, they must develop big-picture thinking versus detail thinking. To avoid the risk of oversimplification when it comes to matters of the mind, leaders must adopt the right style for the right context (Mauri, 2017).

Different leadership styles can function in all kinds of organizations, depending on many diverse features such as leaders' traits as well as context, a sector of activity, industry, size, and formation of the proficient team (Fazzi & Zamaro, 2015). Further, leadership styles might influence or be influenced by recognized differences among and

within organizational cultures, patterns of organizational cooperation or competition goals, group orientation, open or privileged communication channels among employees, professional role identities, and values (Fazzi & Zamaro, 2015). According to Li, Gupta, Loom, and Casimir (2014), leadership style has traditionally been construed as the extent to which an individual emphasizes or displays particular types of leadership as measured by the frequency or intensity of specific leadership behaviors or attitudes using multiple items and Likert scales. A brief examination of each common leadership style and its strengths and weakness follows, along with a discussion of each style's potential impact on a group as well as its relative usefulness for any organization.

**Autocratic.** Srivastava (2016) stated that autocratic leaders are classic do-as-I-say types and may lack leadership experience; they may have had leadership forced upon them in the form of a new position or task that entails managing people. Autocratic leaders can harm an organization as they force their followers to perform programs or services based on a subjective idea of what success looks like, but the followers may not share the same vision. Cherry (2016) stated that autocratic leadership, as authoritarian leadership, is a style marked with individual authority over all decisions and a small contribution from other members of the group. The leaders normally make choices based on their ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers (Cherry, 2016).

Lopez and Ensari (2014) stated that autocratic leaders provide the necessary information to accomplish a task, create the rules, offer rewards for compliance, and threaten to punish subordinates for disobedience. Giltinane (2013) concurred that this leadership style requires its team members to be loyal and obedient rule followers and

punishment occurs in some form when they do not meet objectives. A weakness of this leadership style is that team members may have helpful suggestions for process improvement or risk management, but their views are not required because the leader is running the project and serves as the major decision maker (Giltinane, 2013).

**Bureaucratic.** Bureaucratic leaders are usually strongly committed to procedures and processes instead of people, and as a result, they may appear aloof and highly adverse to change (Srivastava, 2016), since the specific problem or problems associated with using policies to lead are not always obvious until harm has occurred. Giltinane (2013) mentioned that this leadership style is made up of policies and procedures. Projects are completed according to a pre-determined set of procedures, and a lack of creativity and motivation among followers is common. A weakness of this style is that leaders who use this style to motivate and manage a team repeatedly overlook the qualities and strengths of the people in their group and instead focus on whether everyone is following instructions (Giltinane, 2013).

**Democratic.** This system of leadership leads to the development of trust and loyalty among the subordinates (Srivastava, 2016). The leader takes his or her followers into full consideration, utilizes their skills and knowledge, and considers their input before arriving at a decision. In democratic leadership, rapport always exists between the leader and the subordinates (Srivastava, 2016). The strength of this style is that democratic is a participative leadership style in which members of the group contribute to the process of making decisions. Also, Cherry (2016) stated that democratic leadership works best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their

knowledge. Democratic leaders also allow individuals enough time to contribute, develop a plan, and then vote on the best course of action. The biggest problem with democratic leadership is its underlying assumption that everyone has an equal stake in an outcome as well as shared levels of expertise about decisions. Those situations are rarely the case. While democratic leadership sounds good in theory, it often is bogged down in its slow processes, and achieving workable results usually requires an enormous amount of effort (Nagendra & Farooqui, 2016).

**Charismatic.** Charisma is typically seen in mystical terms, like some gift from God, and originates in a set of qualities either present or absent in leaders themselves (Kempster & Parry, 2013). The researchers reported that a large majority of individuals spoke about happy, respectful, and even loving relationships between charismatic leaders and their followers. Therefore, charismatic leadership is not a set of behaviors that can and should be adopted or that can be trained, nor does it imply some form of weakness on the part of the follower. Instead, charismatic leadership emerges within an “emerging-and-becoming” relationship, wherein the identities of leaders and followers reflect an ongoing and complex process of identity granting and claiming. Ultimately, charisma is in the hands of the followers, who grant and respond, and in the hands of the leader, who claims (Kempster & Parry, 2013). A charismatic leader has a vision, as well as a personality that motivates followers to execute that vision (Srivastava, 2016). As a result, this type of leadership is immensely valued. Charismatic leadership provides fertile ground for creativity and innovation and is often highly motivational (Srivastava, 2016). One significant problem may potentially undercut the value of charismatic leaders: they

can leave. Once a leader has exited, an organization can appear rudderless and without direction. The floundering can last for years because charismatic leaders rarely develop replacements. Their leadership is established on the strength of their personalities (Nagendra & Farooqui, 2016).

**Transformational.** Transformational leadership is a form of leadership wherein leaders are connected to and engaged with their followers (Mencl, Wefald, & van Ittersum, 2016). Four elements comprise this higher-order concept of leadership; the first is idealized influences, which refers to arousing solid feelings from followers and creating recognition with the leader (Yukl, 2013). The second element is an individualized consideration, which gives aid, motivation, and training. Third, inspirational motivation is the process of conveying an attractive vision while using signs to focus effort and model appropriate behaviors. The fourth element is intellectual stimulation, which increases followers' awareness about problems and involves followers in resolving those difficulties by different methods (Yukl, 2013). Also, a transformational leader is an excellent coach to direct employees with individualized consideration, no matter whether the mission is exploratory or exploitative (Yukl, 2013). Vito, Higgins, and Denny (2014) stated that the transformational leadership concept makes provisions for power and influences in the leadership process, similar to the transactional leadership theory. According to Burns (1978), the relationship between the leader and the subordinates depends on emotion. The leader utilizes the trust and confidence that the subordinates place in them to motivate behavior (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders typically rely on four characteristics: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and

intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership has its weakness. First, it lacks conceptual clarity, meaning it has too many various actions, and leaders may concentrate on many different elements and procedures. Second, capacities are problematic with uncertain variable limits. Finally, transformational leadership considers leadership as a character trait or individual liability instead of conduct that people can acquire (Northouse, 2013). Thus, its applicability is limited.

**Transactional.** This style of leadership depends on a mutual and deterministic connection involving a leader and his or her subordinates (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership may be characterized in multiple ways (Bass, 1997; Vito et al., 2014). First, transactional leaders utilize contingent rewards, for example, work for pay or time off, to underlie the arrangements for explicit or implicit agreement on goals to be reached to obtain the desired rewards or behavior (Bass, 1985, 1997). Second, transactional leaders use a management-by-exception format to implement a monitoring program that allows them to gather behavioral information to predict or prevent the subordinate from deviating from the agreed upon goals of objectives (Bass, 1985). Third, transactional leaders are passive and only act when a problem arises. Under this perspective, leaders and subordinates have considerable power and influence (Bass, 1985). The problem with transactional leaders is expectations, as transactional leaders fulfill employees' needs for rewards when they meet targets (Bass, 1997).

**Laissez-faire.** According to Cherry (2016), laissez-faire leadership also referred to as delegation leadership, is a kind of leadership style wherein leaders are hands-off and permit other associates within the group to make the choices. Researchers have found that



this is the leadership style that leads to the lowest productivity among group members. Allen et al. (2013) stated that because laissez-faire leaders are avoidant in their role as leaders, organizational members do not perceive them as sincere, credible, or trustworthy. Thus, laissez-faire leaders create a psychological climate in which members are resistant to rather than ready for a change. Allen et al. (2013) mentioned that laissez-faire leaders are passive and offer little direction and guidance, so any change effort they suggest is likely to be negatively related to readiness for change. Laissez-faire leaders provide no support and no direction to their employees. These leaders do not create a psychological climate that encourages new ideas and suggestions (Allen et al., 2013). The problem with laissez-faire leadership is that it involves the deferral of decision-making and avoidance of communication; laissez-faire leaders converse only when necessary. Thus, the business of employee development is not a concern to laissez-faire leaders, as they believe that employees can take care of themselves (Wong & Giessner, 2016).

**Servant.** A leader's going beyond his or her self-interest is the main feature of servant leadership (Winston & Fields, 2015). Employing servant leadership in an organization entails that a leader place priority on creating an organizational environment that facilitates followers' growth and development. Winston and Fields (2015) also stated that facilitating the development of followers might occur directly through training and mentoring or indirectly through consistent behaviors that encourage followers to undertake self-development activities. Thus, servant leadership's person-oriented attitude places the leader in the role of a steward of the interests of both the organization and its members (Winston & Fields, 2015). Bambale (2014) argued that servant leadership is a

concept rooted in the belief that to motivate followers to perform at the fullest potential, leaders must rely on one-on-one communication to understand followers' needs, desires, abilities, goals, and potentials. Servant leaders use their knowledge about followers to assist them in achieving their potential. Servant leaders also help followers to achieve their potential by building their self-confidence, inspiring trust, and providing information, feedback, and resources (Bambale, 2014). Servant leadership differs from most other leadership approaches in its focus on personal integrity and the formation of strong long-term relationships with employees (Bambale, 2014).

The weakness of servant leaders is that they can be subject to manipulation by their followers, and they might be perceived as feeble and inexperienced. Another problem of servant leaders is that they might perform actions or service for followers so that the followers will return the consideration, and leaders may apply pressure against followers to promote this system of exchange (Staats, 2015). The next section of this literature review focuses on church leaders, church leadership settings, and leadership characteristics. Each area of focus contributes to establishing the justification and rationale for the selection of the leadership concept for this study.

### **Church Leaders**

The continued existence and growth of nonprofit organizations will require sound leadership. Unlike for-profit organizations, and comparable to other nonprofit organizations, stakeholders volunteer the resources (e.g., money, time, people) to a church leader, and the relationship between church leaders and congregational members is interdependent (Grandy, 2013). Studying leadership in churches provides insight into

the complexity of leadership and reveals that leadership is relational, rather than responsibility or a gift that rests solely with one individual (Grandy, 2013). Leadership in nonprofits is particularly complex and requires a diverse range of skills and abilities, some of which include a high tolerance for ambiguity; advocacy, fundraising, and grant writing; financial management; and managing and motivating a workforce comprised primarily of volunteers. Also, nonprofits are value-driven organizations that require leaders who can sustain tradition (the mission) while balancing the need for innovation (Grandy, 2013).

Stewart (2008) stated that leadership in churches is a complex relationship among pastors, leaders, and members, who have the official and standard authority, and various other institutions, such as the higher church diocese, media, government, and the community. Churches exist to offer moral, spiritual, and community guidance. Studying churches can provide insight into the role of values, leaders, and organizational members in the enactment of leadership, culture, decision making, and strategy in a variety of nonprofit and socially responsible organizations (Stewart, 2008). Therefore, churches are an exemplar of the complexity involved in navigating through a diffuse power structure (Stewart, 2008).

According to Kanyandekwe et al. (2013), church leaders should set good examples for church members, communities, societies in general, and political leaders. The power of church leaders should not be transformed into corruption through fake miracles and prayers for a fee or counseling for a fee. Thus, it is customary that a good work relationship is a strong contributing factor to the successful performance of the

organizational objectives. Leaders in churches create and maintain a positive work climate by establishing the appropriate organizational structure and good policies and implementing them consistently (Kanyandekwe et al., 2013).

### **Church Leadership Settings**

Grandy (2013) mentioned that as in other nonprofits, values, and mission are central to leadership in churches. Pastoral power differs from that in conventional organizations usually featured in organizational studies. Leadership is essential to the growth of a nonprofit organization such as a church, as adequate leadership is necessary for the survival of nonprofit organizations (Grandy, 2013).

Watt (2014) stated that churches in the 21st century need godly leaders capable of influencing others to achieve their mission. Leaders should understand church government and politics, the effects of diversity in theology and worship, spiritual formation of church followers, program planning and administration, as well as age-level best practices. Furthermore, leaders in the church should show moral leadership, individual control, and community service through the initiation, development, and maintenance of positive functioning relationships (Watt, 2014). The role of a church leader may take the form of a preacher, pastor, teacher, counselor missionary, small group leader, or another church-related ministry. But no matter what the call, the church needs to identify and provide leaders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to reach today's culture.

According to Watt (2014), church leaders need to prepare others for effective leadership by educating, equipping, enriching, and empowering them for the work of the

church in general and life in the world at large. The church is one body made up of many people, most of whom are volunteers. Effective church leaders recognize that relational power is the outcome of working with others to achieve mutually satisfactory goals; being a relational church leader is often more about the ability to influence others than the capacity to wield power (Watt, 2014). A lesson for those fulfilling formal and informal leadership roles in the church is that individuals must learn to love others in the agape sense or sacrificial sense. Church leaders should respect and admire all types of other people. People must learn to love and respect others as they become aware of God's love for His people. Church leaders must make it a part of their daily business to communicate their vision and goals to complete the organization's mission (Watt, 2014).

Cole (2015) pointed out that churches face great challenges in reaching today's secular culture. As churches in America continue to age, they gradually become inward-focused and can lose the ability to relate to people in their communities. Leaders may face increasing pressure to spend resources and time in meeting the members' escalating demands, thus reducing the church's ability to carry out the great commission (Cole, 2015).

Moving a church from inward-focused to outward-focused does not guarantee to remove the problems the church will encounter (Cole, 2015). Pastors and leaders must prepare for pushback from the congregation when they embark on the journey of becoming outward-focused. Pastors must receive encouragement that they will not walk this journey alone. Many pastors of small and medium-sized churches who feel stuck with membership growth need to develop a systematized plan for their churches. The

churches they pastor are on a course of status quo with no destination in sight (Cole, 2015). Pastors as leaders should provide the vision of the church to the congregation. A daily reminder of the vision is a critical part of a leader's responsibility for achieving the organization's mission (Watt, 2014). The success of the church depends on the direction of the pastor and leaders in the church as churches face significant reductions in church attendance and membership.

### **Leadership Characteristics**

Gini and Green (2014) stated that three principle characteristics constitute the core of the leadership concept: character, stewardship, and experience.

**Character.** Character encompasses the totality of a person's beliefs, values, and ethics (Gini & Green, 2014). Character, like skill, athletic ability, or musical talent, must be performed to be perfected and maintained, yet some mistakes, actions, and behavior, whether intended or not, can change lives and reputations forever. Being a person of character is an ongoing activity and not a one-time affair or an episodic experience and assuming the leadership of an organization, whether a club, a sports team or a global corporation, is a daunting and dangerous thing to do (Gini & Green, 2014). For a leader to attempt to do so without a solid understanding of who they are (character) and without a clear sense of what they are willing and unwilling to do (integrity and conscience) is a formula for public failure and personal tragedy. The character may be the most crucial and elusive element of leadership. Character is permanent; it establishes both day-to-day demeanor and destiny. Therefore, it is not only useful but also essential to examine the character of those who wish to lead (Gini & Green, 2014).

**Stewardship.** Gini and Green (2014) argued that to act as a steward is to act as “an agent” for another. Stewardship, like leadership, is always focused on others. Being a steward requires that leaders recognize that the ultimate purpose of their work is others and not themselves (Gini & Green, 2014; Senge, 2006). Leaders, like stewards, do what they do for something larger than themselves, putting their followers’ or constituents’ needs before their own (Gini & Green, 2014).

**Experience.** Gini and Green (2014) mentioned that the ability to learn is a defining characteristic of being human, and the ability to continue learning is an essential skill of leaders. Real learning is the result of time, experience, effort, education, involvement, achieving success, and most importantly, experiencing setbacks and failures. The ability to be a leader is the result of training, time on the job, surviving the test of both minor and major failures, and the talent to extract both wisdom and skills from these experiences. Gini and Green (2014) also explained that the need for leadership is part of humans’ social DNA; people need leadership, they seek it out, and they are desperate for it. During times of despair, they may embrace bad leaders, misleaders, and toxic leaders, who promise to satisfy their needs for security and provide a sense of order and certainty in a disordered and uncertain world. In light of the above literature, the rationale for this study was that the full-range leadership theory was the ideal vehicle for this study. The full-range leadership theory focuses on both the positive and negative effects of the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles (Samad, Reaburn, Davis, & Ahmad, 2015).

### **The Full-Range Leadership Model**

The focus of this study was the leadership styles as represented in the full-range leadership model. The transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, and laissez-faire leadership styles are the constructs of full-range leadership theory. These styles may be applied to a specific and quantifiable demographic of the contemporary workforce. The full-range leadership model is a suitable academic basis by which to study leadership within organizations because the model is relevant across professions. Since its origins in the 1980s, the full range leadership model has evolved into the most researched theory of leadership today (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013).

Bass (1985) developed the full-range leadership model, which classified leadership styles into three types: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. Allen et al. (2013) reiterated Bass's (1985) suggestion that these three types form a continuum, with transformational leaders being the most active and effective, laissez-faire leaders being the least active and effective, and transactional leaders falling in the middle.

**Transformational leadership style.** Burns (1978) stressed that transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to a higher level of motivation and morality. Burns (1978) also described transformational leadership as a process rather than specific behavior. Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) stated that Bass (1985) described a transformational leader as an individual who raised followers' awareness, shifted them to higher-level needs, drove them to move beyond their self-interests and work harder to



surpass expectations. Bass (1985) also stated that the extent to which a leader is transformational is primarily determined by the extent of his or her influence on followers. Followers of such a leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader, and because of the qualities of the transformational leader, followers are willing to work harder than originally expected. Burns (1978) stated that transformational leaders appeal to higher ideals and moral values and empower followers to produce profound and fundamental change. Transformational leaders offer followers more than just working for personal gain; they provide followers with an inspiring mission and vision to give them an identity (Bass, 1985). The leader transforms and motivates followers through his or her idealized influence earlier identified as charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Also, this leader encourages followers to come up with new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter the environment to support success (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership is a practice that changes and transforms people to go beyond expectations. Burns argued that transformational leadership goes beyond the straightforward exchange relationship between leaders and followers which is characteristic of transactional leadership.

Transformational leaders inspire followers with a common vision, which offers a conceptual map of where the organization is headed (Allen et al. (2013). These leaders concentrate on the transformation of both the organization and the individuals within it and influence their followers to transcend their self-interests for the good of the group by increasing their commitment to the organization's vision. Leaders act as change drivers,

actively involved in creating an environment and culture that foster change and growth (Allen et al., 2013).

Transformational leadership is an effective and influential leadership style to influence the behaviors and performance of followers (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). It articulates a compelling vision, offers clear goals, provides support and stimulates followers to work. Bass (1985) identified an inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, idealized influences, and intellectual stimulation as the four dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors. Inspirational motivation refers to a leader who creates an attractive image of the future and demonstrates optimism, enthusiasm, and individualized consideration to provide encouragement and support to followers (Bass, 1985). Idealized influences refer to a leader who serves as a personal example who maintains high ethical standards. Intellectual stimulation encourages followers to challenge and be aware of the problems (Bass, 1985).

Chan and Mak (2014) stated that transformational leadership stimulates followers to exchange ideas and generate a mission within organizations. A transformational leader encourages followers with high motivation and belief at work, which enhances the personal meaningfulness of followers. This action generates followers' emotional attachment and involvement in identifying the leader. The identification of a leader reflects the extent to which followers' have confidence and belief in their leader. Followers are likely to engage with a leader when he or she expresses feelings of pride to others as members (Chan & Mak, 2014).

Transformational leaders provide individualized care to their followers, providing benefits and support that exceed their expectations (Chan & Mak, 2014). Followers who perceive their leader as extraordinary will become strongly dependent on the leader for guidance and inspiration. Also, when followers experience pride and feelings of accomplishment towards their leaders, they also feel obligated to stay with the leader. Pride in being a follower of the leader emphasizes the high level of identification in the leader-follower relationship and an increase in the normative commitment of the followers (Chan & Mak, 2014).

Transformational leaders move followers to transcend their self-interest for the good of the group, organization, or country (Bass, 1997). Transformational leaders motivate followers and other constituencies to do more than they originally expected to do as they strive for higher order outcomes (Bass, 1997; Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership may be autocratic and directive or democratic and participative. Leaders can be intellectually stimulating to their followers when they authoritatively direct the follower's attention to a hidden assumption in their thinking (Bass, 1997).

A central thesis of Bass's (1985) concept is that transformational leadership goes beyond exchanging inducements for desired performance. By extension, leaders may exhibit intellectually stimulating leadership approaches as well as different kinds of leadership styles, methods, skill sets, and philosophies to influence every area of the church. Transformational leaders impact their members to surpass their self-interest for the benefit of the organization (McCleskey, 2014). Leadership plays a crucial role in the progress and working of an organization. Thus, the process of organizational change

commands very effective and extremely skillful leadership and a leader who is adept at recognizing the most attractive structure of an organization and addressing the questions of organizational change in a most proper way (Kalaluhi, 2013).

For a church as an organization to accomplish its goals and grow, the leaders must be effective (Kalaluhi, 2013). Individuals within the church have the impression that the leaders of the church have to be strict or reserved and are not obligated to involve the members in the decision-making process because members are not active in the higher levels of authority (Malakyan, 2013). With this technique, leaders transform their followers by activating higher-order needs, emphasizing the value of certain outcomes, and influencing their followers to put the organization before their self-interest (Malakyan, 2013).

**Transactional leadership.** The transactional-transformational paradigm features leadership as either a matter of contingent reinforcement of followers by a transactional leader or the moving of followers beyond their self-interests for the good of the group, organization or society by a transformational leader (Bass, 1997). The paradigm is sufficiently broad to provide a basis for measurement and understanding that is as universal as the concept of leadership itself. Leaders and followers enter an exchange beginning with a process of negotiation to establish what is being exchanged and whether it is satisfactory (Bass, 1997). Transactional leadership depends on the leader's power to reinforce subordinates for their successful completion of the bargain. Reinforcement can be materialistic or symbolic, immediate or delayed, partial or whole, implicit or explicit, and usually involves rewards or resources. Bass (1985) pointed out that transactional

leaders do not develop higher-order leadership strategies that have the potential to unlock employees' potential and creativity. Oberfield (2014) stated that the three components of transactional leadership are passive management by exception, active management by exception, and contingent reward. These components share principal agent logic about the leader-follower relationship; that is managers (leaders) are responsible for communicating goals and instructions to workers, observing follower behavior, and responding in kind to the actions of followers (Oberfield, 2014). Although Bass (1985) was clear that transactional leadership is an important component of organizational functioning, he labeled it a *lower order* (Oberfield, 2014). In this way, Bass indicated that transactional leadership is a necessary component of management, but it is not enough for an organization to achieve its full potential. Bass argued that leaders must employ transformational leadership; they need to inspire followers and unlock their potential for creativity. In other words, transformational leadership augments transactional leadership to achieve higher levels of subordinate performance with the primary difference residing in the process by which the leader motivates subordinates and in the types of goals set (Bass, 1985).

Transactional leadership centers mainly on leader-follower exchanges (Zareen, Razzaq, & Mujtaba, 2014). Followers perform according to the will and direction of the leaders, and leaders positively reward the efforts. The baseline is a reward that can be a negative experience related to disciplinary actions. However, if followers meet the terms and conditions to achieve the assigned goals, the exchange can be a positive experience related to praise and appreciation. Researchers have proposed three characteristics of

transactional leadership, which are contingent rewards, active management by exception, and passive management by exception (Zareen et al., 2014). Transactional leaders communicate with their followers what they should do and how they should do it and then monitor them closely; followers perform tasks and obtain contingent rewards upon satisfactory performance and get punished for unsatisfactory performance (Gilani, Cavico, & Mujtaba, 2014).

**Laissez-faire leadership.** Skogstad, Hetland, Glasø, and Einarsen (2014) echoed Bass's (1985) definition of laissez-faire leadership as the avoidance or absence of leadership, almost all literature on this style of leadership characterizes laissez-faire as the most inactive as well as the most ineffective. Skogstad et al. defined laissez-faire leadership as a follower-centered form of avoidance-based leadership in which subordinates perceive a situational need for leadership, and leaders fail to respond to those needs; this dynamic is the main source of variance in outcomes. Moreover, laissez-faire leadership is perceived as leaders' volitional and active avoidance of subordinates when they needed assistance, in contrast to transactional and transformational forms of leadership (Skogstad et al., 2014). Skogstad et al. (2014) indicated leaders, in general, should avoid laissez-faire leadership, which from a follower-centered perspective, does not meet the legitimate expectations of the subordinates. Organizations in general, as well as leadership development programs, should address laissez-faire leadership behavior and its negative effects just as they examine the features of transactional and transformational forms of leadership (Skogstad et al., 2014). Leaders must know when to act and when not

to act in their relationships with subordinates and thus not confuse empowering leadership with laissez-faire leadership behaviors (Skogstad et al., 2014).

Laissez-faire leadership is a style in which a leader delegates all the decision-making powers to followers (Gilani et al., 2014). Such leaders give complete freedom to their followers to decide by providing them all the necessary tools and resources (Zareen et al., 2014). Expectations for followers to solve problems are very high, but when followers go through the process and ultimately make decisions, the whole process becomes a good learning opportunity to develop and to know about necessary organizational tools. Zareen et al. (2015) further stated that laissez-faire leadership style is useful in situations with large numbers of decisions, when decision making is easy, when followers should perform routine tasks with fewer complexities and less demanding criteria, or when rules and regulations are pre-determined. This leadership style is inappropriate when followers lack knowledge, experience, and expertise or when they are unwilling or unable to make decisions on their own (Zareen et al., 2015).

**Servant leadership.** Researching the topic of servant leadership is the first step for academics and leaders in organizations that embrace the servant leadership model (Greenleaf, 1977). The procedure of taking up a servant leader position begins with a natural awareness of wanting to serve, followed by the longing to lead. As leaders first desire to serve, they can promise to meet the wishes of those they serve first. This motivation is different from that of leaders who desire to lead, to satisfy a drive for power, or to obtain material property (Greenleaf, 1977). Thus, leaders should be responsible for serving others first, and this level of service must supersede their ambition

and the organization's mission (Greenleaf, 1998). Pastoral leadership is a Bible-centered ideology, whereas servant leadership centers on an Omni-secular ideology. Greenleaf (1998) defined Omni-secular as a belief not bound to a certain context or religious influence; rather, it is a person's conscious choice to serve. Laub (2014) presented the following definition of servant leadership: the grasping and practice of leadership that identifies the good of those led above the selfishness of the leader. Servant leadership supports the worth and progress of individuals, the structuring of groups, the exercise of genuineness, the issuing of leadership for the good of those leading, the allocation of authority and position for the ordinary good of every person, the whole organization, and individuals served by the corporation. Greenleaf (1977) assumed that the leadership distinction of servant leaders displays itself in the responsibility that they take as servants first to ensure that other individuals' most important needs are met. Thus, the basis of Greenleaf's (1977) concept of servant-leadership is that the leader does not love the company more than he loves the individuals who make up the company.

Leadership is vital to the success of the church, and the need for different leadership styles is not going to go away anytime soon (C. H. Johnson, 2014). Also, leadership focuses not on power and self-promotion but the selfless pursuit of progress. It signals the leader when it is time to lead, when it is time to follow, and when it is time to compromise (C. H. Johnson, 2014). The contentious idea is that servant leadership is a lasting, transformational method to a single leader and association. However, the servant leader's conflicts with some typical styles of leadership that concentrate on authority, position, force, title, temporary rewards, and managing followers as a means to an end



(Sipe & Frick, 2015). Gaps in literature persist on the topics of ethical leadership, ethical decision making, and communication; these deficits indicated the need for further research.

### **Overview of the Pentecostal Church**

The Pew Research Center (2014) stated that the modern Pentecostal movement traces its roots back to a revival that took place at the Azusa Street Mission in downtown Los Angeles between 1906 and 1909. Although the church maintains records of earlier outpourings of the spirit in places such as Topeka, Kansas, in 1900, the significance of what transpired at Azusa Street led to its recognition as the birthplace of the movement. Soon Pentecostalism began to spread beyond Azusa Street, first throughout the United States, and then throughout the world, as men and women alike began to carry the message of Pentecost into the mission field. Some of the earliest Pentecostal missionaries traveled to Latin American countries, some as independent missionaries and others as representatives of organizations or denominations. From its earliest inception in the culture of Latin America, Pentecostalism gained mass appeal, especially among those who found themselves on the fringes of society (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Pentecostalism and related charismatic movements represent one of the fastest-growing segments of global Christianity. A quarter of the two billion Christians in the world are believed members of this highly personal faith, highlighting the religious recommencing of the holy spirit as a gift for talking in tongues, godly cure, and revelation (T. M. Johnson, Zurlo, Hickman, & Crossing, 2015). Even more than other Christians, Pentecostals, and other renewalists believe that God, acting through the Holy

Spirit, plays a direct, active role in everyday life. Pentecostalism has evoked the largest shift in the global religious scene over the last decade and now constitutes the third largest body of the universal church, counting more than 640 million Pentecostals worldwide in 2015 (T. M. Johnson et al., 2015). Though counting such a diverse movement is a complex task, Pentecostals' numbers are expected to hover around 1.1 billion by 2015 (T. M. Johnson et al., 2015).

Strong leadership has been an important ingredient of the Pentecostal movement from its beginning (Wacker, 2001). If the essence of leadership is the ability to persuade people to do what is needed for completion, the essence of effective leadership in the church was the ability to persuade them to do it of their own accord. And in this respect, the revival's torchbearers proved skillful beyond their grandest dreams. A. Anderson (2013) concurred and suggested that the astonishing growth of global Pentecostalism may partly be attributed to the movement's entrepreneurial leaders and preachers.

Given this prominent role of leadership and the numerous examples of famous and infamous Pentecostal leaders, it is surprising to learn how little has been written on the topic of Pentecostal leadership (Åkerlund, 2015). The steady stream of research addressing leadership from confessional or denominational angles reflects this awareness, one prominent example being Callahan's (2013) reference handbook on religious leadership, which treats leadership in various religious and confessional contexts separately rather than lumping them together as if they represented one uniform phenomenon. The implicit premise is that leadership takes on distinct meanings and aspects in various religious contexts. To keep spirituality and administration in balance is

thus a constant challenge for ecclesial leaders, one that may be solved using a religiously rooted normativity (Ershova & Hermelink, 2013).

Consequently, researchers cannot simply assume that general leadership theories apply in ecclesial contexts as they do elsewhere. This realization has led to an increased emphasis on strong, visionary, and entrepreneurial leadership and management, arguably the result of an emphasis on pragmatic and practical intelligence in church growth strategy (Åkerlund, 2015). Finally, the inherent fluidity of Pentecostalism has made it the quintessential globalized religion by transcending the local and propagating a universal image of the world, while at the same time incorporating itself successfully into the sociocultural contexts of any new cultures it encounters (Deininger, 2013).

**Pentecostal leadership.** Christel (2013) warned against painting a picture of Pentecostal leadership with broad strokes, as great diversity exists across generations and contexts of Pentecostal leaders. Christel narrowed the study to classic Pentecostals (U.S. Assemblies of God) and suggested that leadership stems from being led and empowered by the Spirit as their leadership is grounded in a deep sense of God's calling them and giving them a mission. Love and burden for the lost are what motivates these leaders, who rely on the empowering gifts of the Spirit in executing their leadership (Christel, 2013). Leaders also reject top-down hierarchy and rely on transformational leadership by encouraging team-based ministry and involving others in setting the direction for the church. They mobilize members of their congregations for compassionate work in their local communities (Christel, 2013). Åkerlund (2015) employed Wacker's (2001) distinction between the primitive and the pragmatic in explaining the problem of

Pentecostal leadership's capability to merge religious vigor and orientation, while at the same time being flexible in global dealings. Even as Pentecostal leaders attributed their work to the Spirit, even to the degree that some of their periodicals refused to list a human editor, Wacker (2001) insisted that leaders were always present, assessing realities, setting direction, and implementing strategies. Local Pentecostal leaders have been able to cross the spiritual and material-void by proclaiming that God is not only in the business of saving souls but also of providing healing and deliverance from diseases and suppressive forces of any kind (A. Anderson, 2013).

Myers (2015) stated that in a similar vein, indigenous leadership makes Pentecostal churches better suited to inspiring deep-rooted and long-lasting change in society, more than international nongovernmental organizations, as churches are more embedded in the local context than their secular counterparts. Though this approach to mission undoubtedly has proven itself to be effective, it has also been blemished with signs and blunders (A. Anderson, 2013). Pentecostal leadership training needs contextual models, according to Easter (2013), who advocated approaches that balance contextual awareness and adaptation of local practices with principles of Biblical leadership, including experiential, incarnational, and participatory modes of learning geared towards missional transformation.

**Leadership and church growth.** Leadership is essential to the growth of a nonprofit organization such as a church, and effective leadership is necessary for the survival of nonprofit organizations (Grandy, 2013). According to the Pew Research Center (2014), 72% of people believe religion is losing its influences in America. The

United States ranks third behind China in the number of people who do not profess Christianity. The poll and census data concurred that only 40% to 50% of people attend church, and 4,000 churches close every year. One remedy may be for pastors to share the vision of the church with the congregation. A daily reminder of the vision is a critical part of a leader's responsibility for achieving the organization's mission (Watt, 2014). The success of a church depends on the direction of the pastor and leaders. To motivate others, leaders must envision the future and embrace the vision so that they can transfer their enthusiasm to others.

Additionally, the church's financial stability and increases in membership are reflections of pastors' success (Watt, 2014). Membership problems are not specific to a single denomination; many churches have experienced reductions in membership (Grandy, 2013). Attendance at Sunday services has decreased due to nonreligious activities such as sports practice and leisure activities such as shopping and weekend travel (McMullin, 2013). Leaders should ensure the success of the organization with new initiatives and demonstrate their creativity to produce a productive, profitable, and conflict-free environment (Saeed et al., 2014). It is essential for leaders to be effective in their leadership of the church members, who are vital to the success of the organization. That success includes an increase in church attendance or membership rather than a decline (Belias & Koustelios, 2015).

**Full-range leadership model in church leadership.** While the descriptions of the leadership styles seem separate and clear, in reality, a leader may move between transformational and transactional styles (Hannah, Sumanth, Lester, & Cavarretta, 2014).

The full-range leadership model recognizes this movement between transformational and transactional leadership, with the understandings that one leader may have a preferred style, and some individuals are unable or unwilling to implement the transformational profile of leadership (Hannah et al., 2014).

The research question in this study was designed to address church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Also, the nine elements that make up the significant concepts of the full-range leadership model provided some leadership features from which the research participants could obtain answers. The nine elements of the full-range leadership model determine or assess qualities, conduct, and qualities of leaders using any of the leadership styles included in the leadership model (Luo et al., 2016). These nine elements derived from the three leadership styles creating the full-range leadership model.

Transformational leadership has four key areas, as stated previously, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Antonakis & House, 2014). Idealized influence includes two elements; the leader provides role modeling in ethics and values and encourages followers toward the completion of goals (Luo et al., 2016). Transactional leadership adds contingent rewards, management by exception active, and management by exception passive to the full-range model, and the final concept laissez-faire leadership (Luo et al., 2016).

Also, servant leadership stresses serving people first; such a leader is, in essence, a person experienced in listening, requesting responses, collaborating, expression of

beliefs and compassion, methods thinking, and the proper use of power. The purpose is to improve the progress of individuals in the organization and multiply teamwork and individual contribution (Sipe & Frick, 2015). To build effective teams within an organization, leaders must recognize that creating effective teams requires their support, coaches who can facilitate the development of teams, organizations that value teamwork, space that encourages teamwork, and leadership that rewards team performance (Taplin, Foster, & Shortell, 2013).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This study was a qualitative exploration of transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant leadership styles among pastors, deacons, and ministers of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, designed to determine the influence of these styles on the growth of church membership. The full-range leadership model established how the three leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire) correlated with the three leader outcomes (perception of leader effectiveness, extra effort, and subordinate satisfaction with the leader; Bass & Avolio, 1997).

Transformational leadership includes charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transactional leaders exercise contingent rewards or management by exception to attain organizational objectives. Laissez-faire leaders offer partial or no direction or connections (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The nature of the leadership style of servant leaders is managing by example. Leadership and improved

partnerships that bring people together for the success of collective goals eventually lead to social change (Greenleaf, 1977).

The full-range leadership theory presumes that followers work effectively in a transactional relationship with the leader, although rewards such as bonuses alone are not sufficient. The leader has to exercise transformational leadership as well to motivate great success, incentive, and dedication among followers (Antonakis & House, 2014).

Therefore, what is unknown is how church leaders should supervise their outreach strategies to help increase membership in their churches. The findings of this study may provide information and understanding to church leaders and members of congregations to fill the gaps in the existing literature regarding church leadership and membership growth.

Chapter 3 will describe the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, participant selection process, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment of participants, data collection process, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. Also, this study may contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge on the leadership styles of church leaders and the extent to which these styles influence membership growth.



### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perceptions of church leaders such as pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of congregations regarding their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The qualitative approach offered an all-inclusive structure for a comprehensive exploration of complex issues related to human behavior, human perception, and lived experience (Khan, 2014; Schwandt, 2015). Also, this study may contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge on the leadership styles of church leaders and the extent to which they influence membership growth. A single interview protocol consisting of semistructured, face-to-face interviews was the method of collecting data from church leaders.

Chapter 3 outlines the method, study design, the study sample, instrumentation, and data analysis utilized in the study. This chapter features a discussion of ethical issues including protection of the study participants. Chapter 3 also explains the process employed in performing this qualitative case study research, which explored church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

The overarching research question for this case study was What are church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles

influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia? Two subquestions focused on this study:

RQ1. What are the leadership styles commonly employed by church leaders to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia?

RQ2. What is the church leaders' (pastors, deacons, and ministers) knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia?

The goal of this study was to explore the different leadership styles (i.e., transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) of pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of the congregations of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and the influence of those styles on church membership growth.

Transformational leaders guide their members to rise above their self-interest for the good of the organization (McCleskey, 2014). Transactional leadership centers on the task of management, planning, and group accomplishment (Cherry, 2016). Laissez-faire leaders keep away from responsibility, delay decision making, and do not advise church members (Allen et al., 2013). Servant leadership is not just an organizational system; it is a behavior that starts with the normal idea that one wants to serve and to serve first (Greenleaf, 1970).

This study involved the application of a qualitative method with a case study research design. The qualitative method supported examination of how individuals and

groups establish significance. The qualitative investigation involved data collection through interviews, observations, documents, and qualitative analysis to find substantively relevant patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). The study included a sequence of plans, considerations, and an evaluation of the literature on the condition of the Pentecostal church and the causes of the church's decline.

A case study generates a free-standing detailed and rich story about a person, organization, event, campaign, or program, which is the focus of the study (Patton, 2015). This method certifies that the subject is not observed through a single lens; instead, a variety of different objects and perspectives permit disclosure and understanding of various aspects surrounding the problem (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles understand how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident (Yin, 2014). The features of a case study include three aspects. First, a case study deals with technically distinctive situations. Second, the case study incorporates several informational resources that merge by triangulation, and third, the case study method can direct the collection and analysis of data by setting up theoretical propositions (Yin, 2014). A two-fold definition by Yin (2014) encompassed the scope and features of the case study, and the case study method can be applied in both quantitative and qualitative research. However, a case

study is usually classified as a qualitative method because it highlights the in-depth understanding acquired predominantly by qualitative methods (Yin, 2014). The case study method has gained relevance because it provides in-depth explanations and descriptions, and the methodology has been widely applied in fields such as psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, social work, business, education, nursing, and community (Yin, 2014).

A case study allows a researcher to concentrate on the development of a group, resulting in a complete examination and a broad picture of subjects derived from varied data sources (Yin, 2014). An exploratory case study involves a single association and setting, and comparative case studies include multiple associations and settings (Yin, 2014). The case study design incorporates numerous methods of collecting information with the capacity to capture ordinary dynamics of the information (Merriam, 2014). Case study research has been in use for over 50 years in many disciplines; for instance, case study techniques are a constant feature of anthropological study, and as a result, anthropologists have contributed to the growth of case study techniques in numerous cultural settings all over the world (Babbie, 2015; Merriam, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Historical research is descriptive, and it regularly overlaps with case study research (Yin, 2014). A case study yields findings similar to a story, but it includes modern aspects of open observation and organized interview processes. Historical study is restricted to showing examination of substantial and ethnic objects and records (Yin, 2014). The case study method was appropriate for this study because some interviews within the limits of this study would be inadequate for the completion of other research

study methods. A case study centers on the development within a group, which results in an inclusive review and offers a complete assessment of subjects from different data resources (Yin, 2014). Investigative or descriptive case studies entail one organization and locality, and comparative case studies, involve multiple associations and localities (Yin, 2014).

The rationale for this research tradition is that researchers using the case study methodology can assist in creating an awareness of difficult situations and in evaluating the connection between situations (Yin, 2014). Case study research permits researchers to collect information from different sources to increase the validity of a multi-case study (Lewis, 2015). In qualitative study, participants may speak openly and give specific information within a compact grouping, providing in-depth information; in contrast, quantitative techniques do not accommodate immediate follow-up inquiries (Pearce, Thøgersen-Ntoumani, & Duda, 2014).

The quantitative research method was not a good fit for this study because it underlines objective measurements, gathering numerical data, and generalizing the data to provide clarifications on a specific issue (Bryman, 2015). Mixed methods research was not suitable because important or appropriate quantitative data was neither essential nor required for this study (Zohrabi, 2013). Additionally, other techniques, such as grounded theory, narrative, content analysis, ethnography, or phenomenology, did not align with the purpose of this research. Phenomenological or ethnographic research was not helpful for this research as the design focused on a cultural group from a specific information source, instead of a procedure that involved a group of persons (Morgan, 2015). The

grounded theory could not accommodate numerous wide-ranging responses from participants within an organization (Mellon, 2015). The narrative design requires inclusion of an author's narrative, and the procedure may have required the omission of details and issues from the participants, rendering that approach inappropriate as well (Wolgemuth, 2014). None of these specific study methods would produce the power and distinctiveness of the case study research (Merriam, 2014).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I chose the churches for this study based on the following criteria: the churches were in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and the churches' religious beliefs fell within in the Pentecostal doctrine of salvation, Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, healing, and deliverance. The researcher's main function during a qualitative case study is gathering and organizing of information and examination of the results of the information (J. A. Smith, 2015). I related to and worked with the participants during the process of the semistructured face-to-face audio-recorded interviews (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). To maintain the purpose and the validity of the research, I applied highly ethical standards at all stages (Bryman, 2015).

As researchers gain an understanding of the purpose of their studies, Bernard (2012) cautioned, personal ideas and perspectives may create bias in the evaluation of research information. Thus, when researchers recognize and set aside their ideas, they are better at understanding the details of others' experiences (Seidman, 2013). To prevent influence of researcher bias in this study, I included procedures to ensure that the details of the results derived from the participants' comments and experiences during the

member-checking process. In member checking, participants review a summary of their interview responses to certify truthfulness in interpretation and meaning of their answers (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The participants confirm that the summaries mirrored their assessments, opinions, and experiences/understandings or suggest revisions to improve accuracy. This review is a method of verifying the explanation provided by the participants while assessing the interview records (Morse, 2015a). Another means of ensuring accuracy and clarity was the use of interview questions that accommodated follow-up inquiries and explanation during the case study research process (J. A. Smith, 2015).

During this study, I conducted individual face-to-face interviews with members of the target population for the research, which consisted of a sample of 10 pastors, 10 deacons, 10 ministers, and 10 members of the congregations of four Pentecostal churches in the geographical area under study. Also, I conducted one focus group interview with five of those same participants. I applied employ due diligence and reflectivity or self-reflection to identify and remove any bias from my interpretation of the data (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2014).

Although I am a member of a local Pentecostal church in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, the leaders and members of the congregation from my church were excluded from being selected as part of the sample participants for this research study. Additionally, I ensured I did not have any private or professional connection with the sample participants. I protected the confidentiality of the research participants and ensured their communication remained secure using every ethical method within reason

to eliminate bias. I selected the target participants to perform the research and obtained informed consent (Appendix B) from each participant. Once data collection and transcript review were complete, I used NVivo software to help in generating themes and inscribing the purpose of the research (Brandão, 2015). Next, I developed an interpretation of the information, reviewed ideas or themes that appeared, evaluated information with each participant, and requested participants answer additional questions to enhance clarity if needed. Participants received copies of my summaries of their transcripts and my initial interpretations of their responses via e-mail or by hand and provided feedback concerning the truthfulness and fullness of the summaries.

The interview questions were impartial and limited in scope to prevent biases that may have polluted this study, and numerous ethical requirements governed this research study. I explained the purpose of the research to the participants and emphasized the importance of their honesty. Preserving confidentiality and privacy was essential; therefore, I assigned pseudonyms to the participants, organizations, and field sites to establish anonymity.

### **Methodology**

Qualitative research methods were appropriate for this study because a qualitative study generates detailed knowledge of an individual's thoughts and inspiration (Barnham, 2015). Qualitative researchers seek to investigate, find, and recognize individuals' skills and behaviors in connection with life situations. Qualitative researchers may gather data from individual interviews, focus groups, or document review from participants within their natural setting (Patton, 2015). In this study, I followed a plan of purposeful



sampling and collection of data through face-to-face semistructured individual interviews, one focus group interview meeting, and document review. Findings of this study identified strategies that church leaders use to ensure effective leadership.

A qualitative design was the most suitable research method for this study and the best method for theory advancement and analysis, support of concepts, capturing facts, and discovering extra facts (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). Qualitative researchers work to advance knowledge by discovering details in events and identifying individual activities and ideas (Roer-Strier & Sands, 2015). The use of qualitative inquiry can create profound and in-depth portraits of a precise experience, and in this research, it had the potential to produce vital forms of understanding and partnership with leaders in the churches.

A qualitative study was preferable to a quantitative or mixed methods study because its features aligned most closely with the purpose and aim of this research. Quantitative methods emphasize the quantity of information, aiming for vast sample size and large quantities of statistical information for inspection (Anyan, 2013). A mixed methods study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Depoy & Gitlin, 2015), and as mentioned, quantitative data was not appropriate for this study. Therefore, qualitative research was most likely to result in profound awareness of the significant motivations of church leaders and thus answer the research questions (Seidman, 2013). A discussion of the specific procedures for this study follows.

### **Participant Recruitment and Selection**

The population for this qualitative case study was pastors, deacons, and ministers of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. I selected the

participants using the nonprobability sampling technique of purposive or judgmental sampling (Patton, 2015). This technique does not afford all individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (Patton, 2015); instead, the focus is to select participants who are likely to have pertinent knowledge and experience to contribute to the study. The sampling permitted the selection of leaders who could describe their leadership styles and the impact of those styles on church growth.

The target sample size for the research was 40 to 80 participants, consisting approximately 10 to 20 pastors, 10 to 20 deacons, 10 to 20 ministers, and eight to 15 members of the congregation for individual face-to-face interviews and four to six participants for one focus group interview with leaders and members of congregation of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Only pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of the congregations of four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia were eligible for the study.

To identify participants who were willing to participate in the research study, I sent letters via mail or e-mail to pastors of different Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The letters described the research study, the research purpose, its significance, the advantages of the research study, and the need for the church to participate in the research study. Three days after posting the letter to the pastors, I telephoned them to remind them of the request for their participation in the study and to ask if they had any questions or concerns about the research study. The letter of invitation for individual leaders to take part in the research stated or advised that participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I

selected 40 participants from four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, to participate in semistructured interviews, and five of these participants contributed to one focus group interview.

On the other hand, participants who responded and agreed to participate received verification and clarification of the study, and I answered any questions the participants had about the study. Then, the participants and I arranged face-to-face, one-on-one interviews, the place and time of which I confirmed via email. The participants did not receive the questions before the interviews; this procedure encouraged the participants to communicate spontaneously and share their understanding and their experience with no planning.

This sample included three demographic groups of church members. First, the participants were active members of the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Second, the participants held leadership roles within the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Also, English-speaking Pentecostal churches were invited to participate in this research study. A researcher is permitted during the exploratory case study to obtain information in view with a careful assessment of skills (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015); in this case, the participants' ability to speak English ensured optimal communication during the interviews.

To achieve data saturation, the sample must consist of participants with the most knowledge to answer the research questions (Morse, 2015b). Data saturation related to the difficulty of the sample with the ability to locate duplication in the information during the interview of the church leaders who manage these Pentecostal Churches in

Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia (Morse, 2015b). Due to my experience and knowledge of the role of leaders within the church and how churches operate as nonprofit organizations, the interview process was a short case study interview. I tried to validate reliable findings and at the same time explore the participants' experience with open-ended questions in an informal method (Yin, 2014). The data consisted of responses to semi-structured, open-ended interviews questions with the participants, and those responses presented an opportunity to acquire an understanding of the research problem (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

### **Instrumentation**

In qualitative interviews, open-ended questions accommodate individual variations (Patton, 2015). The main technique of data collection for this case study was semi-structured interviews. The interview protocol was similar for each of the semi-structured interviews, which were audio recorded to ensure reliability and validity of the data and findings (S. J. Taylor, Bogdan, & De Vault, 2015). The interview protocol allowed for flexibility and allowed participants to provide detailed responses (Hancork & Algozzine, 2015). During transcript review, each participant verified the exact significance of the interviews (Roig-Tierno, Huarng, & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2015). In trying to attain an in-depth measure, a researcher can use the two data collection methods of record assessment and individual interviews to improve reliability and validity of the study (Yin, 2014).

One-on-one interviews served to gather information on each church leader's perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of the styles influenced

the growth of church membership. During a focus group interview meeting, participants described how they placed significance and identified nonprofit organizations' leadership effectiveness, providing detailed insight to enhance the depiction of the phenomenon of interest (Tecau & Tescasiu, 2015). The inclusion of a focus group interview meeting in addition to the individual interviews offered two advantages: first, the ability to achieve detailed examination of a specific topic that would not be feasible in quantitative study, and second, the benefit of creating provisions for new topics and concepts that one might present through the dealings with the participants (Miles & Sparks, 2014). Data also illuminated and explained the leadership styles of leaders in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and those styles' impact on church growth.

The participants in this nonprobability purposive sampling answered open-ended interview questions about the leadership styles of leaders and their impact on church growth within Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. At the start of the interview, the participants had an opportunity to accept or refuse the audio recording process. The face-to-face interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes but no more than an hour, and all participants consented to audio recording and verbatim transcription for data analysis. Each participant had enough time to answer the interview questions honestly, as established in the case study protocol (Yin, 2014).

Face-to-face individual interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour as predicted in the consent form. Also, the focus group interview meeting lasted 35 minutes. The goal was to ensure that the participants were relaxed and comfortable throughout the study. During the interviews, I informed the participants that they would receive a

transcript of the audiotaped interviews. Upon completion of transcription, I mailed the transcripts to the participants to review and sign. The participants had a week to review the transcript and request any changes, but none requested any revisions. Participants verified the accuracy of their transcripts via e-mail or by hand and provided final confirmation, signature, and date. All the participants approved the information and did not request any changes. Also, during the interviews, I assigned the participants a pseudonym to guard their identity. The coded data and transcripts are kept in a secure external hard drive, and five years after the completion of the study, all information will be destroyed.

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

The purpose of data collection is to gather information concerning a specific attribute of a person or phenomenon. The use of record gathering as a research instrument produced thoughtful assessment by disclosing energetic and victorious leaders of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The triangulation of information enhanced validity and reliability during the justification of the research results and signified the existence of full information (Santiago-Delefosse, Gavin, Bruchez, Roux, & Stephen, 2016). To achieve data saturation, the sample must consist of participants with sufficient knowledge to answer the research questions (Morse, 2015b). Data saturation is the point at which subsequent interviews produce only redundant information, and no new data emerges; saturation signifies that data collection is complete (Morse, 2015b).

At the end of the data collection process, each participant received a copy of the final transcript and a thank you letter for their participation in this research study. Every participant had the chance to examine the transcript to confirm the accurate representation of their responses (Harvey, 2015). Finally, I held debriefing sessions via telephone with participants and asked about their experiences with the research to check for any unexpected adverse consequences or misunderstandings. Debriefing also served as a follow-up to restate the research objective and respond to any issues or deal with any matters of the participants. Debriefing was further an opportunity to thank participants for their assistance in completing the research and assure them that their anonymity would be maintained.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The qualitative research approach offered an all-inclusive structure for a more comprehensive exploration of complex issues related to human behavior, human perception, and lived experience (Khan, 2014; Schwandt, 2015). A case study research design can assist in positioning complexities and determine questions to carry out further gathering of data and analysis (Morse, 2015a). The purpose of a case study is to present the findings of the study based on the data (Morse, 2015a). I conducted a specific assessment of all interviews by maintaining a careful data analysis to ensure that the information was reliable (Devotta et al., 2016).

A broad assessment of records from the four Pentecostal churches provided relevant information related to the different leadership styles of church leaders, pastors, deacons, and ministers and those styles' influences on the growth of church membership in Pentecostal Churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The review of documents such as files, policies and procedures manual, and quarterly reports from the four Pentecostal churches provided a useful comparison to the information gathered from the interviews, a way of verifying accuracy for the analysis, and an additional source of data. The employment of numerous data sources to assure the gathering of comprehensive information required to respond to research questions is methodical triangulation (Henwood et al., 2015).

NVivo software was used to assist with the coding and highlighting of ideas and accounts to aid in understanding the core of the occasion (Brandão, 2015). NVivo software permits the controlled arranging of imported records to source files of interiors, exteriors, and notes. The most favorable method of arranging data reports into the database will be determined by the study and prepared analysis (Brandão, 2015). I created a database for various events during the research process. The software also accommodated files and notes and Microsoft Word documents or text files. NVivo allows the inclusion of exterior items like PowerPoint managements, web pages, and books as supplemental material (Giselle, 2013).

A different alphanumeric code represented each participant and his or her interview responses, and the data were safeguarded with a password in a computer secured in a file cabinet. Each participant's code identified the information he or she



provided, which I organized chronologically. The records from this study will not contain the names, addresses, or phone numbers of the churches to protect the confidentiality of leaders and pastors (Cunliffe & Locke, 2015).

In a case study, the collection of information can be achieved through numerous resources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Recorded information might support information from extra resources that presents in-depth material in a complex situation (Roer-Strier & Sands, 2015). Thus, to achieve reliability in the information, researchers should verify or double-check the information by extra sources (Lampard & Pole, 2015). It is significant to check the information for uniformity during the research to enhance the truthfulness of the findings (Schwandt, 2015).

Efforts to organize the information included an Excel spreadsheet to track participants' information (phone contacts, consent forms, and e-mail addresses), private statement records, record assessment completion, and the interview schedule. Given the importance of accurate documentation of records and the succession of events, a qualitative study database was useful to organize the case study information, procedures, and questions for the interviews. The database contained a tracking of procedures to alleviate bias and add validity to the study design (Yin, 2014). A file devoted to each participant contained recordings from the interviews, agendas from the meetings, interviews minutes, and location of the interviews.

After the evaluation of the data in the NVivo software, I carried out an extra broad analysis of the data to discover ideas and connections (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015). During the process of coding and labeling a qualitative study, themes

emerge since a researcher needs to describe the sentences, expressions, and passages obtained through the course of the interview and organize them so that commonalities and themes along with the data can be recognized (Dasgupta, 2015). NVivo was also appropriate to code and group qualitative information (Zamawe, 2015).

The development of a qualitative database assisted with creating and organizing files for the interview data. A researcher's field journal documented reflections related to the study and assumptions, ideas, and other relevant information. Study findings included a presentation of the ideas and assumptions from the journal. The ideas helped to demonstrate efforts to control bias. Furthermore, the journal demonstrated how these values influenced the conduct and conclusions of the study (Merriam, 2014).

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

To ensure credibility, I provided details of the purpose of the study to the participants and answered any questions the participants had about the study. All participants answered the same set of interview questions. Triangulation of different data sources serves an essential purpose in-case study by enhancing clarity in the answers advanced by participants. Therefore, the use of triangulation helped to mitigate researcher bias (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). Also, transcript review and acknowledging biases, along with constant reflection, ensure sufficient depth and significance of data collection and analysis (Wegener, 2014).

In this research, data saturation was related to the difficulty of locating the sample and the ability to locate repetition with the data during interviews with leaders in different

Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia (Morse, 2015). Qualitative researchers, while planning a study, examining outcomes, and assessing the standard of the study, must be concerned with credibility and trustworthiness (Patton, 2015). If the questions of trustworthiness and credibility are intended to separate good from bad studies, then assessing and enhancing trustworthiness and credibility was significant to the accomplishment of this study.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to whether the findings of a study apply to other situations (Merriam, 2014). To ensure transferability, qualitative researchers create rich, detailed, and thick descriptions in context so that future researchers can make comparisons and judgments concerning similarity and transferability. The goal of the qualitative researcher is descriptive adequacy. The researcher must have detail in the descriptions of the setting and participants to help the reader determine transferability (Ary et al., 2014).

To ensure that this study achieved transferability, I generated thorough descriptions of the information along with a detailed discussion of the methods of data analysis. I described the framework of the research, including the location, date, and times of the interviews, the locations (state and country) of the Pentecostal churches, and the assumptions and limitations, that impacted this research.

### **Dependability**

Dependability occurs when a different researcher can pursue the perceptions of the current researcher (Shaw, 2013). Dependability concerns whether the results of a study are trustworthy. In qualitative research, some variability occurs because of the

contexts of studies differ (Ary et al., 2014). Researchers may use several methods to ensure dependability. In this study, I utilized data triangulation to help ensure dependability. For example, the agreement between the interview data and observational data indicated dependability in the findings of the study (Ary et al., 2014). I employed the code-recode strategy, wherein I first coded the initial transcript. After a few days have passed, I will recode the same data. Then I compared the two lists of codes to see if the results are consistent; consistency indicates dependability.

Another measure to ensure dependability is to explain the critical situations that occurred throughout the interview procedures and report the impact these situations had on the study. However, apart from a delay in getting a response back from some of the participants after e-mailing or hand delivering the original letter of invitation to participate, no unexpected situations occurred during the collection of data. Finally, the dissertation committee chair and committee members examined this study to guarantee the accuracy of the data analysis and ensure no exclusion or modification of any results.

### **Confirmability**

In qualitative research, confirmability indicates the researcher's objectivity and the extent to which the research is free from bias in the interpretation of results and procedures (Ary et al., 2014). I used three approaches to achieve confirmability: the audit trail, corroboration, and control of bias. I used reflexivity and reflected critically on myself as a researcher, the human as an instrument (Merriam, 2014). Humans, by nature, have a bias or a preconceived idea of how something should function. Researchers may have certain expectations or ideas of a phenomenon, and to combat this problem, the

researchers must address their biases. Researchers must explain their biases, ideas, and assumptions concerning the research (Merriam, 2014).

Further, I addressed any concerns the participants express about this study, which strengthened its impartiality. I checked for conflicting data (discrepant cases) that cast the research results into question. Finally, I generated an audit trail, which tracked and described the decisions I made starting from the beginning of this research study through the reporting of the results.

### **Reliability**

During a qualitative case study research, the idea of reliability is to obtain reliable findings that can be transferable (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The researcher should apply research tools to generate data that stays firm during the research (Allison, Hilton, O'Sullivan, Owen, & Rothwell, 2016). In other words, transferability depends on the decision of the person who reads the results (Allison et al., 2016). Efforts to achieve reliability in this research study included various strategies, including methodical triangulation, transcript review, and contributions and comments from individuals who participated in the research.

In this research study, I performed methodical triangulation between the data from semi-structured interviews and the records related to church organizations. Methodical triangulation is the use of multiple data sources to ensure the compilation of all-inclusive data to answer the research questions (Modell, 2015). Triangulation helped me to discover and discuss patterns in leadership behavior, leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of these styles influences the growth of

church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

Employing methodical triangulation while performing case study research may strengthen data analysis due to careful comparison in the collection of information (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Also, a transcript review was employed following the interviews during this research. Participants were encouraged to review the transcript of their responses to ensure the correctness of the information. Communication was made with the participants during the research process to present a clear picture and aid in the data examination process. The benefits of transcript review derive from the prospect of participants' verifying the importance of the interview process and the correctness of the transcript during the research study (Roig-Tierno et al., 2015).

Audio recording and documented statements were employed based on the participants' willingness to reread the interview information to validate accuracy. NVivo software reinforced the accuracy of the interviewing and audio recording processes (Brandão, 2015). Therefore, to maintain reliability and validity, I followed specific policies and procedures when conducting interviews and generating audio recordings.

### **Validity**

The validity of data helps ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the information (White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012). Construct validity is the legitimacy of the thoughts and the connection between the study theory and the study sizes (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, Kukenberger, Donsbach, & Allier, 2015). Construct validity involves the explanation of information (Mathieu et al., 2015). In an exploratory case study design,

the saturation of information derives from data provided by individuals who have sufficiently encountered an understanding to answer to the subject of the study (Morse, 2015b). The sample for this research permitted a possible option for replication and significance of the results (Yin, 2014).

Furthermore, the use of methodical triangulation as the verification of numerous data resources guaranteed the collection of comprehensive information to respond to the study problems (Modell, 2015). The exercise of methodical triangulation while performing case study research enhanced data analysis due to careful comparison in the collection of information (Noble & Smith, 2015). Achievement of trustworthiness and credibility together contribute to the validity of findings.

### **Ethical Procedures**

In addition to working to achieve trustworthiness, I observed the ethical conduct of this study. Before beginning the study, I provided a written description of the study's purpose, research design, methodology, participants' involvement, the consent process, risks, and benefits. After submitting the required information to the Institutional Review Board and obtaining approval, I proceeded to gather data, attended to ethical matters during the research, ensured the research displayed truthfulness and maintained a standard for an excellent study procedure (Kornbluh, 2015). Adherence to ethical ideas ensured credibility and protected participants during the research procedures (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). The research included an arrangement process to cover the possibility that participants might pull out of the study and yet allowed me to preserve information and generate a list of conformity records.

Preliminary communication with leaders in churches included an official letter to invite them to partake in the research study. The letter described the research purpose and provided the information required for setting up the framework of the research. Interested parties received an e-mail or a letter with the consent form. I reiterated the importance of returning the consent form promptly. I asked the participants to e-mail their consent forms if they had access to a computer; if not, I collected the forms in person. Also, I ensured that leaders had my contact information to address their involvement and aspects of the research.

As a form of member checking I sent each participant a summary of their responses at the end of the interview. This summary included a review of the interview records with the different participants to clarify their meaning and the interview discussion recorded in NVivo software. NVivo is a computer-aided qualitative information analysis software that improved the process of coding and kept time during the arrangement of information (Brandão, 2015). The research embodied the ethical principles set by Walden University and abided by *The Belmont Report's* procedures to preserve ethical standards all through the research (E. E. Anderson et al., 2012).

The consent form conveyed that leaders' participation was optional, personal, and involved no cost. The leaders participating in the research study had the right to withdraw at any time without notifying me. I was the only person to have absolute control over the information, which remains secured in a locked file cabinet. The software and hardware information will be stored on a computer with password security. The leaders who participated in the research received code numbers, which will serve as their pseudonyms



to protect their identities during the research process. The information will be safely stored on an Excel spreadsheet so that I may trace the leaders who participated via the numbers allocated to them, and through approved consent forms, e-mails, contact details, and the scheduled times set for the interviews. All records will be destroyed and erased five years after completion of the research.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles and how the implementation of those styles influences the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The qualitative research approach offered an all-inclusive structure for a more comprehensive exploration of complex issues related to human behavior, human perception, and lived experience (Khan, 2014; Schwandt, 2015). Also, this study contributed to the body of scholarly knowledge on the leadership styles of church leaders and the extent to which they influence membership growth. A single interview protocol consisting of semistructured, face-to-face questions was used to collect data from church leaders.

The results of this research may influence social change by adding to the knowledge of church leaders who function as leadership mentors and believers within their church environment. Findings may enhance leaders' understanding of how their leadership styles influence church growth, and they may be able to incorporate specific leadership techniques to increase membership and participation in their church communities. Chapter 4 includes the findings of this research study, a description of the

research setting, and the demographics of the leaders who participated in the research. I will explain the procedures to determine dependability, transferability, and confirmability. The findings of this study will be based on the responses to the research questions.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore four leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, used by church leaders (pastors, deacons, and ministers) and the influence of these styles on the growth of church membership. The following overarching research question guided this study: What are church leaders' perceptions of their leadership styles, and how does the implementation of these styles influence the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia? The impact of positive social change on the church leaders within the communities can help to motivate and raise awareness of the leadership styles of leaders and the care and services they provide to individuals within the church environment.

A purposive sample of 40 leaders from four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, participated in semistructured interviews, which lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and five of these participants contributed to one focus group interview. All 40 participants provided detailed answers to open-ended interview questions. Data analysis included inspecting the findings of the interviews together with the data derived from church files, policies, and procedures manual, and quarterly reports from the four Pentecostal churches. The interview responses from all the participants, the responses from the focus group interview meeting, and the document review formed the basis for the data analysis process and the conclusions of this research study.

Chapter 4 focuses on the research setting, participant demographics, and data collection process. Also, this chapter features explanations of the data analysis process and evidence of the trustworthiness of the findings of this qualitative research. Finally, the chapter presents the findings of this research, a summary, and a transition to Chapter 5 of this study.

### **Research Setting**

Following approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (#07-23-18-0367819), recruitment of participants for this research began. I sent invitation letters (Appendix A) to prospective participants, and 40 participants volunteered to participate. The church leaders and members of the congregation who participated in this research study served in various Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia. The sample consisted of 40 participants, including 10 pastors, 10 deacons, 10 ministers, and 10 members of the congregations who had indicated their willingness and the church's cooperation to take part in the research by signing a letter of consent.

The focus group interview group consisted of five of the church leaders and members who participated in the study. To collect data via document review, I reviewed church files, church policies and procedures manual, guidelines for church membership, files for the social mission of the church, and quarterly reports on the management of the church. To prepare for the individual face-to-face interviews for this study, each of the participants picked a location that was suitable for them. Eventually, all the interviews took place at the participants' church offices. The focus group interview also took place in one of the participating church's offices, a location all the participants approved.

All participants were familiar with the interview spaces/rooms that they chose, and as a result, they could communicate easily with minimum encouragement. I established rapport and an atmosphere of trust with participants by thanking them for deciding to take part in the study and making clear to every participant that participation in the study was noncompulsory and could be terminated at any time. All participants answered the qualifying questions and confirmed they understood the purpose of the study. This transparency led to their readiness to respond to the research questions. No individual/private or organizational limitations impacted their participation.

### **Demographics**

The participants in this research were all church leaders and members of the various Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. These participants met the inclusion criteria described in Chapter 3 and with permission from Walden's IRB and all four churches, recruitment efforts began with phone calls and e-mails to administrators and senior pastors at the prospective churches within the research area. The prospective participants received by phone or e-mail an invitation to participate in a doctoral study. Those who met the inclusion criteria and expressed willingness to participate signed the statement of informed consent and arranged a time and place for their interview. Face-to-face data collection procedures included semistructured face-to-face individual interviews with 40 participants and one focus group interview meeting with five participants.

Alphanumeric participant codes (P1, P2, P3, . . . P40) issued to all the individuals in place of their real names ensured confidentiality and protected the privacy of

participants. Each participant signed an informed consent form and provided detailed answers to the interview questions. The sample included 20 men and 20 women, and all the participants were active leaders and members of five years or longer in their Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Table 1 presents demographic information about the participants, including gender, years of experience in their position in the church, what position they held, and which church (coded C1, C2, C3, C4) they attended. The participants' years of experience ranged from 4 to 10 years.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this study derived from one-on-one semistructured interviews, one focus group, and review of documents from the churches. Pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of the congregations contributed to this exploratory case study. A total of 40 people took part in the individual face-to-face interviews, including 10 pastors, 10 deacons, 10 ministers, and 10 members of the congregation. Five of those participants who were leaders and members of the congregation from the four Pentecostal churches also agreed to participate in the focus group. The individual interviews and the focus group interview took place at the participants' church offices.

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Participant No.	Gender*	Years of Experience	Position	Church
1	F	5	Member of Congregation	C1
2	M	10	Pastor	C2
3	F	4	Minister	C3
4	F	5	Minister	C1
5	M	5	Minister	C4
6	F	10	Minister	C2
7	M	5	Deacon	C1
8	M	8	Pastor	C2
9	F	6	Member of Congregation	C3
10	M	6	Deacon	C4
11	F	8	Member of Congregation	C3
12	F	5	Member of Congregation	C4
13	M	6	Deacon	C1
14	F	6	Minister	C2
15	M	9	Pastor	C3
16	M	4	Minister	C4
17	M	5	Minister	C1
18	M	8	Pastor	C1
19	F	5	Member of Congregation	C2
20	M	8	Pastor	C1
21	M	4	Member of Congregation	C3
22	M	10	Pastor	C4
23	F	5	Deacon	C2
24	M	6	Minister	C3
25	F	5	Member of Congregation	C4
26	M	10	Pastor	C3
27	M	5	Member of Congregation	C2
28	M	9	Pastor	C4
29	M	8	Pastor	C2
30	M	9	Member of Congregation	C3
31	F	7	Member of Congregation	C4
32	M	6	Deacon	C1
33	F	7	Deacon	C3
34	M	8	Deacon	C1
35	F	6	Deacon	C1
36	F	6	Pastor	C2
37	F	6	Deacon	C2
38	F	7	Deacon	C4
39	F	8	Minister	C2
40	F	9	Minister	C4

*Note.* Gender: M = male, F = female.

With the letter of permission from the head pastors of the churches and the IRB approval, I contacted the members of the different Pentecostal churches within the geographical research area. Prospective participants received letters of invitation during the week of July 24, 2018; the letters described the research and invited them to participate in the study. Each person who expressed interest in the study read and signed the consent form before scheduling the interview. Alphanumeric codes prevented identification of the participants after they confirmed their willingness to participate in the interview process. The codes served to distinguish each participant and to safeguard their privacy. A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was useful to track of the information related to participants including their names, e-mail addresses, assigned codes, and phone numbers for easy retrieval. That spreadsheet was secured on a password-protected personal laptop computer, to which only I have access.

Apart from a delay of three to four days in getting a response back from some of the participants after e-mailing or hand delivering the original letter of invitation to the participants, no unexpected situations occurred during the collection of data. The interviews took place during August, September, October, November, and December in quiet and private offices at the churches where the participants were members. The participants did not receive the questions before the interviews; this procedure encouraged the participants to communicate spontaneously and share their understanding and their experience with no planning. During the process of collecting data, I stayed flexible to adjust to the schedules of participants who needed to change the time of their planned interviews for work-related or private reasons. The face-to-face interviews lasted



30 to 45 minutes but no more than an hour, and all interviews were audio recorded using a mini tape recorder and Samsung 9 voice recorder with the consent of the participants.

Next, the focus group interview was conducted after sending invitation letters to church leaders, pastors, deacons, ministers, and members of the congregations, and those who agreed to participate in the focus group signed consent forms. The focus group interview took place during the same period as the face-to-face interviews on a date and time the participants approved. Five leaders and members of the congregation who had participated in the individual face-to-face interviews also participated in the focus group discussion, which lasted 35 minutes. The focus group discussion took place in the conference room of one of the participating churches, and participants granted permission for audio recording of the meeting. The focus group participants answered a set of open-ended questions, the interactive discussion was lively, and the group produced a considerable amount of information.

The process of document review took place in private offices at the four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia, and the material reviewed included vision statements, pertinent features of the handbook, and revisions of significant parts of the handbooks and logbook. The process of document review lasted for a week and yielded relevant information about church membership and policies.

The focal point of the interviews was the expressions of each participant. It was crucial that I honestly pay attention to the participants and not let my personal feelings show. The use of prewritten questions (Appendix C) assisted in keeping the focus on the substance of the participants' answers, and not on my personal feelings on the research

topic. The data collection followed the process as outlined in Chapter 3 without any changes. No unexpected situations occurred during data collection of data, and no distractions interrupted the interviews.

The individual interviews and focus group interviews were recorded using a mini tape recorder and Samsung 9 voice recorder, and each interview and focus group discussion were transcribed into a Word document to produce a full transcript for analysis. I sent the transcripts to each participant via e-mail or by hand for transcript review. All the participants approved the information and did not request any changes.

All data obtained during this study will be kept in a fireproof and waterproof cabinet in my home office safe for five years after the completion of the study. The data includes electronic files, interview transcripts, recorded interviews, and information from the document review. The data is saved on a password-protected flash drive in a fireproof and waterproof cabinet. The next stage of the study was the analysis of the information gathered during the data collection process.

### **Data Analysis**

The data for this study included semistructured interviews, a focus group interview discussion, document review, and field notes. Throughout the interview process, field notes constituted a record of my observations. After verbatim transcription of all interviews, participants received a copy labeled with their identification code. Table 2 displays details about the transcripts, indicating the number of participants, types of participants, length of the interviews, number of pages in the transcripts, and location and type of interview.

Table 2

*Detailed Descriptions of Participant Transcriptions*

List of Participants	Type of Leader	Length of Interview in Minutes	No. of Pages*	Location of Interview	Type of Interview
1	Pastor	40	15	Church	Face-to-face
2	Pastor	35	12	Church	Face-to-face
3	Pastor	40	14	Church	Face-to-face
4	Pastor	45	15	Church	Face-to-face
5	Pastor	40	13	Church	Face-to-face
6	Pastor	35	12	Church	Face-to-face
7	Pastor	35	12	Church	Face-to-face
8	Pastor	40	13	Church	Face-to-face
9	Pastor	35	12	Church	Face-to-face
10	Pastor	30	11	Church	Face-to-face
11	Deacon	40	13	Church	Face-to-face
12	Deacon	45	13	Church	Face-to-face
13	Deacon	40	12	Church	Face-to-face
14	Deacon	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
15	Deacon	30	10	Church	Face-to-face
16	Deacon	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
17	Deacon	35	10	Church	Face-to-face
18	Deacon	30	10	Church	Face-to-face
19	Deacon	30	11	Church	Face-to-face
20	Deacon	35	12	Church	Face-to-face
21	Minister	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
22	Minister	30	10	Church	Face-to-face
23	Minister	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
24	Minister	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
25	Minister	30	10	Church	Face-to-face
26	Minister	30	9	Church	Face-to-face
27	Minister	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
28	Minister	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
29	Minister	30	10	Church	Face-to-face
30	Minister	30	10	Church	Face-to-face
31	Member of Congregation	35	12	Church	Face-to-face
32	Member of Congregation	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
33	Member of Congregation	35	10	Church	Face-to-face
34	Member of Congregation	35	10	Church	Face-to-face
35	Member of Congregation	35	11	Church	Face-to-face
36	Member of Congregation	30	9	Church	Face-to-face
37	Member of Congregation	35	10	Church	Face-to-face
38	Member of Congregation	30	10	Church	Face-to-face
39	Member of Congregation	30	11	Church	Face-to-face
40	Member of Congregation	30	10	Church	Face-to-face

*Note.* \*All transcript pages were double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The data analysis process for this study consisted of the five phases recommended by Yin (2014): information collecting, information dismantling, information gathering, information clarification, and formulating conclusions and results. During information collecting, researchers become familiar with the transcripts and designated codes. The second stage was information dismantling to get the initial codes from the answers. The third step was information gathering for themes. The fourth step of information clarification involved recognizing clusters to establish common themes. The final stage was selection of the most frequently mentioned themes.

Importing the transcribed interview data into the NVivo 12 Pro software from the Word documents provided an orderly collection of data organized into groups and themes. Data processing included the following subsequent analyses: (a) generated related codes and nodes for every interview question, (b) extracted important terms or expressions from every participants' interview responses and allocated them to suitable nodes, (c) examined every node for the important terms and expressions to form emergent themes, (d) generated a word cloud, (e) estimated the number of participants who had mentioned the themes, (f) generated tables to display the number of participants who mentioned the exact themes, and (g) generated tables to display the themes and subthemes.

Thematic data analysis is a technique for condensing the information from numerous bases and then categorizing the information into themes and ideas, connecting information from different bases, and finishing by identifying significant information and

information that might remain valuable for forthcoming study (Saldaña, 2013). The thematic coding process consisted of an evaluation of data, including interviews, focus group discussion, and document review. Thematic coding involves examining the transcripts for themes and codes, recording every theme that appears, entering data in the qualitative data analysis software, and examining themes in different ways, such as idea planning for themes and explaining the findings (Boston College, 2016). Coding yielded recognizable patterns that could be assembled into categories or classifications to establish emerging themes.

As recommended by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), continuous similarity analysis was the next step. This examination of the whole collection of information and breaking the information into manageable-sized components supported the development of subsets of information. The third step was color coding every piece of data, and finally, sorting the similar pieces of information by grouping them under previously established codes. Codes emerged from the conceptual framework and the interview transcripts, and these codes emerged into themes that reflected the data.

The next step was to note various characteristics and mark them using highlighters for further analysis. The occurrence of themes and categories assisted in the clarification of the information (Maxwell, 2013). The answers from each of the participants were linked to the research questions to establish uniformity in viewpoint, which reinforced the significance of the answers. While concentrating on the information that was relevant to the research questions, it was simple to efficiently reach conclusions

and capture the participants' perceptions concerning leadership styles and church growth within the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

Throughout the process of collecting information, the participants were cooperative and willing to discuss the successes and the problems they experienced within the Pentecostal churches. Interviews continued as planned even when the answers were repetitions or combinations of the previous descriptions of problems or challenges and the successes of the leaders in the Pentecostal churches. During the process of collecting and analyzing the information, the individual participants' responses appeared to be largely similar. Nonetheless, data collection proceeded until 37 sets of information had been assessed, despite the temptation to end the analysis process because of data saturation. However, analysis included each of the answers from the 40 participants and one focus group to ensure the inclusion of rich detail and achievement of data saturation.

Ultimately, analysis revealed 12 emerging themes and two subthemes; the 12 themes were ideal leadership styles, church leadership management, church leadership motivation, leadership styles that ensure church growth, effective leadership communication, leadership practices, developing leaders, perception of leadership, church attendance growth and decline rate, leader's leadership role, church administrator's handbook, vision and mission statement. The two subthemes were moral standards and planning and organization. Table 3 displays a summary of the 12 emergent themes and two subthemes that derived from individual interviews, a focus group meeting, and document review from four churches (C1, C2, C3, C4).

Table 3

*Summary of Data from Semistructured Interviews, Focus Group, and Document Review*

Codes	Themes and Subthemes	No. of Occurrences	Data Source	% of Occurrences
Leaders with good character are examples for members and other leaders to follow.	Ideal church leadership styles Subtheme: Moral standards	25	Semistructured interviews	100%
Strategic planning is lacking in the management of the church.	Church leadership management Subtheme: Planning and organization	16	Semistructured interviews	85%
Prayer, devotion, and sermon for church service.	Church leadership motivation	25	Semistructured interviews	100%
Important for leaders to have friendly and truthful communication with the congregation.	Leadership that ensures church growth	23	Semistructured interviews	92%
The style of leadership employed by a church leader is the main reason behind the growth of churches.	Effective leadership communication	17	Semistructured interviews	68%
Pastors and church leaders should motivate individuals in the church.	Leadership practices	16	Semistructured interviews	64%
Pastors and leaders must be committed to leadership development and to develop others.	Developing leaders	25	Semistructured interviews	100%
Pastors and leaders are not perfect; they have flaws, and still, they have to grow and develop to be good leaders.	Perceptions of leadership	25	Semistructured interviews	100%

Table 3

*Summary of Data from Semistructured Interviews, Focus Group, and Document Review (continued)*

Codes	Themes	No. of Occurrences	Data Source	% of Occurrences
The church is about people; the church is not just a building, and pastors' and leaders' techniques will result in an increase or decline of church attendance.	Church attendance growth and decline rates.	5	Focus group	100%
The most important roles of pastors and leaders are to teach the Bible, encourage members to pay offerings.	Leaders' roles	5	Focus group	100%
The leaders and members receive training to improve their leadership skills and growth to be effective church leaders.	Church administrator's handbook.	5	Document review	100%
The information shows details of policies and strategies of the church's vision and implementation and the church's mission as a nonprofit establishment.	Vision and mission statement	5	Document review	100%



### **Discrepant Cases**

Data analysis also included remaining alert for the presence of discrepant cases. Glaser and Laudel (2013) observed that a discrepant case is an information that differs significantly from the other viewpoints on the event under analysis. After verifying the frequency of the words and expressions with the hand-coding evaluation and transferring all the information transferred to NVivo 12 Pro software for another stage of reducing the frequency of the word used by all the participants, no discrepant cases were evident. Because discrepant cases did not exist, it was necessary to code only the themes that contributed to answering the research questions.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

Sources of data in this study were interviews, a focus group, and document review, and these three separate and connected components determined the basis for the qualitative study (Patton, 2014). I employed careful procedures for coordinating the research by performing 40 individual interviews, one focus group discussion, document review, and follow-up requests for explanations of certain issues with interviewees to make sure that I understood their answers. The individual participants received the interview transcripts to review and verify that the information was an accurate representation of the interview meeting. I worked to remain impartial and neutral throughout information gathering, analysis, and clarification as recommended by Kardish et al. (2015). This procedure reinforced the accuracy of the study's themes and findings.

**Transferability**

Transferability is the degree to which the results of a research study can be employed in a related setting (Cope, 2014). Therefore, to achieve transferability in this research, I solicited a fruitful, broad account of information by asking open-ended questions during semistructured interviews (Patton, 2015). This approach ensured that the information I gathered held considerable meaning for readers, and individuals might recognize a link among the study setting and subject matter. The analysis may lead to further knowledge or new perceptions of the phenomenon (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014). I included criteria for participants who provided context to this research to add strength to transferability.

**Dependability**

For a research study to be dependable, the results must be reliable, and future researchers must be able to replicate the study in comparable situations (Cope, 2014). Triangulation of data from numerous sources (interviews, focus group, and document review) confirmed the outcomes and supported dependability of this research. The information analysis software NVivo preserved a review track within the query devices function, and I applied the device twice to analyze the nodes during coding, confirming the legitimacy of those codes and nodes (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013).

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is the truthfulness of the information, the degree to which a researcher reveals that the study results derived from answers of individuals who participated in the study and did not result from the biases or concerns of the researcher

(Houghton et al., 2013). Each participant reviewed a copy of the interview transcripts to confirm the information before the process of analyzing the information began. I employed an audit trail and reflexivity to maximize confirmability. I triangulated the findings by matching the hand-coded findings with the NVivo Pro software information analysis to boost the qualitative information trustworthiness.

### **Study Results**

The foundation of this analysis was the two research questions:

RQ1. What are the leadership styles commonly employed by church leaders to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia? and

RQ2. What is the church leaders' (pastors, deacons, and ministers) knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia?

The following sections present a discussion of the results from each of the data sources, along with the explanations of how they connected to the two main research questions. Examples and quotations from participants' responses enhance and provide depth to the portrayal of how leadership styles impact church growth in the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Table 4 summarizes the alignment of the data sources with the emergent themes and subthemes and the research questions.

Table 4

*Alignment of Data Sources, Themes, and Research Questions*

Interviews	Data Sources		Themes and Subthemes	Research Question
	Focus Group	Document Review		
X			1. Ideal church leadership styles Subtheme: Moral standards	1
X			2. Church leadership management Subtheme: Planning and organization	1
X			3. Leadership motivation	1
X			4. Leadership styles to ensure church growth	1
X			5. Effective communication	2
X			6. Leadership practices	2
X			7. Developing leaders	2
X			8. Perceptions of leadership	2
	X		9. Church attendance growth and decline	1
	X		10. Leaders' leadership roles	2
		X	11. Church administrator's handbook	1
		X	12. Vision and mission statements	2

## Results from Interviews

Research Question 1 was What are the leadership styles commonly employed by church leaders to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia?

**Theme 1: Ideal church leadership styles.** The first theme appeared from the interview data and contributed to answering RQ1 because the responses identified the leadership styles the participants perceived to be influential in the churches. The participants remained extremely keen on their understanding of an ideal leadership style within the Pentecostal church. For instance, all the participants agreed that if a leader decides to function by immoral standards, their behavior will damage the church and the body of Christ. Individuals do sometimes criticize the activities of leaders who decide to employ untruthfulness, try to put down others, or seek enrichment at the cost of the underprivileged (C. E. Johnson, 2017). Also, all the participants perceived servant leadership and transformational leadership as the ideal types of leadership for the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

The concept of servant leadership requires servant leaders to develop other servant leaders. P6, P14, and P39, ministers from C2, preferred servant leadership as the ideal leadership style for the Pentecostal churches and mentioned that the pastor from C2, who is a servant leader, inspires the growth of servant leadership, as proposed by Greenleaf (1977).

P33, P34, P35, and P38, deacons from C3, C1, C1, and C4 respectively, shared that they perceived transformational leaders as the ones who can resolve the root of the

problem in the Pentecostal churches and transform the beliefs that are causing the problem. Leaders who have the Christ personality or focus on the teachings of Christ can control and prevent self-centered behaviors and bad practices and show genuine authority (Mabey, Conroy, Blakeley, & Marco, 2016).

All the participants described ideal leadership as a leader who positions him or herself at the forefront of change and develops assistants, teammates, and colleagues to adopt and carry out the collective vision of the church. These followers take on the mutual obligation to maintain and develop solutions that support the collective vision. P22 from C4 added, “Leaders in the Pentecostal churches should encourage and influence their members to perform at their best potential and describe the focus and vision for the church.” A good leader at no point in time should lack truthfulness in the private and proficient areas of leadership (Mabey et al., 2016).

All the members of the congregation from the churches commented that for the church to experience growth, the ideal leaders must be followers of Jesus Christ, and effective prayer must be a way of communicating with God. Members noted further that their understanding of an ideal leader is a person who attends cautiously to the opinions of the followers, an easy-going, kind person who is always ready to communicate openly with others.

**Subtheme: Moral standards.** Moral leadership is a shared practice that includes individual moral conduct and moral inspiration within the church and the surrounding neighborhood (Johnson, 2017). P2, P8, P29, and P26, pastors from C2, expressed that leaders within the church must have dignity and respect, provide a good example for the

members, and recognize the scriptures as authority for management. All the participants expressed the significance of pastors and leaders behaving morally at all times whether in their professional or private capacity. Individuals with good morals are perceived as an influential force in making change and development to the church establishment (Ramalepe, 2016).

P17 and P4, ministers from C1, mentioned that leaders with good moral quality are seen as upholding the high moral guidelines required by the Pentecostal church. P4, from C1, explained, “Leaders who decide to manage others without following the set principles of the church may result in membership decline and affect the growth of the church.” P10 and P38, deacons from C4, noted that any leader who does not have individuals following them is not going to be referred to as a leader with good moral leadership skills. They also stressed that people who are called leaders, in their view, would be leaders with the right attitude who establish a vision for the members and encourage them to follow.

**Theme 2: Church leadership management.** Theme 2, the need for effective planning by the church leadership management, also helped answer RQ1. Leaders in Pentecostal churches besides performing praise and worship put forward efforts of shaping and managing the church surroundings of their congregation to ally with the main standards and policies of the Pentecostal church. Some participants agreed that the church surrounding and its management is an effective enhancement of successful church growth.

P1, P9, P11, and P12, members of congregations from C1, C3, C3, and C4, shared the view that managing the church involves a special combination of spiritual capability and business experience to be successful and competent in supporting the demands of members, disciples, community sponsors, and the church; therefore, management training is an essential segment of the formation of the church. Generally, in religious denominations like the Pentecostal churches, pastors are successful business authorities dealing with monetary records, managing the church activities, running neighborhood programs, recruiting workers, and supervising individuals volunteers, and members in ongoing training (Masenya & Boooyse, 2016). All the members of congregations emphasized that the Pentecostal church is structured in such a way that the senior pastor or leaders make all the decision with the belief that they have the spiritual experience and direction from the holy spirit. Therefore, all the members have to follow the decisions made by the senior pastors and the other leaders.

All the participants mentioned that the church should have a system of management that the church leaders follow to help with the execution of changes, reorganization, and helpful activities for the growth of the church and its neighborhood. P14, a minister from C2, stated, "Every leader must be organized, or they will not succeed." P2, P8, and P28, pastors from C2, C3, and C4, explained that their calling as a pastor is to build a relationship with members, give them the Christ love, the agape love, the unconditional love. The pastors expressed their belief that this loving relationship is all the members are seeking. Orwig and Orwig (1998) claimed that management should



change and describe particular objectives regarding standard management for the church organization.

All the participants established the need for effective and quality training in management before been selected or ordained as leaders. They also asserted that leaders are developed spiritually to help with the management of the church. Finally, most of the participants supported leadership management training in the church to improve the church's ability to meet its needs.

**Subtheme: Planning and organization.** Leaders have been characterized as the main connection to active signs of change within an establishment and the main relationship to that change (Guamba, 2017). Planning is the orderly creation of ideas and ambitions required to produce accomplishments within an establishment (Guamba, 2017). All the participants expressed that planning strategically helps the leader carry out changes effectively, execute changes, and rearrange and implement creative procedures to help the growth of the church and its community. P40, a minister from C4 said,

Every leader must have a strategic plan; otherwise they are going to fall short of their members' expectations. . . . When a leader possesses a strategic plan, it gives them the confidence to work with other leaders and members to effect a successful change within the church.

P23 and P37, deacons from C2, mentioned that all planning by leaders must be communicated to other leaders and members because failure to do so may lead to confusion inside and outside the church. The first duty for a church leader should be to uphold a religious affiliation with God and a professional association with members

(Edmondson, 2015). P36, a pastor from C2, and P37, a deacon from C2, mentioned that for a church to grow effectively as nonprofit establishment, the leadership has to offer the message, preach and teach the gospel, organize members to serve, and embrace everyone inside and outside the church.

**Theme 3: Church leadership motivation.** The third theme, which emerged from the interview data, also supported RQ1. P9, P11, P21, and P30, all members of the congregation from C3, expressed that the pastor and church leaders are very good at motivating and encouraging individuals in the church to have great plans to achieve their goals. Motivational leadership is the conduct that inspires individuals to work toward a common objective and the act or conduct that lead to transformation within a group (Fehr, Yam, & Dang, 2015)

P7, P13, P32, P34, and P35, all deacons from C1, shared their perceptions of their pastor as a transformational leader and described they had felt motivated by his creative incentives to increase membership. According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders can motivate members to function at their finest. Bass suggested that transformational leaders must express a transparent idea, connect beliefs to the members, and demonstrate promise for achieving the goals. P4, a minister from C1, stated, “I am very motivated by the church senior pastor as a transformational leader as he is very connected to every member of the church to work towards evangelism and the growth of the church.” P4 went on to say that the leaders in the church are motivated towards creating new initiatives in church development.

P15 and P18, pastors from church C3 and C1, commented that expansion and connection with the leaders and the individuals who attend church hold potential for enhancing church growth, but these goals receive little attention in the church. P15 further stated that some pastors do not connect in any significant way with their congregations. This lack of motivational techniques in developing relationships with individuals in the church may affect the growth of the church. Successful policies and motivational help from leaders and members within the church are vital in creating positive results in the growth and achievement of the church as a nonprofit organization (Dinh et al., 2014; Zogjani & Raci, 2015).

**Theme 4: Leadership styles that ensure church growth.** The fourth theme that emerged from the interview information further contributed to answering RQ1 because members perceived an effective leadership style as necessary for church growth. All the pastors mentioned that their leadership styles fluctuated, as they sometimes needed to display characteristics of a servant, transformational, or transactional leader, depending on the needs of the members and the church congregation. The servant leadership style parallels Jesus's form of leadership style, wherein several individuals are keen on being part of the body that decides how the church should progress (Greenleaf, 1977).

All the pastors also emphasized that as servant leaders, they serve according to the principles of the Bible. They further explained that Jesus came as a servant, and if they were not servant leaders, they would not be able to serve the congregation. Servant leaders can assist their members to follow the leadership styles of their leaders, particularly where the needs of others are primary (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser,

2014). Therefore, each Pentecostal church, irrespective of its size, needs to establish the leadership style that is best suited for managing the church. The success of the Pentecostal churches has to be credited to some extent to the leaders' leadership styles inside and outside the church.

According to P1, P19, and P21, members of the congregation from C1, C2, and C3, transformational leaders enable members to engage with their congregations, know their followers, and understand their followers' experiences. P14, a deacon from C2, noted that when a leader employs a transformational leadership style, people can look at him or her and say, "This is an example of the type of leader to follow." With the transformational leadership style, leaders can use lenient control of inspiring the vision and message to accomplish goals for change, to improve and convert members' opinions, and to cause the beliefs of the organization to adhere to the aims and purposes of the leader (Nye, 2014). All the ministers expressed their views that the transformational leadership style is extremely new and may induce individuals to attempt a new venture to accomplish new objectives. Even though transformational and servant leadership styles are dissimilar in some ways, both models include the idea of inspiration, belief, admiration, and reliability, developing, honesty, hazard-distribution, and assigning (Nye, 2014).

P37 and P38, deacons from C2 and C4, observed that without love, whether a leader can prophesy, speak in tongues, teach, or preach is immaterial. Without love, the church will not grow. Transactional leaders are commanding individuals who employ structural rules and regulations, procedures, control, and influence to retain command

though they may cultivate dependents by responding to their particular requests and financial requirements (Men & Stacks, 2013).

**Theme 5: Effective leadership communication.** The fifth theme that appeared from the interview information supported RQ2. What are the church leaders' (pastors, deacons, and ministers) knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia?

All the participants commented that it is important for leaders to have friendly and truthful communication with their congregation. P18, a pastor from C1, stressed that all pastors and other leaders must regularly inform their members of improvements, challenges, and recent events. P2, a pastor from C2 shared, "Leaders have to communicate daily to their church congregation, as hearsay is not good for the growth of the church." Hall and Davis (2016) argued that communication must be sufficient to establish and support private, specialized, and leadership connection. The perceptions of the power of communicating differed among the leaders' spiritual contact with personal followers. This method of communication is extremely helpful to share knowledge, creating fellowship, common security, and group development (Hall & Davis, 2016). P3, P4, P5, ministers from C3, C1, C4, all revealed their views on the significance of communicating inside and outside the church as having the potential to improve the relationship among leaders, members, and other sponsors within the church community.

The focus group members mentioned that the senior pastors and leaders communicate through e-mail to staff members daily to inform them of meetings, ongoing

ventures, and members who need care within the church. The focus group participants also pointed out that the pastors go a long way to communicate with their congregations, using various forms of technology, small groups, meetings, and conferences to remain linked with the church members and congregation.

**Theme 6: Leadership practices.** The sixth theme that appeared from the interview information also supported RQ2. All the participants agreed that prayer, devotion, and arrangement of the sermons for church services were the practice duties of the pastor. Martin and Allen (2016) maintained that leaders must have good knowledge on topics of inspiration, authority, decision making, resolving issues productively, managing disputes, spiritual understanding, managing pressure, developing groups, managing transformation, and understanding of the institution in which they work. According to P7, a deacon from C1, the senior pastor is the only one whose leadership practices determine the objectives to accomplish, and this leader commands and monitors every event and determines all programs and policies without the views or ideas of the other leaders.

All members of the congregations from all four churches emphasized that the pastors should have no business in the finances of the churches; they should appoint people to handle the financial matters. P13 from C1 also noted, “All the pastors should be doing is to preach and tell us the word, teach us about what we need to know about the word.” Also, P9 a member of C3 stated, “The church leaders should practice how to work with church members, build them up, work with just like a teacher to pupil; be patient, love, sacrifice, and the church will experience growth.”

King (2014) stated that pastors as leaders should manage the issues centered on the religious denomination and practices of the church and, the size and density of the gathering. Individuals who are members or regular worshippers must execute preparatory and secretarial tasks. The pastors must not be in a position where they control or attempt to supervise a lot of issues. Otherwise, they will breakdown (King, 2014).

**Theme 7: Developing leaders.** The seventh theme that emerged from interview responses helped answer RQ2. P19 and P 27, members of the congregation from C2, emphasized the lack of commitment of the pastor and other leaders towards leadership development and the need to develop other individuals. P19 further commented,

The pastor is always occupied with other functions and doesn't have the desire to develop himself or other leaders or members. A lot of pastors and untrained leaders have ignored getting the training required for the church to develop and grow.

All the ministers noted that the pastors need to improve in the area of developing members and leaders, encouraging and showing them what is expected of them and helping them to develop as effective leaders. The behavior, beliefs, ways, opinions, and decent personality of any individual determine good and moral leadership (Gea, 2016). Good leadership is a central feature of an effective Pentecostal church.

P23, P33, P34, P35 and P37, deacons from C2, C3, C1, C1, and C2, mentioned that even though individuals may be born with abilities that distinguish them as unique and more talented as leaders than others, they need to develop certain skills through the process of learning. On the hand, P7, a deacon from C1, also stated,

I will under no circumstances depend on the pastor to develop my leadership skills. I will develop my leadership skills through continuous biblical training, seminars, and conferences to become an effective leader in the position I serve in the church.

**Theme 8: Perception of leadership.** Theme 8 emerged from interview information and helped answer RQ2. P2, a pastor from C2, said,

I am not a perfect leader. I have flaws. I have a lot of growth still in life but those simple things, leading, doing things when others are not around, humble myself, listening, those things help to make me a good leader. Those are specific skills that I love, and I would add one last thing to that list: accepting criticism.

P8, a pastor from C3 commented,

We as leaders have to admit we are wrong, ask for forgiveness, and don't make the same mistakes over again. So, we as leaders have to be better with those we have alienated and cause a decline, apologize and try not to manipulate them, not sell them something to get back, but win them back by selling them the truth.

All the members of the congregation noted that the pastors and other leaders should lead the members regarding the church vision with desire and eagerness. P14, a minister from C2, shared the opinion that it would be better for leaders to practice a leadership style that motivates the members and others within the church regarding the values of the Bible and the focus of the church. The act of serving others might expand beyond perseverance, exercise, honest character, and religious obedience (Claar, Jackson, & TenHaken, 2014).



All the deacons noted that servant leadership style is simple and creates opportunities that enable other leaders to develop within the church. P38, a deacon from C4, said,

I have been functioning as a servant leader for quite some time now, and I have been successful in helping others grow and increase the growth in the church. The degree to which leaders might change their main aim from the association to members is unique features in categorizing leaders as transformational or servant leaders.

### **Results from the Focus Group**

The focus group included five participants who participated in the discussion that lasted 42 minutes. The focus group discussion took place in the conference room of the church, and I audio recorded it with the agreement of the participants. The questions were open-ended, the interactive discussion was lively, and the conversation produced a considerable deal of information. Two themes emerged from the focus group information: church attendance growth and decline rates, and leaders' leadership roles.

**Theme 9: Church attendance growth and decline rate.** This theme emerged from the focus group interview with five participants and pertained to RQ1. All five participants expressed that with church attendance growth and decline rate, it is the responsibilities of the leaders to plan, direct, and organize programs regularly to encourage individuals inside and outside the church to attend and become permanent members. One focus group participant, a minister from C3, stated,

The main thing I see is that the church is about people; the church is not a building. It is people. The pastor leads the church, and leaders and their direction, and their leadership technique will either led to the growth of the church membership or decline in attendance.

Also, all the focus group participants from C1 through C4 emphasized that evangelism is the key to increasing membership growth and that leaders must reach out to new individuals or first-timers who come to the church. Leaders should further follow-up with newcomers regularly after their first visit, pray for them, and counsel them on whatever they are going through, and they will come back to the church and become members, according to the forum. Lack of effective evangelism and follow-up may lead to a decline in church attendance. Many leaders in the church have been chosen to pursue the mission of membership growth within the community and disciples of the church establishment (Lee, Chen, & Lee, 2015). The focus group participants further asserted that the lack of active involvement in community work or outreach programs is a sign of a lack of growth for a church.

**Theme 10: Leaders' leadership role.** This theme derived from the focus group information and supported RQ2. All the focus group participants agreed that whether the leadership style of the pastor and other leaders is transformational, transactional, or servant does not matter. P8, a pastor from C2 said,

The most significant role of the Pentecostal pastor or leader in the church is to teach the Bible scriptures to the congregation and explain to the members about the importance of paying their tithes and offerings.

Also, all the focus group participants mentioned that leaders should teach the members of the congregation about the need to give freely for the growth and development of the church and explain that the more they give, the more they are blessed. According to King (2014), the modern congregation looks up to the senior pastor as the main leader, tutor, and holy preacher. With the usual congregation, the presence of the members is required for all occasion, engagement, or meetings.

One focus group participant stated, “The leaders of the church have to be genuine, be sincere, take the lead, and have to be an example to all because people are observing them all the time.” Phillips (2014) hinted that several leaders within the church aspire to preach or teach and not lead, whereas other leaders within the church honestly intend to manage the church establishment. The five focus group participants agreed that leaders in the church are to be the ones in front, be open, welcome new members and speak to people and if they haven’t seen them attending for a while and suddenly, they are back, let them feel loved and show your care and concern. Another focus group participant, mentioned that it is vital for pastors as leaders to make use of their leadership qualities to train, mentor, motivate, and empower other leaders and members with the biblical scriptures to help the church congregation to grow rapidly.

### **Results from Document Review**

With the permission of the senior pastors and administrators from the four Pentecostal churches, I had access to documents for review, and I was able to take notes regarding the vision statements, related features of the handbook and revised significant parts of the handbook and logbook. The process of document review lasted for a week,

and I also took notes on relevant information about my study. Two themes emerged from the data gathered during the document review.

**Theme 11: Church administrator's handbook.** The information from the church administrator's handbook supported RQ1. This document was a summary of policies, legislative actions, and established procedures intended to guide the administration of the Pentecostal church's various ministries, mainly outreach, membership, music, security, and financial. This document from the four Pentecostal churches indicated that the senior pastors support leaders and members of the congregation through various training programs to improve their leadership skills and promote their growth into effective leaders. All focus group participants mentioned that the church administrative handbook shows the defined responsibilities of board members, the pastor, and other leaders and defines how they should carry out the duties of planning, organizing, and directing leaders and members on the day-to-day running of the church. P29, a pastor from C2, said, "Leaders and members within the Pentecostal church will find that many commonly asked questions are answered in these pages."

The documents also showed that Pentecostal churches planned and sponsored meetings, courses, prayer groups, and conferences to guide leaders and members to become more effective leaders. In these ways, Pentecostal church pastors and leaders display compassion, one of the features of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970). Also, documents revealed the churches' yearly financial statements, which detailed to members how the church collected finances and all its expenditures. Melao, Maria Guia, and Amorim (2017) explained that monetary management includes preparation of the

association's budget, such as the distribution of finances to value and expenditure, and monitoring the association's accounts and balances.

**Theme 12: Vision and mission statements.** The document review also included perusal of the various vision and mission statements from the four Pentecostal churches; these documents supported RQ2. The information from the four Pentecostal churches revealed details of policies and strategies of the churches' vision and how it related to the churches' mission as nonprofit establishments. P15, the pastor from C3, stated, "Communicating the vision and mission of the church helps distribute information, bringing people together, spreading the word of God within the church community and far beyond."

Leaders who fail to comply with the rules and regulations implicit in the vision and mission of the establishment or church might cause harm or failure to the establishment (Stelmokien & Endriulaitiene, 2015). All the focus group participants remarked that for a church to succeed as a nonprofit establishment, it needs leaders of extraordinary character and skills. They further expressed the value of promoting the vision and mission of the church and the need for leaders and members to aware of the significance of building their leadership relations with individuals within the community.

The document review also included details of the minutes of church meetings, which illustrated that decision making is a collective responsibility of the pastors and other leaders. The members are also involved in some decision making, as revealed in the minutes. The plan of leadership must entail encouraging and assisting members in supporting an establishment's vision and mission of productivity and sustainability

(Asumeng, 2014). Also, the vision and mission statement review showed that the pastors and leaders performed supervision and responsibility in the execution of their precise style of management. However, the documents also indicated the presence of an allowance for freedom of communication and contribution among all the members.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 described the procedure used for addressing this study's research questions, including a review and analysis of the information gathered during the research process. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore four leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, of church leaders (pastors, deacons, and ministers) and the influence of these styles on the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. A sample of 40 participants from four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia contributed to this study. The sources of data included semistructured individual face-to-face interviews, a focus group discussion interview, and document review.

Twelve themes emerged during data analysis. The first theme reflected the need for ideal church leadership styles within the Pentecostal churches. Good leaders are necessary, according to participants, because a leader with good character can uphold the high level anticipated by God. Also, church leaders should concentrate on developing an effective connection with untrained leaders, members, helpers, and the community. The other emergent themes included participants' insights on church leadership management, leadership motivation, leadership styles to ensure church growth, effective communication, leadership practices, developing leaders, perceptions of leadership,

church attendance growth and decline, leaders' leadership role, church administrator's handbook, and vision and mission statements.

This chapter addressed the findings of the research study together with the research settings, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and explanation of the themes and categories. The results of this research study revealed similarities and differences in the participants' perceptions of the particular leadership styles practiced in the Pentecostal churches and the churches' approaches to leadership development. The findings indicated that most of the participants preferred the servant and transformational leadership styles as the ideal leadership style for the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield Virginia.

The findings additionally indicated that the leaders in the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia, adopted a certain belief about leadership styles that are geared towards membership growth. In the last chapter, I will restate the purpose and nature of this study, summarize the main findings, present an explanation of the findings, explain the limitations of the study, analyze the recommendations for future studies, describe the social implications, and conclude with the relevance of this study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore four leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, of church leaders (pastors, deacons, and ministers) and the influence of these styles on the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. I performed this study using a qualitative case study design due to the nature of the RQs. Since I needed to have a detailed knowledge of the issues, I employed a case study design that permitted the application of numerous sources of information to help in solving the issues.

In this study, information was collected from leaders and members of the congregations from four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The data derived from various sources, including semistructured individual face-to-face interviews, one focus group interview, and document review. The main findings from this research are represented by 12 emergent themes: (a) ideal church leadership styles, (b) church leadership management, (c) leadership motivation, (d) leadership styles to ensure church growth, (e) effective communication, (f) leadership practices, (g) developing leaders, (h) perceptions of leadership, (i) church attendance growth and decline, (j) leaders' leadership roles, (k) church administrator's handbook, and (l) vision and mission statements.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

Because of the nature of the research problem, the qualitative research method was the most suitable methodology to answer the research questions. The research



findings support other researchers' results and created a fresh and more in-depth knowledge of the leadership styles within the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, and the impact those styles had on church growth. The literature review established that leaders place top priority on the conduct, quality, and style of leadership behaviors they exhibit to function effectively (Bell, 2013; Bunch, 2013; Lee et al., 2015; McCleskey, 2014; Northouse, 2015; Nelson & Cohen, 2015).

Other scholars observed that the church leadership is very firm on the duties, offering positive management and carefully supervising the capacity of the church (Khan, Asghar, & Zaheer, 2014; Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). The participants in this study noted the need for an ideal leader in the Pentecostal church, a leader who stands in front and help other leaders and members to carry out the same tasks and fulfill a mutual obligation towards the church's vision. At the same time, leaders develop solutions that connect to the collective vision of the church. The participants noted that their image of an ideal leader within the church is a leader who is ready to listen to the views of the members, a leader who is calm and caring, and one who communicates openly with others. The participants further expressed that an ideal leader is one who demonstrates good leadership performances, procedures, and schemes that influence church membership growth, contribute to retaining members, enhance neighborhood dealings, and promote the image of the church.

Many church leaders do not possess the necessary expertise in accounting, administration, and leadership, and leaders may not have the leadership skills to allocate and apportion tasks and assignments to other individuals and to prepare the aims and

purposes upon which the church is managed (Rosenberg Hansen & Ferlie, 2016). The participants identified the need for leaders to promote efforts to shape and manage the members of each congregation within the church environment to align with the main standards and policies of the Pentecostal church. Some participants agreed that the church's image and management are contributing factors to successful church growth. A strategically developed plan could be an instrument to relieve the trials or problems generated by the absence of management expertise and experience and may initiate growth in output and viability (Placido & Cecil, 2014).

The results support the findings that some participants perceived the transformational or servant leadership styles to be the main approaches that can resolve the root cause of the problem of leadership within the Pentecostal church. All the participants shared the view that managing a church requires a unique blend of spiritual experience and business experience from a leader, who needs both types of experience to generate prosperity and keep up with the needs of members, disciples, community sponsors, and the church. Therefore, management training is an essential segment of the formation of the church. The participants recognized certain management skills within the church that were essential for growth but asserted that the shortage of adequate training in these areas provided to leaders and members by the church administration has led to a greater number of inexperienced leaders within the church. The participants saw managing workers, individuals, finance, mission, conferences, and meetings as significant facets of leadership in the church.

Bass (1985) suggested that transformational leaders might perform as individuals of good character, and therefore, members might follow and accept the ideas of the transformational leaders. Bass advanced further that transformational leadership offers inspirational motivation to encourage and motivate members to accomplish greater objectives for the association. The results also support a tremendous agreement among the participants that they were extremely motivated as a result of transformational leaders' inspiration. The participants described that transformational leaders' inspirational motivation improved their perception of motivation during the performance of their duties in the church. Thus, inspirational motivation entailed the leader's capability to stimulate assurance, inspiration, and determination in the members (Bass, 1985).

All the participants also mentioned that the leaders' leadership style and character might have an impact on the growth of the church. As the success or failure of the church is highly dependent on the leadership style practiced by the leaders in the church, identifying the leadership style of any leader within the church is significant to realizing its achievement (Bottomley et al., 2014; Dinh et al., 2014). Participants perceived the passion of the church leaders as a vital feature that inspires members to embrace the church's vision and strive toward attaining the objectives of the church. Participants who were members of the congregation also perceived that their leaders should be someone of truthfulness, who showed a decent and righteous way of life and exhibited a servant or transformational leadership style, which motivated change and increased membership growth. Lopez and Ensari (2014) maintained that effective leaders could adjust to a

leadership style that is good for the different responsibilities within the establishment that they lead. Servant and transformational leaders exhibit influential representative conducts, and their followers tend to develop solid regard and admiration for leaders within the church (Vllachos, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2013; Washington, Sutton, & Sauser, 2014).

The participants emphasized that effective communication among leaders and members is the most significant practice to determine success for the church. Numerous remarks from the participants signified the importance that leaders engage in direct and truthful communication with members and other individuals they serve. Participants asserted that the leaders must keep members well-informed of advancement, issues, and recent progress.

All the participants expressed that the most vital practices and duties for the pastors should be prayer, devotion, and arrangement of sermons. The pastors, however, realized that they work in a situation where their power is vital for propelling decisions and accomplishments in church. The implication, therefore, was that pastors and leaders in the Pentecostal church are actually in the church not only to preach and teach but also to manage and to prepare other leaders and members to serve the individuals within the church and the community outside the church as well. Fausing, Joensson, Lewandowski, and Bligh (2015) described a church establishment or leadership practice as favorable to inspiring individuals, by participating in making decisions and sharing of leadership.

All the ministers emphasized that their knowledge of the leadership function aligned precisely with what is written in the Bible, to teach and develop other individuals

to participate in ministry duties so that the pastors need not perform all the ministry duties by themselves. Biezen and Poguntke (2014) stated that post-modernism is transforming the way worshippers identify leadership and in turn determining how leaders perceive the issue. According to Biezen and Poguntke, the old-fashioned power-and-management styles of leadership are being replaced by leadership styles that encourage, inspire, and include.

All the participants who were members of congregations expressed the need for leadership development within the church. Participants maintained that pastors and leaders in the church should regularly assess and review the leadership training programs to develop members. An establishment's leadership training and growth strategy must be allied with the main values of the establishment; the practice must inspire members, involve the interests of interior and exterior sponsors, and offer members new and added services (Peterlin, 2016). The results support these findings that leadership training boosts the viable strategies for a church establishment; as church leaders grasp how to teach, mentor, and encourage members and others to exhibit leadership capacity, an effective system of leadership capability develops inside the church establishment.

The participants expressed standard tasks that church leaders must perform: servanthood, inspiring, motivating, staying humble, listening, accepting criticism, and teaching. Participants characterized these tasks as central to leaders' success in motivating church members to achieve their objectives and assist in the growth of church membership. Throughout the interview process, leaders and members presented numerous accounts of the tasks that they perceived as important, while they monitored

their leaders through conferences, church services, and in the course of other functions.

The participants also recognized these tasks as compatible with the perception of the task expressed by P2, a pastor from C2, who described himself as follows:

I am not a perfect leader; I have flaws. I have a lot of growth still in life, but those simple things, leading, doing things when others are not around, humble me.

Listening, those things help to make me a good leader.

All participants who were deacons emphasized that the servant leadership style is the simplest style that provides opportunities for leaders to develop or grow within the church.

The focus group revealed their perception that evangelism and following up with individuals who attend the church is key to increasing membership. The focus group participants felt that membership growth is essential for the church, and the leaders must develop a relationship with the individuals who attend church. The focus group participants further added that too often pastors and leaders in churches do not connect in meaningful ways with these individuals. The strength of these remarks and the actuality of lacking church relationship was the reason behind this perspective, which wholly came from the focus group participants. They saw the growth of the Pentecostal church as a means of developing relationships and empowering individuals. Strong leadership is important to the stabilization and growth of the church (Barna Group, 2014).

Additionally, the focus group participants agreed that one of the key reasons individuals attend the Pentecostal church is because of the preaching of the word of God, and they hoped that the pastors and leaders would maintain that practice. These focus group

participants credited the growth of the Pentecostal church membership to the effective preaching of the word of God by the pastors and their honest style of communicating the importance of the scriptures to the church congregation.

This study aimed to answer the two research questions. The interview questions helped identify the leadership behaviors, leadership styles, and leadership practices that could influence the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The responses from the participants depicted the significance of spreading the word of God, continuing the development of leaders, and creating strategic planning tools to support continued growth and effective leadership in the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield Virginia. The findings of this study aligned with the conceptual framework of the full-range leadership theory by Bass (1996) and Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership theory. Greenleaf's (1977) concept of servant leadership supports the training and development of upcoming servant leaders so that the church will achieve long-term success.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In this research, I employed the qualitative research method to achieve a thorough knowledge of matters and generate an up-to-date view (Agyemang & Castellini, 2015). Case studies usually include a small sample size of about 15 to 50 people (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachimias & Dewaar, 2015). One limitation of this research was that the sample size was small; however, I was able to conduct a thorough investigation and arrive at the responses to the research questions. Because of the sample size, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to other populations, as the case in quantitative

research (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2015). In quantitative studies, researchers utilize statistical procedures, for instance, the mean, mode, median, and standard deviation, to evaluate the information. In this study, the sample size was 40; therefore, I cannot generalize findings or apply statistical investigation to the findings of this research (Houghton et al., 2013).

The second limitation of this research was that the sample was limited to Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The scope of the study did not include other denominations in other localities or states. The participants were leaders and members of the congregations from those same four Pentecostal churches. Members and leaders of other denominations might have contributed diverse opinions of leadership styles and church growth; nevertheless, these findings and conclusions apply only to the Pentecostal denomination within Alexandria and Springfield Virginia.

The third limitation of this research was potential bias, and although research interviews are prone to bias (Lomangino, 2015), the participants shared their perceptions of their leaders' leadership styles within their churches honestly. Every effort was made to mitigate potential bias and remain impartial and professional throughout the research procedure. Because some of the responses from the participants diverged from the literature on the topic, numerous reviews of the interview responses were necessary. Noting participants' facial expressions or physical responses added meaning or counterpoint to communications or revealed implied meanings of the spoken answers participants provided.



Finally, limitations may have impacted the accuracy of the individual participants' answers to the interview questions. Since all the individuals who participated in the research were from Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, they might have intended to portray a positive image of their perceptions of their leaders' leadership style and church growth. A determined examination of all facial expression and body language determined if any of the individuals who participated in the research performed abnormally during the research interview process.

Despite the limitations, the data from the 40 individuals who participated in the semistructured interviews, the one focus group of five participants, and the document review inside the church office answered the research questions. I observed that the participants were all eager to explain the various methods used by Pentecostal churches to develop individuals to become effective leaders and boost church membership. The face-to-face interviews and the focus group discussion interview took place within the church offices of the participants, and their familiarity with these locations contributed to their comfort and increased the likelihood that they provided honest responses. Transcript review and triangulation reinforced the validity and reliability of the data and findings.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on my analysis of the information, I have discussed below the recommendations of this study for future research. Because of the limited collection of 40 participants in the research, further research is necessary to endorse the validity of the main themes that emerged from this research. Future researchers might adopt other

methodologies such as quantitative or mixed method and other study designs with a larger sample size of participants, which would enhanced the generalizability of the results. While the previous literature hinted at the great influence that leadership has on the church, a shortage persists in research that identifies the real leadership qualities, conduct, and styles that contribute to church membership growth, neighborhood inspiration, and member assistance. The conceptual framework of this study incorporated the perception of numerous researchers with the aim of dealing with the gap in the literature and capturing the main components required by church leaders to perform an effective part in the growth and influence of the Pentecostal church including members, the community, and the broader world.

This study may also be replicated by future researchers who explicitly concentrate on numerous church denominations that include effective church leaders who are geared towards creating a change within the church and its community. The Pentecostal church has guidelines and procedures as discussed in this research study for leaders and members within the church. Therefore, future researchers should determine whether various leadership styles perform well in some church establishments or if the style of leadership centers on the congregation attending church, the surrounding community, or the leader's capability to create a positive change.

Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership model is the basis for church leadership capabilities. Accepting a servant leadership style in Pentecostal churches is not the same as following the old-fashioned totalitarian, autocratic, and dictatorial styles of leadership. The findings of this study established that the performance of servant leadership may

demand different opinions and visions for the senior pastors and leaders. The pastors and leaders' knowledge of the significance of combined leadership and the development of effective leaders support the servant leadership style as aligned with the leadership practice of Jesus Christ.

The findings from this research might offer a reliable basis for recognizing the practices of Pentecostal church leaders in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. In order, to expand this research, researchers from other church denominations, states, and cities can offer cooperation, agreeing for the research to be performed through subsections at stages of leadership in the Pentecostal church. For instance, a researcher may cooperate with researchers from other church denominations and smaller churches within the locality to create an influence on their community. Information gathered during large-scale collaborations may generate a large data set for evaluation. The similar arrangement can be employed for a comparison of Pentecostal churches in states such as North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, California, Georgia, Alabama, Illinois, Florida, and Texas. In such situations, the information would signify the leadership style or practices of Pentecostal church leaders from numerous experiences and potentials to increase church growth. Data from such different viewpoints might better inform future church leaders about which leadership styles to practice to be a successful and effective leader within the Pentecostal church and the church community.

Researchers may contemplate an emphasis on the obligations, duties, and approaches of effective Pentecostal church leadership. This recommendation derived from the confirmation by several of the individuals who participated in this research

regarding the responsibilities of a leader within the church, the massive tasks that the job requires, and the obligations of leading individuals who do not want to transform with the church or ministry. A future study might also help future and current leaders from numerous denominational and non-denominational churches. A detailed research study would be possible, given the larger size of the sample in a study that included a large number of churches located in various geographical regions.

Finally, recommendations to ensure that leadership training becomes well-organized for leaders and members of the Pentecostal churches include (a) create scripted rules, (b) obtain suitable training, records, and tools, (c) distribute the general vision of the church as a non-profit establishment, and (d) offer training or qualifications for the leaders from a professional or skilled leadership trainer to leaders and members within the church. The leaders who apply motivational policies in religious establishments can offer the basis for attaining change, efficiency, and total achievement (Bassous, 2015; Zamecnik, 2014).

## **Implications**

### **Implications for Social Change**

Implications for positive social change that derived from this study included the ways leaders within the church could assist members, families, and individuals in the community. The participants in this study indicated that church leaders, including the pastors, should motivate the members of the congregation to be more active in serving the Pentecostal church and the community. Participants also indicated the necessity for the pastors to provide regular training for untrained leaders and members.

The participants commented on the development of leaders and members that would promote church membership growth. The Pentecostal church leaders and members have a special responsibility to individuals attending the church and to the community they assist. The responsibilities of these leaders have been a significant factor in creating influence on the leaders' leadership style and church membership growth. Therefore, the impression that these leaders are developing in the community might help to encourage individuals and increase understanding of the leadership styles of leaders and the maintenance and facilities they provide to persons in and around the church community.

The participation of young individuals in the church could encourage volunteers to take on tasks that contribute a positive influence on the involvement of older individuals in the community even with no controlled adult spiritual contribution (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 2016). The participants were conscious of the necessity for leaders and members to receive sufficient training programs in the Pentecostal church. Special training in procedures, modern computer skills, and motivational techniques are essential to prepare potential leaders within the church. Training provided to leaders and members in the church might be beneficial to the leaders of other nonprofit or for-profit organizations. The implications for positive social change included the possibility of helping leaders within the Pentecostal church to establish the main supply center for safe haven and support for individuals within the community.

Churches need effective leadership, organizational growth, and financial stability. Church leaders and their followers have become business owners, providing employment opportunities for people in the church and the community. Churches are a place of

worship, spiritual growth, and illumination that have expanded into the world of Business. P. Allen (2015) revealed the need for churches to have effective leadership, quality fellowship, and high quality of service. To be successful, leaders must have sound leadership techniques, worthy members, plan strategically, and professional ideas. P. Allen mentioned that prosperous churches are similar to business organizations, and leaders must focus on the finest leadership practices, managing policies, and computer development to spread the teachings of Jesus Christ and create an influence around the world despite increasing differences in ideas and opinions. The diversity of the Pentecostal church has stretched the church leadership's influence into the world and has created awareness for leaders in the church to function in their communities and the whole world efficiently.

### **Implications for Theory**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore four leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, of church leaders (pastors, deacons, and ministers) and the influence of these styles on the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The conceptual framework of this study included the full-range leadership theory by Bass (1996) and Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership theory. The full-range leadership theory, as applied to this study, included the transactional and transformational leadership models (Bass, 1996). Findings from this study aligned with previous literature and enlarged the application of the servant, transformational, and transactional leadership styles to leaders within the Pentecostal church. The definition and concepts of servant

leadership style, as described by Greenleaf (1977), offered a complete account of the kind of leadership style appropriate for Pentecostal churches within Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The objective was to present a different leadership style for the current Pentecostal churches to develop effective leaders and church membership growth.

According to Bass (1996), the full-range leadership model characterizes leaders who display both the transactional and transformational leadership styles depending upon the location and setting of the organization. The transformational and transactional frameworks were appropriate for this study because those leadership theories presented an extensive notion of leadership styles that were useful in this exploration of leadership conduct in both religious and nonreligious establishments (Rowold, 2008).

Significant and complete reports centered on the research questions investigated the problem of diminishing growth of church membership and its connection to church leadership styles in the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Maintaining a general focus on leadership conducts was essential to this research while the broad scope of styles and conducts was important to explain the leaders and members leadership practices aimed at increasing church membership growth.

### **Implications for Practice**

Leaders and their leadership styles were significant and influential within these participating Pentecostal churches. Therefore, this vital function is considered to be crucial to the functioning of Pentecostal churches. According to the findings of this research, the Pentecostal church leaders and members implied that the churches are not competently equipped to train leaders and members because of the lack of adequate

training programs, reliance on old fashioned strategies, and absence of current technology. Findings revealed the participating Pentecostal churches were not applying consistent organizational procedures to train the leaders and members to develop motivational and leadership practices to become effective leaders.

Such training could assist leaders in identifying the leadership styles in use within the church. The enhancement of these leadership abilities might influence the leader's capability to involve, encourage, and inspire church members to achieve successful church growth. Offering essential training programs to church leaders and members can improve their computer skills and provide them with an effective means of connecting with other individuals. Masenya and Booyse (2016) mentioned that supervising training from other sections of study might be modified to supplement the original training of pastors in their everyday managerial responsibilities.

Also, the increasing change in religious activity in the world renders it vital for leaders and members to receive training at an initial stage and then yearly review training to ensure that leaders within the Pentecostal church are conscious of the most up-to-date communications on the church's rules and program policies. Leaders in religious establishments who want their establishments to stay significant in the surrounding community and within the business atmosphere should communicate the vision with members and other individuals, establish a pleasant atmosphere, and make regular rules in their establishments (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Transformational leaders should communicate knowledge with members regarding structural activity and upcoming transformations (Balaji & Krishnan, 2014;



Zogjani & Raci, 2015). Transformational leaders appear effective through group actions that advance the confidence, inspiration, and standards of their members (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015). Standards related to servant leader characteristics included (a) building hope, (b) showing interest to others, (c) representing discipline, (d) pursuing the basic principles for the establishment, (e) exhibiting kindness in activities and faith in every person, (f) addressing the demands of members and the establishment, (g) developing a situation for peace and coordination within the establishment, and (h) supporting members' happiness (McCann et al., 2014).

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore four leadership styles, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant, of church leaders (pastors, deacons, and ministers) and the influence of these styles on the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. I performed semistructured interviews, a focus group interview, and document review at the church offices of the participating Pentecostal churches. The individual participants provided answers to the interview questions easily and without any form of pressure. Forty leaders and members of the congregation of the four Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia, took part in the face-to-face semistructured interviews and represented four segments of the Pentecostal church congregation: pastors, ministers, deacons, and members of the congregation. The themes that emerged from this study were ideal church leadership styles, church leadership management, leadership motivation, leadership styles to ensure church growth, effective communication,

leadership practices, developing leaders, perceptions of leadership, church attendance growth and decline rate, leaders' leadership roles, church administrator's handbook, and vision and mission statement.

This qualitative exploratory case study comprises an account of activities, qualities, and policies from Pentecostal church leaders and members in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The interviews gathered specific information, explored the inspiration beyond the leaders' quest to be effective, and inquired about a careful design idea for church membership growth. The information offered in this dissertation signifies information regarding the practices of leaders in four Pentecostal churches who are actively serving their respective churches.

The church leaders and members interviewed for this research study had the knowledge to present their perceptions of their participation in leadership positions and their leaders' leadership styles, their church's contributions to the community, and how those leadership styles impacted membership growth. The findings of this study confirmed the link between church leaders' decision-making abilities, their capability to be ethical, use of the Bible for spiritual guidance, their readiness to help others, and their transformation in the church. The findings were consistent with three leadership theories: servant leadership, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership, and answered the main research questions. The Pentecostal church leaders' leadership styles have played a significant part in the effectiveness of leaders and church membership growth. The participants characterized the Pentecostal church leaders' desire to communicate the vision of the church to members and other individuals in the

community as vital to bringing new people to the church. The participants confirmed that in the Pentecostal church, proper strategic programs for development and good responsibilities are influential in training leaders.

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## Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in a Doctoral Study

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is in connection with my conversation with your organization's leadership regarding a proposed research project involving participants at -----  
----- . My name is Yera Keita, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Management, Leadership, and Organizational Change program at Walden University. As part of my doctoral study at Walden University, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting to show how church leaders and members of congregation influence the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. The focus and topic of the study are A Case Study of Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Church Growth in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.

I contacted you to participate because you are a church leader and member of the congregation from a Pentecostal church in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. Participation in this research study is voluntary and will be confidential. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a semi-structured individual face-to-face, audiotaped interview with the researcher. The interview will be scheduled in a private location of your choice. The duration of the interview will be 45 minutes to one hour.
- Participants in the semi-structured individual face-to-face interview may be asked to participate in the focus group interview meeting. Also, the selection for participants in the focus group interview will be determined from their



position as Pastors, deacons, ministers and members of congregation within the Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, and Springfield, Virginia that they serve.

- Participate in a focus group, audiotaped interview with the researcher, regarding how church leaders and members of congregation influence growth of church membership. Also, video recording will not be permitted. The focus group interviews will be scheduled in a private room location and the duration of the focus group interview will be approximately between thirty minutes to one hour.

Please read the enclosed consent form carefully. If you have any questions before acting on the invitation to participate, please do not hesitate to contact me. Participants must be church leaders (Pastors, ministers, deacons), and members of the congregation of Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia. If you satisfy these criteria and have agreed to participate in the study, please notify me via the contact information. I will contact you again to deliver the consent form, and to set up the individual face-to-face interview of no more than 1 hour.

The interview will be audio recorded, and participants will have the opportunity to review the transcribed interview interpretations for accuracy before inclusion in the study. I sincerely appreciate your valuable time and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Yera Keita

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Time of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The interview session will commence with relationship building, salutations, introducing myself to the research participant, after which I will introduce the research topic.
2. I will thank the participant for taking the time to respond to the invitation to participate.
3. Request permission to digitally audio record the face-to-face interview and the focus group interview meeting as a backup written notes, and I will note the date, time and county the interview is taking place in.
4. The coded sequential interpretation of the participants' name and/or church name, e.g., 'respondent Q1...' will be indicated on the audio recorder, documented on my copy of the consent form and the interview will begin.
5. The face-to-face interview will span approximately 45 – 60 minutes for responses to the Research questions, including any additional

follow-up questions. The duration of the focus group interview meeting will take 30 minutes to an hour.

6. I will remind participants of the purpose of the study. The purpose of the case study is to explore/show how church leaders (pastors, deacons, ministers), and members of congregation influence the growth of church membership in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia.
7. Then, I will inform the participant regarding the review of the interview report that I will make available after my transcription.

The research questions that guide this qualitative case study, semi-structured open-ended interview protocol and the focus group interview, and provides a guide to the researcher on the focal areas for the case study are RQ1. What are the leadership styles commonly employed by church leaders to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, Virginia? and RQ2. What is the church leaders' (pastors, deacons, and ministers) knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and servant) to increase membership growth in Pentecostal churches in Alexandria, Virginia?

### **Interview Questions for Pastors**

The following interview questions will answer research Q1.

- a. Are you satisfied with your effectiveness as a leader in your church congregation?
- b. Is your leadership style different from what you believe is the ideal style for your church congregation?
- c. What leadership style do you think is most effective in which to ensure continued membership growth in your church?
- d. How will you describe the impact of the leader's leadership style on church growth?

The following interview questions will answer research Q2.

- e. Are there leadership style/responsibilities that you are more or less comfortable with as senior Pastor? Please elaborate on your answer.
- f. What leadership practices, characteristics, and activities have been most effective in your personal Pastoral context?
- g. What are the major concerns that you have addressed in your Pastoral ministry? How do you measure success in your ministry?

### **Interview Questions for Ministers and Deacons**

The following interview questions will answer research Q1.

- a. Please describe your current or previous leadership role in the Pentecostal Church?
- b. Based on your experiences, will you describe as detailed a situation that encouraged you to be a lead Minister or Deacon of the church you lead?
- c. Based on your experiences, what leadership practices do you employ?

The following interview questions will answer research Q2.

- d. Based on your experiences, what is your perceptions of the role you have, as minister/deacon, in regards to the different factors that have led to the growth or decline of the church?
- e. What leadership characteristics do you view as contributing to the success/failure of the church membership growth?
- f. How would you describe your leadership technique towards increase membership growth?

### **Interview Questions for Members of Congregation**

The following interview questions will answer research Q1.

- a. How would you describe your church leader's behavior towards retaining church members?

- b. What activities would you like to see the church leadership put into practice to improve interactions and motivate members to bring new people?
- c. What motivation would you like to see implemented by church leadership to help people be more involved?
- d. As a member of your church, how closely do you follow the governance and prescribed structure of the church administration and leadership style?

The following interview questions will answer research Q2.

- e. What factors, inside or outside the church, do you believe have had an influence on the growth or lack of growth of your church?
- f. How would you describe your church leader's leadership styles?

### **Focus Group Interview Questions**

The following interview questions will answer research Q1.

- a. What are the perceptions of Leaders of the Pentecostal Churches in Alexandria, or Springfield, Virginia concerning church attendance growth and decline rates?

- b. What are the perceptions of Leaders and members of congregation concerning factors that affect church attendance growth and decline rates?

The following interview questions will answer research Q2.

- c. What's your approach to working with others to achieve membership growth in church?
- d. How do you see your leadership role impacting membership growth within the church?
- e. How do you engage others to participate as a function of your leadership role in church?

End interview sequence; discuss member checking with participant(s).

- 8. Thank the Participant(s) for their part in the study. Reiterate contact numbers for follow-up questions to clarify responses and my interpretation of their answers, and address concerns from participants.
- 9. End protocol.