THE ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERS IN ADVANCING CHURCH GROWTH

An Action Research Project

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**ABSTRACT**

The church and its leaders are not immune to the rapidly changing societal shifts. This action research project aimed to identify church leaders’ role in the church's growth. An overview of different leadership styles, including autocratic, authoritarian, transformational, servant, and humble leadership, are provided in this research. The research question guided the study and brought uniformity within the research process, promoting the reliability and applicability of the research findings. The action plan was consistent with the humanistic theory of structural functionalism, which emphasized the significance of functional coordination, social norms, and values in maintaining social control and soundness. The research occurred in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (EWIP) over five weeks. A demographic survey and questionnaires were used as the research-based intervention. The participants in the research were the clergy of the respective congregations in the MCEWIP, supplementary ministers, lay pastors, lay ministers of Christian education, acolytes, lay members of the executive boards, and lay members of the provincial board. The sample consisted of 30 adults 18 and older who consented to participate in the pre-intervention data collection. The sample for the post-intervention data included 33 respondents 18 years and older. The results of this action research project can help advance constructive social change through church leaders’ willingness and ability to engage in continuing education and equipping the saints for ministry through evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability.

DEDICATION

To the glory of El Shaddai, *God Almighty!*

To my children N’Jheri C. and Ayele C. Matthew,

the two most significant influences and inspirations in my life. To Jeanette Smith-Barry and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Conrad D. Spencer, the two most influential leaders in my life,

and in memory of my grandparents Sybil Edwards, Cleofoster Hill,

Clarence Leon Elmes and Henrietta Elmes, and my dad, Walter F. Orr, Sr.

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Finally, this research would not have been possible without the ongoing support of my children, N’Jheri and Ayele Matthew. I am forever grateful to both of you for your love and support.

**EPIGRAPH**

Progress and growth are impossible if you always do things the way you’ve

always done things. -Wayne Dyer

A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

-Lao Tzu

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

-Proverbs 29:18

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**SECTION I**

**PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION**

Leadership is essential in incorporating values and inspiring followers and colleagues to advance professionally and personally. Bolden et al. (2023) asserted that “Leadership is one of the most sought-after yet elusive qualities in contemporary organizations and society” (p. 1). Daft (2022) stated that “Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes” (p. 7). Leadership is about trusting the leader’s vision, competence, and character. Effective leadership ensures positive progress (Daft, 2022; Sexton et al., 2018). World-renowned leaders have well-developed communication skills and can inspire others to follow their leadership (Keow Ngang, 2021). Leadership skills can be developed and continuously improved by anyone. Enhanced skills strengthen leadership quality (Kouzes & Posner, 2023; Liu et al., 2021).

Leadership in the church is essential as leaders have a critical role in shaping their followers’ values, beliefs, and practices.  Church leaders form the backbone of the leadership structure in the church (Dodson, 2018; Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). The congregation looks to its leaders for spiritual guidance and interventions (Branson & Martinez, 2023; Day et al., 2021). Influential church leaders can spur a solid belief in their followers, enhancing the unity and growth of the church (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020; Ugwu, 2021). This research will define and describe leadership styles, qualities, and the impact of such on church growth.

This research analyzes the reported outcomes of the role of church leaders in advancing church growth in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP). Section One introduces the problem and purpose statements, the research significance, background, best practices identified in the literature, the research question, and professional relevance regarding the study performed.

Problem Statement

Whether or not a church grows or declines depends on the church’s leadership. There is insufficient knowledge about what church leaders need to do to evoke the substantial expansion of the church and its congregations. Church growth may depend on the church’s historical, sociological, societal, economic, and spiritual status, leadership, and practices. Further, different practices and principles found in various churches can aid their growth (Schulz et al., 2019). To achieve church growth, church leaders must transcend overarching differences.

Purpose Statement

This action research project aims to identify church leaders’ role in the church's growth.

**Significance of the Research**

Church leaders have a vital role in advancing the expansion of the church. As such, church leaders are critical in shaping their followers’ values, beliefs, and practices (Toby et al., 2020). The findings from this study will inform the church authorities on what church leaders can do to ensure the church's growth. The results will also offer insightful information about the current relationship between church leaders and the church’s social expansion. The findings will increase church leaders' knowledge base and skill set to equip the saints to advance the church through evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability.

Background And Best Practices Identified In Literature In Advancing Church Growth

Effective leadership is often vital to organizations' success and growth (Daft, 2022; DuBrin, 2022; Kouzes & Posner, 2023). Within the church, Christian leaders understand that Christ is ultimately the head of this organization, and effective leadership is framed within the context of Christ’s overarching commission. Church growth is represented in fulfilling the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all peoples and nations. Church growth is, as such, an essential indicator that the church is fulfilling the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-13). According to Jordan (2019), the role of church leaders in advancing church growth is a topic of great importance to expanding Christian communities.

The church plays essential roles in worship, teaching, fellowship, evangelism, and community service (Cooper & Cooper, 2021; Sastrohartoyo et al., 2021). The church spreads love, the gospel among people, the advancement of an organization, and instructions to support the people (Patterson & LeBaron, 2022). Therefore, the church’s growth is essential to enable the church to reach out to more people, impact the lives of more people, and spread the gospel to them. The church’s growth is also an important indicator demonstrating that the congregation’s ministry is not stagnant (Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021). Church growth is in tandem with the Great Commission, where Christians should spread the gospel worldwide (Matthew 28:16-20; Milner, 2022). While the church’s growth may take many forms, including more people or activities, the role of church leaders in ensuring church growth is vital. This paper highlights the best practices displayed in the literature by church leaders in advancing church growth.

**Sources Consulted**

The literature review includes online peer-reviewed journals, printed journals, and books. The sources were predominantly selected from publications within the past five years. These selections are relevant for reviewing the best practices identified in the literature on the role of church leaders in advancing church growth. Selected journals specialize in theology, leadership, and Christian studies, including research papers, thesis projects, and literature reviews. The databases searched included but were not limited to the Library of Congress, ProQuest, JAMA, EBSCO, Questia, and Google Scholar.

**Church Leadership and Church Growth**

**Biblical and Theological Definition and Description of the Word Church**

Understanding the meaning of “church” in Biblical and Theological contexts is crucial to comprehend what church growth means. The meaning of “church” is “εκκλησία,” a Greek word that refers to an assembly or congregation of people (Chia et al., 2021; Yi, 2019). Different people have different understandings of the meaning of the church, with some regarding it as a building and others as the people who gather to worship God and serve God’s people (Chia et al., 2021; Yi, 2019). A definition from the Bible is essential to standardize its meaning (Pillay, 2020). The Bible refers to the church as a gathering or an assembly of people (Toh, 2019; Yi, 2019). The church is first mentioned in Mathew 16:18 and speaks of those God has summoned out of this world (Irawati, 2021). Therefore, the church refers to all believers who worship God (Zarns, 2023). Theology draws its description of the church from the scriptures. According to Verster (2022), the Bible defines the church as the community of believers in which the entire revelation of God’s connection with humanity in Christ can be seen. These descriptions are imperative to understand the growth of the church.

**Definition and Description of Leadership**

Understanding leadership is essential to appreciate the scope of individuals ensuring the church’s growth. While God mandates all Christians to spread the gospel, the task heavily depends on the leaders because of their ability to organize and coordinate activities that the congregation follows. According to Howieson (2019), a leader is an individual who guides other people. Gregory (2019) describes a leader as an overseer or a person charged with ensuring that the things done by others are done correctly. Leadership in the church is serving or influencing others out of Christ’s interests to achieve God’s purpose (Dyer 2022). Leaders are tasked with mentoring and encouraging people and furthering their faith to ensure the congregation has a positive church experience.

**Definition and Description of Church Growth**

Understanding the definition of growth is essential to relate it to the church context. Growth implies increasing, developing, or expanding. According to Cameron (2022), growth is an increase in size, progression from simple to complex forms, becoming more prominent or significant, and progress toward achieving one’s goals. In the church context, scholars define church growth by indicators such as the church’s increase, development, or expansion (Krispin, 2020; Ngele & Peters, 2019). Jordan (2019) and Quiaoo (2020) describe church growth as measured numerically, spiritually, and geographically. Numerical growth occurs when people spread the gospel and others believe and obey it. Numerical growth is illustrated in the book of Acts, which states that believers and disciples increased significantly (Estes, 2022). Spiritual growth occurs when the congregation grows in love, grace, and knowledge (Estes, 2022; Ginting et al., 2022). Since Christ commands Christians to proclaim the gospel to all countries, geographic growth involves the development of new churches in various regions of the world (Reeve, 2022).

**Church Growth Theories/Principles**

There are various principles that research has shown to enhance church growth.  Some examples are small holistic groups, functional structures, energizing leadership, gift-focused ministry, and passionate spirituality (Mazzalongo, n.d.).  The church’s growth requires empowering leadership, where the leaders focus on empowering their church members for ministry. The leaders help the church members to develop their gifts, growing them and the church (van Wingerden et al., 2021). Gift-oriented ministry helps the church’s growth as people serve in areas where they are gifted, which results in them engaging in ministry according to God’s will and not their own (Dever, 2021; Branson & Martinez, 2023). Passionate spirituality, where the members care deeply about their relationship with God, promotes the growth of the congregation and the church (Brandt & Frederick, 2021). Functional structure is the church organization that supports church life, practical ministry, and clear communication (Thayer, 2023). The members of small holistic groups are encouraged to use their gifts, share their experiences, minister to one another, and support one another, all of which contribute to their and the church’s growth.

**Summary**

A church is a gathering or an assembly of people. The church is not the building where people gather to worship but the people who gather to worship. The community of believers in which the complete revelation of God’s relationship with humanity in Christ can occur is how the church is described theologically (Zarns, 2023). A leader is an individual who guides other people. Leaders are responsible for leading people with similar goals and objectives. Leadership in the church context is serving or influencing others out of Christ’s interests to achieve God’s purpose (Howieson, 2019). Church growth may be numerical, spiritual, and geographical. Some examples of concepts include empowering leadership, gift-focused ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, and small holistic groups (Quainoo, 2020).

**Biblical and Theological Foundations**

**Biblical and Theological Foundations of Leadership**

Leadership in the Bible is portrayed via iconic figures who guided God’s people and believers, ranging from the days of Noah during the Great Flood (Genesis 6:9-9:17; Gnuse, 2022), Moses in leading the Israelites from Egypt (Adebomi & Omotosho, 2022; Exodus 14), and many other leaders in the Old Testament to the New Testament like Jesus Christ and His Disciples (Ewa, 2022; Luke 6:12-16). Hah (2019) stated that leaders like Moses in the Bible are imperative figures who demonstrated effective leadership and how to serve people according to God’s command.  The Bible’s first book, Genesis, lays the groundwork for leadership, and the final chapter of Revelation establishes a kingly leadership role (Niemandt, 2019). The books of Exodus through Jude also illustrate narratives about influential leaders and those who were ineffective in doing God’s will (Cook, 2022; Gatlin, 2022). The Bible shows the massive deterioration of leadership in Lucifer’s rebellion against God and the incredible demonstration of leadership by the Messiah (Whitehead, 2019). Both extremes provide essential insights to leaders in the church. The model of leadership that Christ demonstrated is that of service, as he emptied himself of all desire for honor and glory to serve people (Mark 10:45). The compelling Biblical portrayals of leadership provide the values, virtues, and models of leadership applicable to the church, and which can influence masses in a direction that follows God’s Word (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). Church leaders are encouraged to serve their members with love and humility, just like Jesus Christ (Friedman & Mizrachi, 2022).

The theological foundations of leadership are principles that construct Christian leadership's basis, processes, goals, and outcomes (Knoetze, 2022). Principles of theological leadership include Christlike qualities such as humility, compassion, integrity, love, and prayerfulness (Branson & Martinez, 2023). Du Plessis and Nkambule (2020) noted that theological principles of leadership are vital for people’s understanding of God’s nature, the church’s origin, the church’s role in human life, the future of the church as aspired by Jesus Christ, and the practices of leadership that is compatible with servant leadership. Theological and biblical foundations provide Christians with a practical framework for leadership and establishing standards that can assist the church and enhance the lives of its members. Theological leadership involves a deep devotion to God and an intimate relationship with God to help others (Branson & Martinez, 2023).

**Old Testament Principles and Examples of Leadership**

The Old Testament contains leaders who demonstrated their ability or inability to serve God’s people according to His will.  God chose the leaders, and some who effectively performed the will of God included Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Noah, the Judges, David, Solomon, and the Kings who ruled after the division of the Northern and Southern kingdoms (Geyser-Fouche, 2023). These leaders in the Old Testament provide essential information on what effective and ineffective leadership entails, evident by observing those who followed God’s commands diligently and those who failed to heed God’s orders. Nehemiah, for example, provided principles of good leadership as he left his position as the King’s cupbearer to return to Jerusalem to build a wall around the city (Nainggolan et al., 2022). Christians derive sound leadership principles from Nehemiah: compassion, a clear plan of action, readiness for the opposition, continued seeking God’s guidance, and delegation of responsibilities. Other leaders guided the Israelites into victory through God when they diligently followed God’s instructions. However, the Old Testament shows leaders fail when they stray from God’s guidance, as Solomon did.

**New Testament Principles and Examples of Leadership**

The central figure in the New Testament that Christians aim to emulate is Christ. Christ’s leadership was perfect, and it is the reference point that all Christian leaders infer from when providing services to people (Morgan, 2022). Although other apostles like John, Peter, and James showed good leadership, they also gleaned from Christ, making Christ the ultimate leader and the reference point for all Christians (Boaheng & Osei, 2022). In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus instructed His disciples that leaders should not exercise authority over the people, and whoever wishes to become a leader must first become a servant. Jesus affirmed that leading with a servant’s heart enabled leaders to lead with a pure heart, free of pride or arrogance (Reid, 2022). Other principles of leadership that Jesus displayed included honor and submission to God’s authority, caring for the people, and prayer (Morgan, 2022).

**Summary of the Biblical and Theological Foundations of Leadership**

Leaders like Moses in the Bible are imperative figures who demonstrated effective leadership and how to serve people according to God’s command (Hagos, 2021). The books in the Bible illustrate narratives about leaders who were influential and ineffective in doing God’s will (Hah, 2019). The Bible shows the massive deterioration of leadership in Lucifer’s rebellion against God and the incredible demonstration of leadership by the Messiah. Both extremes provide essential insights to leaders in the church (Whitehead, 2019). Leaders in the Old Testament who effectively performed the will of God included Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Noah, the Judges, David, Solomon, and the Kings who ruled after the division of the Northern and Southern kingdoms (Geyser-Fouche, 2023). Nehemiah was compassionate, had a clear plan of action, the readiness for the opposition, and continued seeking God’s guidance and delegation of responsibilities (Nainggolan et al., 2022). The central figure in the New Testament that Christians aim to emulate is Christ, whose leadership was perfect. Christ said that leaders should not exercise authority over the people, and whoever wishes to become a leader must first become a servant (Morgan, 2022; Resane, 2020).

**Biblical Expectations of Church Growth**

The Bible provides essential insights on church growth that Christians and church leaders should infer from when aiming for church growth. In Mark 4:26-29, Jesus provides insights on church growth (Robinson, 2021). Jesus used a farming analogy to explain how the kingdom of God grows. God affirmed that the church resembled a man who scattered his seed and reaped it when the time was right (Mueller, 2020). The Bible expects the church to grow by Christians fulfilling the Great Commission (Alawode, 2020). Romans 10:14-15 asks how people will hear the word of God without someone preaching to them. The church is commanded in 2 Peter 3:18 to increase in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

**Styles of Leadership**

According to Adebinu and Omotosho (2022), many factors contribute to effective leadership in the church. This research provides an overview of different leadership styles, including autocratic, authoritarian, transformational, servant, and humble leadership. Adebinu & Omotosho (2022) state, “A leadership style is a leader’s style of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. Many different leadership styles can be exhibited by leaders in churches, politics, business, or other fields” (p. 4).

**Autocratic Leadership**

**Definition and Description of Autocratic Leadership**

Church leaders use a variety of leadership philosophies to lead their congregations. Autocratic Leadership is an example, and it involves the leader having control over all the decisions and taking minimal input from other leaders (Khan et al., 2021). Autocratic leaders do not ask for advice, information, or recommendations from others; instead, they base their decisions on their views. Autocratic Leadership is more common in business and only works where quick decisions are required.  In church, autocracy is based on God providing a single leader to the church at a time (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). Churches that embrace the Autocratic leadership style view the leader as the sole authority overseeing the church’s activities.

Additionally, autocratic leaders are highly efficient if the leader is effective, but it has inherent disadvantages if the leader is ineffective. If the leaders can get things done, the church benefits significantly from their drive and demand (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). Therefore, influential church leaders can be enormously beneficial in propelling the church toward achieving its goals, including growth.

**Qualities of Autocratic Leadership**

Various qualities of autocratic leadership make it distinct from other leadership styles. Autocratic leaders accept very little input from others concerning administration (Jony et al., 2019). Autocratic leaders make almost all the decisions, boosting efficiency because decisions are made quickly without consultations. However, the morale of the subjects severely deteriorates because their inputs are usually not welcomed by the leader (Nyakundi & Ayako, 2020).

Another quality of autocratic leadership is that it has a highly structured environment. This structure results in rigidity, which has an upside because the members know the person in charge and, therefore, where to obtain instructions to perform tasks. However, the highly structured organization may result in a stringent environment because of concerns of the members that they are being monitored continuously (Jony et al., 2019). Autocratic Leadership clearly defines rules and processes because the members know the leader has the final say (Zheng et al., 2021). Autocratic Leadership also leaves little room for initiative, cooperation, and creativity among the members. Therefore, a church that uses autocratic leadership highly depends on the leader to make crucial decisions, and it benefits from their efficiency and suffers from their inefficiency (Zheng et al., 2021).

**Biblical Examples of Autocratic Leadership**

In the Bible, various leaders used autocratic leadership styles. Despite its closeness to dictatorship, some scenarios indicate its effectiveness, leading to its preference by multiple leaders. For instance, the Bible highlights that Elisha spent many years serving Elijah before leading in his own right (Argonauta, 2022). In this context, autocratic leadership was essential because it enabled Elijah to guide Elisha on how to lead through the ways of the Lord. In some instances, in the Bible, autocratic leadership proved ineffective. Pharaoh, for example, used autocratic leadership as he was in control of every aspect of his kingdom and did not consider the inputs of any other person (Gultom, 2022). It is evident through the way the Israelites suffered in Egypt. Pharaoh’s arrogance and disobedience to God, compounded with his autocratic leadership style, led to massive losses for the Egyptians through the ten plaques. Autocratic Leadership works best when the leader is competent and works in their subjects’ best interest.

**The Impact of Autocratic Leadership on Church Growth**

Autocratic leaders operate on a do-as-I-say basis, expecting the congregation to perform activities as instructed (Klahn Acuña & Male, 2022). Autocratic leadership retards the church’s growth because it creates a hostile environment that restricts the freedom of the members to perform activities in ministry that they would enjoy (Zheng et al., 2021). Autocratic leadership hinders the church’s numerical growth and lessens the effectiveness of its members in sharing the message with others (Nyakundi & Ayako, 2020). Small holistic groups, fervent spirituality, functional structures, and gift-focused ministry, all essential for church growth, may suffer from internal revolt inside the church due to feeling left out of vital decisions. The autocratic leader may also make the congregation engage in worship in ways they deem fit, which may not appeal to the congregation (Fowler et al., 2020). Autocratic, experienced, efficient leaders make important decisions that may help grow the church.

**Summary of Autocratic Leadership**

An autocratic leader makes all the choices and rarely gets input from their team members (Khan et al., 2021). Autocratic leaders do not ask for advice, information, or suggestions from others; instead, they base their decisions on their views. In the church, autocracy is based on God providing a single leader to the church at a time. Churches led by autocratic leaders view the leader as the sole person overseeing the church’s activities. Autocratic leaders accept very little input from other people concerning leadership. Autocratic leaders make almost all the decisions, boosting efficiency because decisions are made quickly without consultations. However, the members' morale severely deteriorates because the leader usually does not welcome their input (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). In the Bible, autocratic leadership was effective and efficient for Elijah when Elisha worked under his tutelage (Argonauta, 2022). However, the arrogance and disobedience of Pharaoh made it an ineffective method to govern, wreaking havoc for the Egyptians. Autocratic leadership may inhibit the church’s growth because the congregation may not perform activities to spread the gospel to others, and their morale to worship may reduce (Gultom, 2022).

**Authoritarian Leadership**

**Definition and Description of Authoritarian Leadership**

Authoritarian leadership is another style that various leaders apply to manage and provide guidance to their members. Authoritarian leadership resembles dictatorship more than autocratic leadership (Leber et al., 2023).  In authoritarian leadership, the leaders have complete control and make all the decisions without consultation from the members. While autocratic leaders may consider the members minimally when making decisions, authoritarian leaders do not consider the interests of others. Factors like the social norms of individuals in certain areas influence the authoritarian leadership style. Some societies view authoritarian leadership as the standard form of leadership; therefore, leaders in some societies practice authoritarian leadership with minimal resistance (Du et al., 2020). Authoritarian leaders require absolute obedience from their subjects, and the members perform tasks under close supervision while the leader has unlimited authority. Authoritarian leadership has a clear divide between leaders and followers Obi et al. (2021).

**Qualities of Authoritarian Leadership**

Authoritarian leadership has various qualities that distinguish it from other forms of leadership. Authoritarian leaders think their decisions are the best and the only ones to steer the organization forward (Alblooshi et al., 2021). The leaders describe their vision and goals to their followers, and they provide clear instructions on how the team should achieve these goals. The leaders expect the results to be task-oriented, and therefore, they require the followers to follow the procedures they outline strictly and without fail (Akanji et al., 2020). The leaders control the organization absolutely, and there is usually no room for the subordinates’ suggestions or input. The subordinates are only implementers of the decisions as they are generally not considered in the decision-making process (Kim & Villace, 2019). In the church, the rarity of authoritarian leaders extending grace may identify authoritarian leaders to others as leaders with little compassion, failing to delegate responsibility, and being untouchable (Olorunnisola, 2021). Haruna (2022) summarizes that authoritarian leaders do not express the qualities of Christ of humility and service.

**Biblical Examples of Authoritarian Leadership**

Authoritarian leadership in the Bible is primarily destructive. According to Dodd (2021), Rehoboam and Jezebel are examples of leaders who practiced authoritarian leadership. The Israelites suffered under the reign of Rehoboam, and although he might not be responsible for all their suffering, it is evident that the subjects reflect the King’s leadership. Rehoboam’s authoritarian leadership is apparent in 1 King 12:8, which illustrates that Rehoboam rejected advice that the elders provided him and instead sought advice from young people who had grown up with him. These young people were an extension of himself because they would only tell him what he wanted to hear. Rehoboam’s leadership resulted in Israel’s division and Judah’s wickedness. In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus instructed Christian leaders not to exercise authority over their subjects as the Gentiles did (Breen, 2023). Jesus encouraged His disciples to be servants to their followers, just as Jesus was a servant to the people.

**The Impact of Authoritarian Leadership on Church Growth**

According to Haruna (2022), authoritarian leadership affects church growth. Although the authoritarian leadership style may be effective in other businesses because it results in consistency, time management improvement, direction, provision, and reducing mistakes, it is not the case for the church. The church behooves a friendly atmosphere where the congregation interacts freely without fear to attract new members and retain the old members (Marius, 2022). A friendly atmosphere encourages worship and fellowship, ensuring Christians’ spiritual and church growth. A church led by authoritarian leadership can result in fear among the congregants and feelings of hindrance to their activities. New members may be discouraged from joining the congregation because they may feel that the leaders are too strict (Rainer, 2022). Dependence on an authoritative church leader’s decision may reduce decision-making ability. The failure to delegate duties results in inexperience among new leadership, and when the leader is unavailable or leaves, the whole structure may collapse and result in backtracking of the church’s progress in its growth (Haruna, 2022).

**Summary of Authoritarian Leadership**

In authoritarian leadership, the leaders have complete control and make all the decisions without consultation from the members (Du et al., 2020). Authoritarian leaders require absolute obedience from their subjects. The members perform tasks under close supervision, while the leader has unlimited authority. Authoritarian leaders think their decisions are the best and the only ones to steer the organization forward. Authoritarian leaders require their followers to follow the procedures they outline strictly and without failure. Authoritarian leadership reduces autonomy as the followers are not permitted to make independent decisions (Akanji et al., 2020). Examples of biblical leaders who practiced authoritarian leadership were Rehoboam and Jezebel. The Christians endured much suffering under the reign of Rehoboam (Dodd, 2021). Authoritarian leadership is not suitable for the church, and it may result in retarded growth. Authoritarian leadership creates an atmosphere that leads to fear among the congregants and feelings of hindrance to their activities (Haruna, 2022).

**Transformational Leadership**

**Definition and Description of Transformational Leadership**

Vale (2019) defines transformational leadership as leadership that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers toward their full potential and exceeding their expectations.Theprimary focus of transformational leadership is change, and the leaders work beyond their self-interests to inspire the followers to become better in maturity and to achieve their personal goals (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). It is about aligning the believer’s self-identity with the church’s goals, and the leader acts as an inspiring role model for the believer. The followers develop ownership of the tasks that the leader assigns them. When posting the functions for the followers, the leader also assesses the strengths and weaknesses of those followers to make sure they capitalize on the former while addressing the latter (Bakker et al., 2022). Transformational leadership promotes independence, enabling followers to be innovative and bring about change that may help the organization achieve its objectives, in contrast to autocratic and authoritarian leadership, which deny followers any autonomy to make decisions. The leaders give their followers the freedom to solve problems and trust them to decide their tasks (Alegbeleye & Kaufman, 2020). In the church, transformational leaders listen to their congregation and empower them to make decisions to solve their concerns concerning the church.

**Qualities of Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leaders have distinct characteristics that distinguish them from leaders adopting other leadership styles.  Bass identified the transformational leadership framework as four attributes that leaders possess to varying degrees: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996). Details of this leadership style’s attributes are cited in recent literature, including that of Bojovic & Jovanovic (2020) and Gregory (2019). These writers summarize transformational leaders as those who motivate and encourage positive development for their followers and consider their followers’ interests and goals when leading and making decisions. According to Sehgal et al. (2021), transformational leaders align the followers’ interests with the organization’s goals as they utilize their strengths and improve their weaknesses. The leaders act as coaches and mentors as they guide the workers on what to do while allowing them to make their own decisions. Lokol (2023) notes that in the church, transformational leaders encourage the members not to give up and to continue pushing while providing guidance.

**Biblical Examples of Transformational Leadership**

In the Bible, various leaders use transformational leadership to guide their followers. Abraham is a prominent example of a transformational leader (Lewis, 2019). Abraham’s qualities of creating a vision, courage, confidence, caring about others, and a strong sense of justice demonstrated his transformational leadership style. Genesis 17:5 says that Abraham left everything behind to become the father of many nations (Ofori, 2021). Christians consider Abraham, the father of faith. Christians also have a model of a transformational leader in Jesus Christ (Muthuku et al., 2023). Abraham invested in people by preaching to them the gospel, despite resistance because it was for their good. Abraham entrusted others to minister to different places, felt people’s needs, and provided help whenever possible (Hart, 2023).

**The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Church Growth**

Transformational leadership affects growth (Gaib et al., 2023). While autocratic and authoritarian leadership styles may discourage new members from joining the fellowship due to hostility, transformational leadership may encourage new members to participate because of its friendly atmosphere (Momeny & Gourgues, 2019). Under the guidance of transformational leadership, the members can devise new ways to help the church grow. Delegation of duties by the church leaders enables other members to utilize their talents and gifts to help the church grow (Dunaetz, 2019). Freedom encourages the members to worship more, resulting in spiritual growth. Transformational leadership leads to retention of the followers, as they relate with the leader and remain loyal because of their focus on helping the members achieve their goals. As leaders identify their followers’ strengths and weaknesses, they can utilize these strengths to achieve the purpose of expansion. For instance, a church leader may locate a member’s power to evangelize and provide guidance and responsibilities that the member would utilize this talent to grow the church numerically (Wise, 2020).

**Summary of Transformational Leadership**

The primary focus of transformational leadership is change, and leaders work beyond their self-interests to inspire their followers to become mature and achieve their personal goals. It involves fusing a follower’s sense of self with the church’s goals, and the leader inspires the congregation (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). Transformational leaders motivate and encourage positive development for their followers. Transformational leaders consider their followers’ interests and objectives when leading and making decisions. The leaders inspire the followers to imitate their behavior by serving as role models (Bojovic & Jovanovic, 2020). Transformational leaders foster a work environment with clear values, priorities, and standards. Abraham is a famous example of a transformative leader, shown by his vision, courage, assurance, care towards others, and profound belief in fairness (Lewis, 2019; Ofori, 2021). Jesus was also a transformational leader (Muthuku et al., 2023). Transformational leadership can influence new members to join the church because of the friendly atmosphere that it creates. The members can also devise new ways to help the church grow (Wise, 2020).

**Servant Leadership**

**Definition and Description of Servant Leadership**

Craun and Henson (2022) defined servant leadership as a leadership model rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. In servant leadership, the main goal of the leader is to serve. Unlike other leadership styles where the leader aims to achieve the organization’s objectives, the servant leader’s focus is helping other people (Wu et al., 2021). Leaders put their followers’ needs, growth, and well-being before their own and those of the organization. The leaders’ ability to serve others is natural and innate, and their leadership is a conscious choice that only comes after service. Their followers’ growth and development are top priorities, and their needs rank last (Craun & Henson, 2022). Servant leadership may be envisioned as an upside-down pyramid, while the other leadership styles are regular pyramids (Daniels, 2021). The leader is at the top in the different leadership styles as the employees serve them (Wu et al., 2021).

**Qualities of Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership contrasts other leadership styles in significant ways. The leaders are described as “Servant as a Leader” to describe their characteristics better. Because they are humble and altruistic, they prioritize the needs of their followers. Servant leaders are not interested in power, and the leadership might have been bestowed on them due to their ability to serve others (Saleem et al., 2020). The leaders are community-focused, and they put the considerations of the community first when making decisions.  Servant leaders are highly empathetic and always willing to help others whenever possible. The followers develop trust in their leader and are not afraid to fail as the leader guides them appropriately (Asamoah, 2019; Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). Like transformational leadership, Servant leadership encourages innovation and collaboration. A servant leader delegates duties, even to the extent of sharing power with others, to promote the organization's and its people's growth and development (Acuña & Bledsoe, 2023; Muzira & Muzira, 2020).

**Biblical Examples of Servant Leadership**

The Bible has many characters who lead by serving other people. The most significant servant leader was Jesus, the role model of Christian leadership (Hurt & Long, 2023; Locke, 2019). Luke 22:42 says that Jesus submitted His life for sacrificial service under God’s will (Wright, 2023). John 10:30 also says that Jesus sacrificed his life freely out of service for others. Jesus, despite being the Son of God, led by example in service to other people. Jesus never boasted, but He washed the feet of His followers, which was the epitome of a demonstration of leadership by Jesus (Zentner-Barrett, 2023). Examination of John 13:1-17 shows that love motivated Jesus to serve His disciples. Jesus was fully aware of His position as leader, voluntarily became a servant, and wanted to set an example for His disciples and Christian leaders (Mark 10:45). Moses was also a servant leader. Despite the significant challenges he received before freeing the Israelites from Egypt, Moses remained adamant and diligently followed God’s will. Despite being adopted by the royal family, Moses chose to fight for the Israelite’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Roundtree, 2023).

**The Impact of Servant Leadership on Church Growth**

Servant leadership leads to church growth (Nidin, 2023). The level of satisfaction among church members tends to rise as servant leaders put their followers’ needs first, which is linked to higher retention. New members may be encouraged to join the congregation because of how they relate to the leader as a servant who has their best interest at heart (Andoh-Mensah, 2021). As Christians connect servant leadership with Christ, they may view their servant leaders as close to Christ and therefore heed guidance that the leaders may provide regarding the Bible (Firestone & Firestone, 2020). Servant leadership leads to congregation increase, as people prefer to attend church in areas where the leader engages and serves the congregation. Caring for the well-being of the congregants results in increased membership (Dami et al., 2022).

**Summary of Servant Leadership**

In servant leadership, the leader’s primary goal is to serve. Unlike other leadership styles where the leader aims to achieve the organization’s objectives, the servant leader’s focus is serving other people (Wu et al., 2021). Servant leaders are dedicated to putting other people’s needs ahead of their own. Because they are humble and altruistic, they prioritize the needs of their followers (Saleem et al., 2020). Servant leaders are highly empathetic and always help others whenever possible (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). Moses was also a servant leader who helped deliver the Israelites from bondage (Roundtree, 2023). Still, the most significant servant leader was Jesus, the role model of Christian leadership (Hurt & Long, 2023).

**Humble Leadership**

**Definition and Description of Humble Leadership**

As the name suggests, humble leadership is where the leader applies humility in leadership (Kelemen, 2023). According to Luo et al., 2022, humble leadership leads through humility. Humility is a central concept in Christian leadership, requiring a measured and non-combative approach to issues, conflicts, and initiatives (Torsu & Quacoe-Takrama, 2020). Humble leadership considers other people’s opinions, acts self-aware, and ensures generosity towards followers instead of being narcissistic (Luo et al., 2022). A significant characteristic of humble leaders is their emotional intelligence (Maldonado et al., 2021). Other leadership styles may treat their employees to an end, as they become obsessed with results and achievement of the organization’s goals (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). Although humble leadership may be like servant leadership in many ways, the significant difference is that humble leadership models the process of becoming, and servant leadership models serving others (Kelemen et al., 2023). In humble leadership, the leader considers the followers in each decision (Naseer et al., 2020).

**Qualities of Humble Leadership**

Humble leaders have qualities that differentiate them from other leaders. Humble leaders desire to learn, even from their followers, and do not over-inflate their abilities (Sadler-Smith, 2021). Naseer et al. (2020) noted that the qualities of humble leadership include selflessness, empathy, a willingness to listen and learn from others, and a focus on the well-being of those they lead rather than their gain. Humble leaders have excellent listening skills, acknowledge their limitations, and are open to collaborating to accomplish tasks (Kang & Hua, 2023). Humble leaders lead a life of surrender and preparation and are faithful in their endeavors to help others (Kelemen et al., 2023). According to Friedman (2023), humble leaders are compassionate, modest, open to receiving advice, ready to implement changes when necessary, and willing to admit mistakes.

**Biblical Examples of Humble Leadership**

Various leaders in the Bible are an embodiment of humble leadership. Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of a leader who showed humble leadership. Despite being the servant of God, Christ was humble. Christ is considered the most powerful man to walk on earth and yet the most modest man (Wilkins, 2020). Kind David was also a humble leader. David recognized that his authority came from God and sought to lead God’s people with humility and compassion (Psalm 78:70-72). Similarly, Moses, the leader chosen by God to lead the Israelites from Egypt to their “Promised Land,” was described as the humblest man on earth (Numbers 12:3). Friedman (2023) asserted that Moses was a great and humble leader.

**The Impact of Humble Leadership on Church Growth**

Humble leadership has mostly positive effects on church growth. The leaders embody Christ, attracting new members and retaining the old members (Dunaetz, 2023; Martin, 2021). The leaders following Christ’s example also encourage the members to follow Christ, which enables them to grow spiritually. The spiritual growth of the congregants leads to the development of the church. Humble leaders are open to feedback, which allows them to provide better service to the congregation (Kang & Hua, 2023). Humility in leadership is God’s command, and practicing humility would lead to God helping to grow the church and blessing the leader and the congregation (Kelemen et al., 2023). According to Plow (2023), humble leadership is the best leadership style for church leaders, especially in the age of celebrity church leaders and materialism, because it enables the church leader to be grounded and focus on the word of God. Instead of seeking material wealth, the humble leader seeks spiritualism, which he extends to through congregation through fellowship (Plow).

**Summary of Humble Leadership**

Humble leadership is where the leader applies humility in leadership (Kelemen, 2023). The leader considers other people’s opinions, acts self-aware, and ensures generosity towards followers instead of being narcissistic (Luo et al., 2022). Humble leaders desire to learn, even from their followers, and do not over-inflate their abilities (Sadler-Smith, 2021). Despite being the servant of God, Christ was humble. Christ is considered the most powerful man to walk on earth and yet the most modest man (Wilkins, 2020). The leaders embody Christ, attracting new members and retaining the current members. Church leaders should model the leadership examples set by Jesus Christ in ministering to the church (Kang & Hua, 2023).

**Research Question**

How much of the decline in church growth in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) is attributable to church leaders, and what can church leaders do to facilitate the church’s growth? The research question will guide the study and bring uniformity within the research process, promoting the reliability and applicability of the research findings.

**Professional Relevance**

The researcher is an ordained pastor in the Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP). The Moravian Church is diligent in providing excellent theological training for the men and women who accept the call of God on their lives to serve in ministry. Persons called to the full-time ordained ministry are trained at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI), in Jamaica, for four (4) years. Supplementary or second-career ministers are prepared for a shorter time, depending on their age and prior training. Ministers in the past received training from other theological schools or colleges, but it is not a common practice for ministers to be trained at various institutions (Book of Order, 2022). Despite the initial training and investment in educating the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (EWIP) ministers, the church has been challenged with declining church growth.

The Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province, is struggling with Human Resource Practices in continuing education, duties and responsibilities of staff, accountability, evaluation, and ethics. Whereas the Church legislates specific dynamics about its personnel, it sometimes fails to execute decisions that promote the well-being of the personnel and the organization. The Church encourages continuing training or education of its staff. Unfortunately, not enough staff members pursue continuing education or training, and neither does the church adequately assist its staff in that training. The church can ensure that its staff receives adequate support for continuing education to remain on the cutting edge of ministry and fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20).

Understanding “saved to serve” is critical for the church’s life, health, and future. Ephesians 4:12 reminds humanity that they were called “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Rick Warren (2012), in his national best-selling book, *The Purpose Driven Life,* acknowledges that God has shaped us for ministry (p. 251). When people use their gifts to edify or build up one another, it causes the body of Christ to expand. Church leaders can constantly ask themselves, “What has God called me to do so that I can edify others?” The decline in church growth results from people no longer doing the ministry God has called them to do (Comiskey, 2023; Rainer, 2022). The church and its leadership are responsible for living out its faith while equipping, empowering, and releasing leaders to advance God’s Kingdom on earth.

**Summary**

This paper highlights the best practices emphasized in the literature regarding the role of church leaders in advancing church growth. The Bible describes the church as a gathering or an assembly of persons. A leader is an individual who guides other people and is responsible for leading a group of people with similar goals and objectives. Church growth, the expansion of the believers, may be measured numerically, spiritually, and geographically. The church’s growth requires empowering leadership, where the leaders focus on empowering their church members for ministry. The biblical foundations of leadership begin in the book of Genesis and conclude in the book of Revelation with the declaration of a kingly leadership position. Church leaders should model the examples set by Jesus Christ in ministering to the church.

**SECTION II**

**ACTION PLAN**

The action research plan addressed the role of church leaders in advancing church growth. A participatory action research strategy was used to examine processes and practices that can enhance church growth. The approach was anchored on humanistic and theological theories. The plan of action was consistent with the humanistic theory of structural functionalism. This theory emphasizes the significance of functional coordination, social norms, and values in maintaining social control and soundness. The action plan helped reinforce the practical coordination of church leadership and advance the traits and beliefs essential for the growth of the church community. The observational method was critical in enhancing the data collection process and enabled the research to meet its objectives.

**Research-based Intervention**

The research addressed the role of church leaders in advancing church growth in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP). The approaches to the intervention depended on the nature and extent of the organizational milieu (evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability). A demographic survey and questionnaires were used as the research-based intervention.

The intervention occurred in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) over five weeks. The participants in the research were the clergy of the respective congregations in the Moravian Church (EWIP), lay ministers of Christian education, lay pastors, supplementary ministers, acolytes, members of the executive boards, and the provincial board. Consent was obtained from the provincial board before conducting the research.

The Moravian Church was chosen due to its history of evangelization, missions work, and the present decline in church growth. The demographic survey and questionnaires were used to gather data on the numerous leadership procedures and techniques that can contribute to the church's growth. The thematic analytical method was employed to categorize concepts and ideas into themes, sub-themes, and properties. Categorizing concepts and sub-concepts produced significant themes and sub-themes that served as the foundation for analysis. The researcher will subsequently secure all the required resources, and advanced preparation will be completed for implementing the intervention.

The action research project informed the fulfillment of the Great Commission and the advancement of personal and collective church growth. Information was disseminated to the selected participants through a demographic survey and questionnaire responses facilitated through Survio, a web-based survey software. The survey and questionnaires were designed to collect supplementary demographic data regarding the church’s leadership, including, but not limited to, age, gender, leadership status, and the number of years in leadership.

The survey and questionnaires allow for information collection in a structured and organized manner. The information acquired from the intervention can give church leaders the information they require to draw judgments about improving their leadership practices and growth approaches. A successful outcome of the research intervention will be the participants’ observation and commitment to become equipped and empowered to make disciples who make other disciples as they advance the church’s growth while fulfilling the great commission. The intervention comprised a demographic survey and questionnaires that were functional and practical instruments to gather information on the leadership practices and strategies that can advance church growth (McGraw et al., 2019).

**Sociological Integration**

The humanistic theory, also known as structural functionalism, is the theory most suited to undergird the study. According to functionalists, society is a complex system whose components are interdependent, interconnected, and interrelated (Ameyaw et al., 2021). The functionalists contend that several aspects of society work together to foster unity and stability. Theorists view political, religious, educational, marital, economic, and health institutions as organizations that can collaborate to advance stability. Ameyaw et al., 2021, asserted that,

A defect in any part of the structure leads to social intractability, which ignites social instability. Herbert Spencer linked the structure of society to the parts of the human body (Turner, 2012; Rumney, 2017). He argues that the various parts of society (Social Institutions, social norms, values, or beliefs and behaviors) work together to keep society functioning, just like the organs of the human body work together to keep the body active **(Durkheim, 2014) (p. 261).**

**Émile Durkheim was a renowned sociologist known for his theories on the nature of society. Durkheim was acutely interested in the growth and operation of traditional and contemporary cultures. Social facts, defined as societal norms, beliefs, and institutions, were the foundation for Durkheim's theories (Malik & Malik, 2022).**

**Durkheim supported Spencer’s analogy of the good functioning of the human body with society’s ability to function well (Durkheim, 2014).** Theologians can assert that Durkheim’s theory of the functioning of the human body may be grounded in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, that references unity and diversity in the Body [of Christ]. 1 Corinthians 12:12 states, “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ” (New International Version, 2011).

The thought known as structural functionalism suggests that society should be visible as a multi-dimensional organization of interconnected pieces that safeguards society, its social framework, and its union. In this light, the church is perceived as a social framework that assumes a part in the upkeep and protection of social requests and dependability in society (Jo et al., 2021). The decline in church membership in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) reflects the methods and sustainability factors in the Moravian Church (EWIP). For example, how new members are welcomed and discipled, continuing education for leaders in the church, and periodically assessing and re-assessing population change in the society and the church are essential in ascertaining the progress and sustainability of the community of faith (Chemin, 2021; Fowler, 2019).

The structural functionalism school of thought identifies strong points in social designs that call for practical coordination (Fowler et al., 2019). When applied to the church setting, practical coordination alludes to the most common way of ensuring that the church’s leaders and members help each other understand the process of advancing church growth. The research-based intervention gathered data on the leadership teams in the Moravian Church (EWIP) using a demographic survey and questionnaires. The research results provided vital data that can be utilized to advance church growth.

Furthermore, structural functionalism accentuates the meaning of social norms and values while maintaining social requests and strength (Perry et al., n.d.). The church’s foundation is built on Jesus Christ, and His believers embrace shared values and beliefs. The church’s values and beliefs play a significant role as they impact the lives and direction of the church members and leaders. Researched-based intervention can be used to analyze and enhance social norms and values that are fundamental for the development of the church community (Namunyuka et al., 2022).

Structural functionalism recognizes the meaning of social institutions as a fundamental part of the upkeep of social demands and consistency (Rathmell et al., 2019). The church is a social organization that contributes to developing cultural norms on both the cultural and social levels. Researched-based intervention can add to the conservation of social demands and security in society by encouraging the joining of practical cycles inside the church and cultivating church growth (Kim, 2021).

As a rule, the structural functionalism theory offers a supportive system for grasping the decline in church growth and formulating interventions to resolve the issue (Martin, 2021). Structural functionalism centers around the connection between design and capability. Structural functionalism theory can assist people with grasping the mind-boggling elements of the church as a social framework and devise fruitful techniques for reinforcing its growth and effect in society (Ameyaw et al., 2021; Scott, 2023). The theory centers around the meaning of practical incorporation, social norms and values, and social institutions. The theory assists us with understanding the church's capabilities as a social framework (Scott, 2023).

**Theological Integration**

Advancing church growth requires going back to basics, the Word of God. The Bible reflects the church’s blueprint for growth (Kinoti & Nteere, 2021). According to the Bible, the church is Christ's body, and its growth is crucial to achieving God's mission for the world (Genesis 12:2-3; Matthew 28:19-20). The research-based intervention accentuates evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability. Advancing church growth requires good leadership. The concept of leadership was first introduced by God, modeled by Jesus, and adopted by humanity (Chauke, 2020). Good leadership styles can enhance society and the church. Biblical leaders like Moses and David exemplified vital characteristics for effective church leadership, like vision, boldness, and lowliness in daily routines and interactions with others (Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021). The research-based intervention would gather information on the leadership qualities that add to church growth and give valuable experiences that can be utilized to fortify leadership within the church (Bochere et al., 2021).

Examining the church's theological foundations and beliefs is fundamental for the church’s growth. For example, a church with more accentuation on the legalistic regulations that should be followed may drive individuals away (Alawode, 2020). In contrast, a church that places a more significant amount of accentuation on the adoration of God and service to its members can attract new members looking for spiritual satisfaction (Alawode, 2020). When church leaders comprehend the theological thoughts and values that help their members, they can make more intentional decisions about encouraging church growth (Bochere et al., 2021). Spiritual growth and maturity will result in the church’s expansion locally and globally.

**Summary**

Churches are struggling with fulfilling the Great Commission and advancing church growth. A plan of action has been fostered to promote church growth that accentuates evangelism, teaching, stewardship, leadership, and flexibility. The intervention is grounded in research that pinpoints leadership approaches that add to the expansion of churches. The intervention included the utilization of a demographic survey and questionnaires. The tools will enable church leaders to acknowledge and embrace the areas of concern that require improvement and devise a plan to advance church growth. Moreover, the plan offers a comprehensive answer to the issue by including a social and theological perspective.

The survey incorporated inquiries regarding the leaders' level of involvement and dedication in their positions and responsibilities within the church and whether they feel valued by their peers. The data was analyzed employing descriptive procedures and creative methods to identify patterns, examples, and subjects. The findings will be used to develop approaches and action plans to address the identified areas for improvement in advancing church growth. The results can also serve as a standard for future assessments and evaluations.

The intervention can extend church leaders' information base and range of abilities, which can aid in advancing church growth. It is anticipated that implementing this plan will also foster a culture of innovation and change, which are essential for the church's growth and development. A starting point to advancing church growth can be found through the blend of humanistic and theological perspectives and leadership development.

**SECTION III**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The researcher secured permission to conduct the action research intervention; evidence of permission is a letter *(see Appendixes A and E).*

Participants were protected by agreeing to an Informed Consent Document *(see Appendix B)* before completing the data collection tool.

**Location and Duration**

The research was based in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP). The Moravian Church was selected due to its history in missions and evangelism and the current decline in church growth. Complete access to the church leaders promoted the amount and quality of data gathered from the research.

The duration of the intervention was five weeks. The participants in the study were the clergy of the respective congregations in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (EWIP), lay ministers of Christian Education, lay pastors, supplementary ministers, acolytes, members of the executive boards, and the provincial board. Consent was obtained from the provincial board before conducting the research.

**Data Collection Tools**

The data collection tool consisted of questionnaires and a demographic survey. Open-ended and closed questionnaires *(see Appendices C and F)* were used to collect data from participants before and after the intervention.

**Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

Contact was made with the Chairman of the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province. The chairman was provided a letter of introduction written by the researcher that was shared with all participants in the research. The introductory letter described the study and the importance of the church leaders’ participation.

Data were collected for a period of five weeks. Approximately fifty participants were expected to engage in the research process. The data collection tool consisted of questionnaires and a demographic survey. The forms were distributed among the church leaders. They were allowed to remain with the documents for up to two consecutive weeks. It gave them sufficient time to reflect on their responses before answering the questions. Surveys/Questionnaires were favorable since they facilitated the collection of copious amounts of data from the research participants (Thabtah, 2019). The survey/questionnaires utilized both open-ended and closed questions. The questions were organized logically to promote the transition from question to question.

The researcher maintained the integrity of the data during the research process. Data integrity was ensured by collecting information from the church leaders; leading questions were avoided. Further, bias was limited. Maintaining the respondents’ integrity was done through blinding, where the research participants were unaware of the other participants’ responses.

This action research evaluated the researcher’s engagement in an advisory role to the denomination’s leadership during the period of five weeks in introducing strategies to curb attribution and promote church growth in the aftermath of the recent COVID-19 crisis. The researcher organized the data for analysis and coded them using Survio, a web-based survey software to host online surveys and questionnaires. Participants were given an email link with a distinct code identified with each survey. They also answered a short survey on church leadership *(See Appendix F).* Participants were asked to enter a unique code that was associated with data collection and analysis. The data collected were analyzed and reported.

The study commenced in May 2023 and concluded in June 2023.

Results of the pre-intervention and post-intervention data were evaluated for patterns and themes.

**Expected Outcomes**

The intervention highlighted three points. First, an understanding of pastoral leadership practices that can enhance church growth. Second is the need to adequately equip the saints for ministry work. Third, the effects of team-based leadership in growing the church.

**Summary**

The research was based in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP). The quantity and caliber of the data acquired from the research were enhanced by full access to the church leaders. The participants were members of the clergy and lay leaders in the MCEWIP. Data were collected with a demographic survey and questionnaires. The intervention lasted for five weeks. The study commenced in May 2023 and concluded in June 2023. Successful problem-solving measures included a grasp of pastoral leadership techniques that can promote church growth. Effectively equipping the saints to fulfill the Great Commission or discipleship and stewardship training and promoting and imaging team-based leadership that can result in church growth.

**SECTION IV**

**REFLECTION**

This study aimed to identify church leaders’ role in the church's growth. Data were collected over a period of five weeks. The data collection process consisted of questionnaires and a demographic survey. This chapter reports the results of this research study findings.

**Results and Evaluation**

The sample consisted of 30 adults 18 and older who consented to participate in the pre-intervention data collection. The sample for the post-intervention data included 33 respondents 18 years and older. Participants live in the Antigua, Barbados, St. Kitts, Tobago, Trinidad, and Virgin Islands Conferences of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP). The intervention was implemented in May 2023 and concluded in June 2023.

Data were analyzed according to demographics, including age, education status, leadership status, and conference affiliation. The themes identified between the pre-intervention and post-intervention data were evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability.

*Pre-Test Data*

This section summarizes participants’ responses to the items in the demographic survey and the church leader self-assessment questionnaire.

**Figure 1.**

*Respondents by Age Range*

The sample comprised 30 respondents aged 18 to 90. Fifty percent of the respondents were between the ages of 55 and 72.

**Figure 2.**

*Education Status*

Respondents were asked to state the highest level of education attained, choosing from the following categories: Less than a high school diploma, High School or equivalent (GED), Some College, Associate Degree (AA, AS), Bachelor’s (BA, BS), Masters (MA, MS, MCJ, MPH), Professional (MD, DDS, DVM), and Doctoral (DMin, DPhil, EdD, Ph.D.). Responses ranged from 5.88% with High School/Equivalent degrees to 17.65% with a Doctorate. Eight point eight percent had some or no degree. Five point eight percent had an associate degree. The most significant number of participants, 35.29%, had a bachelor’s degree. Twenty-point-five percent had a master’s degree. Participants who obtained a professional degree equaled five point eight percent.

**Figure 3.**

*Leadership Status*

The church leaders included members of the clergy, lay pastors, acolytes, supplementary ministers, and lay members on the executive and provincial boards. Full-time clergy represented 47.06% of the data collected, lay pastors 2.94%, lay minister of Christian education 2.94%, acolytes 26.47%, laity on the executive board 14.71%, laity on the provincial board 5.88%. Respondents under the supplementary minister and clergy probationer category did not complete the survey (0%).

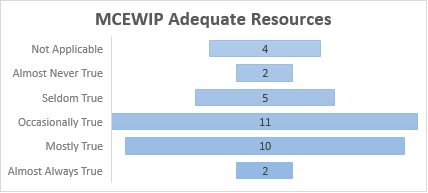
**Figure 4.**

*Conference Affiliation*

The Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) comprises six conferences (Antigua, Barbados, St. Kitts, Trinidad, Tobago, and the Virgin Islands). The six conferences consist of nine islands, including St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John (United States Virgin Islands), and Tortola, British Virgin Islands. Clergy members may be called to serve in any of the six conferences or nine islands. The data reflect that 56% of the respondents resided in the Virgin Islands Conference, 14.71% in the Antigua Conference, 2.94% in the Barbados Conference, 8.82% in the St. Kitts Conference, 5.88% in the Trinidad Conference, and 11.76% in the Tobago Conference.

**Figure 5.**

*MCEWIP Adequate Resources*



The responses to whether the MCEWIP has adequate resources to support its staff and members indicated that the church does not provide adequate resources to support its staff and members.

**Figure 6.**

*I Feel Appreciated and Valued by the PEC and the Executive Board*

The number of responses to the questions I feel appreciated and valued by the PEC and I feel appreciated and valued by the Executive Board yielded the exact responses. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents stated that it is seldom true or occasionally true that they feel appreciated and valued by the Provincial Elders’ Conference (PEC). The PEC is the administrative body of the church. The board consists of three ordained ministers, two elected laypersons, and one member who was co-opted to serve as the treasurer. The Executive Board is the administrative arm of each conference. The Executive Board consists of two members of the clergy and three lay members.

Twenty-point-five percent of the respondents noted that the question did not apply to them. Twenty-six percent said it is mostly true that they feel appreciated and valued by the PEC and Executive Board, and fourteen point seven percent said they always feel appreciated and valued by the PEC and Executive Board. According to Ficarra et al. (2023), trust and a sense of appreciation are vital in creating an organizational culture and enhancing social relations between management and staff.

**Figure 7.**

*Ministerial Staff, Personal Growth and Development*

Thirty-two percent of the respondents stated that it is mostly or always true that ministerial staff take advantage of learning opportunities for personal growth and development. Investing in the leadership and development of church leaders is critical to the church’s growth. According to Krispin (2020), the spiritual vitality of a church begins to wane in the absence of capable leadership. The responses indicated that more staff members must engage in learning opportunities for personal growth and development. The Ministerial Code of Ethics in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP, n.d.) asserts, “I will develop and maintain the professional skills that my ministry requires by regularly undertaking appropriate professional development and by maintaining membership in relevant professional associations, e.g., ministers’ fraternal; Christian Councils” (p. 5).

**Figure 8.**

*Ministerial Staff: Direction and Insecurity*

Church leaders asserted that forty-one percent occasionally felt insecure about their work and needed direction (41.18%). Additionally, 26.47% and 5.55%, respectively, said that they mostly, and it is almost always true that they felt insecure about their work and needed direction. The research indicates that church leaders in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) need guidance and security while leading the church in this unprecedented and changing world. Jikong (2020) stated, “Pastoral Leadership is not spared from the phenomenon of insecurity... Courageous Pastors/leaders are emotionally intelligent enough, culturally competent, and spiritually humble to acknowledge their insecurities and seek help” (p. 3).

**Figure 9.**

*Ministerial Staff – Congregation Receives Needed Care*

Fifty percent of respondents affirmed that the ministerial staff occasionally ensures that the entire congregation receives needed care. According to Bolsigner (2020), “the training that [pastors] received needed to be augmented with a different kind of leadership” (p. 6).

**Figure 10.**

*I Engage in Social Action Reform*

Seventy percent of the respondents declared that it is occasionally, seldom, or almost never true that they engage in social action reform (help for underserved or marginalized populations). Whereas different congregations or churches are involved in community service, church leaders must be awakened and engaged in “progressive social change efforts amid ongoing religious disaffiliation” (Delehanty, 2020, p. 1228). According to Ireland (2021), the church plays a central role as an agent of social change.

**Post-Test Data**

The post-intervention questionnaire was developed after reviewing the initial survey questions and comparing them with servant, transformational, and humble leadership styles considering five constructs: evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability. The five questions that made up the survey were:

1. What additional resources are needed from the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) to adequately support its staff and members in the work of ministry?
2. How can the Executive Board aid church leaders in feeling appreciated and valued by the board?
3. How might ministerial staff be better equipped to care for and nurture members of the congregation as they engage in church leadership?
4. How can church leaders engage in social action reform (help for underserved or marginalized populations) as they engage in culture leadership?
5. In what ways can I seek out challenging opportunities to test my skills and abilities?

The leadership style(s) and construct(s) that were identified with each question are as follows:

Q1. Servant Leadership and Stewardship.

Q2. Transformational Leadership and Team-Based Leadership.

Q3. Servant, Transformational, and Humble Leadership and Discipleship.

Q4. Servant and Transformational Leadership and Evangelism.

Q5. Transformational and Humble Leadership and Adaptability.

The themes that emerged from the post-intervention survey included personal and professional development, particularly continuing education, leadership training, and enhanced and open communication. Other themes were staff evaluation, additional and intentional staff support, greater accountability from staff, professional counseling services for church leaders and members of their families, greater cultural awareness across conferences, and consistent and effective leadership from church leaders. A culture of trust and respect among church leaders and collaboration between other churches and organizations in the community are other themes that emerged from the study.

The research reflects the need for church leaders to understand their role as leaders in these changing times, rethink the church’s practices, and how they engage the work of ministry. Packiam (2022) noted that church leaders serve in a unique role and have been adversely challenged by a rapidly shifting culture. Church leaders in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (EWIP) are encouraged to remember that their goal is to have an authentic relationship with God and work together as God’s disciples in fulfilling the Great Commission. Putman et al. (2013) asserted that

we need to raise biblical disciples and deploy them into the world so they can raise other disciples... Develop a biblical vision for your church, create a common language and definition of terms... consistently live out your vision, and constantly assess, correct course, and encourage (p. 230).

Effecting change that will transform the world and advance God’s Kingdom first requires transformation on the inside. Change begins with God’s human agents living the faith they profess and modeling Jesus Christ their example while fulfilling the Great Commission, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

**Results of the Intervention**

The results of the interventions suggest that the church has entered a new era where church leaders are called to rethink and retool as they engage in the work of ministry (Bolsinger, 2020). There is a clarion call for church leaders to intentionally focus on how they can facilitate church growth. The church’s administration, fellow church leaders, and members are encouraged to support church leaders in personal and professional development to be better equipped to lead the church in fulfilling the Great Commission.

The research question is “How much of the decline in church growth in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) is attributable to church leaders, and what can church leaders do to facilitate the church’s growth?” According to Myers (2020), “...true church growth occurs when the people who make up the church grow spiritually into Christlike maturity through loving service toward others” (p. 275). Church growth requires a willingness to change and be transformed by the Holy Spirit (Herrington et al., 2020). The research reflects that there is a dire need for church leaders in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies (MCEWIP) to engage in self and faith-reflection, personal and professional development, honest and open communication, team-based leadership, adaptability to cultural changes and shifts, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, and fulfilling the Great Commission.

Church leaders can facilitate the church's growth by acknowledging and accepting the need for transformation through spiritual growth, development, and Christlikeness. Myers (2020) affirmed, “When the church focuses on growing into healthy spirituality and Christlike maturity, it is then that God will work to add more people to the church as He sees fit” (p. 281). Jesus asserted in Matthew 16:18, “..on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” According to Whitesel (2020), “Today, the Church must again be led by the Holy Spirit guided by women and men who are not afraid to adjust methodology while retaining orthodoxy” (p. 41). Being open to change in one’s attitudes, perspectives, strategies, and actions will aid church leaders in increasing the church’s relevancy in the world and fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

**Personal and Professional Reflection**

As I journeyed through the research process, I reflected on the origin of the Moravian Church, its zeal for missionary work, and the expansion of God’s Kingdom from the first missionary journey in August 1732 to St. Thomas, Danish West Indies (Known today as the US Virgin Islands). Hutton (2017) indicated that the passion for expanding the Moravian Church in the Western Hemisphere was a burning desire to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all oppressed peoples.

In addition to preaching the Gospel, the Moravian Church Missionaries were pioneers in education. The missionaries provided an education for the enslaved people. The Moravian Church was one of the first organized religious bodies to establish primary and secondary schools for enslaved people in the West Indies (Hutton, 2017).

The Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) often boasts about its rich legacy in missionary endeavors, education, music, and other contributions to religious, social, and cultural heritage throughout the Caribbean and the world. The first great revival in modern-day church history occurred among the Moravians on August 13, 1457, in Bertheldorf, Germany (Greenfield, 2013). The first round-the-clock prayer meeting in church history occurred in the Moravian Community of Herrnhut in Saxony, Germany, in 1727. The prayer meeting continued non-stop for over one hundred years. The Moravian Church still observes the prayer watch throughout the worldwide Moravian Community (Hubbard, 2022). Knowing the legacy of the Moravian Church and the potential to do even greater works today, the questions that plagued my mind throughout the research process were, “Where did we go wrong?” “How do we once again become a church on fire for God while evangelizing the world?” Hebrews 10:23 asserts, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” The Moravian Church needs to “Think outside of the church.” As the mother of Missions, the Moravians need to get back to basics, fulfilling the Great Commission, even if it means sacrificing some of its “sacred” traditions.

**Implications for Leadership**

The results of this action research project are relevant to lead change in society because church leaders are encouraged to look at themselves, who they are, whose they are, what they have been called to do, to whom they have been called to be, and the changes that are necessary to correct the church’s ineffectiveness in aiding the church’s growth. Branson and Martinez (2023) stated that the church is God’s change agent. God calls church leaders and members to fulfill the Great Commission while being intentional, relevant, and effective in winning souls for the Lamb of God. According to Davis (2021),

We must acknowledge, accept, learn, embrace, and master cultural change, especially those resulting from Digital-Transformation, by pro-actively becoming “Positive-Force” Change-Agents in shaping cultural attitudes and norms. The alternative is to resign the Church to the continued steady decline in attendance and membership that stems from an increasing cultural irrelevance that is well underway and which may pose an existential threat to our Church and the world it serves (p. 149).

The results of this action research project are relevant to lead change in society, but the key is to lead change that will last (Havens, 2023 & Quinn, 2008).

The changing times require leadership in a new and unsettling way. Vaters (2020) asserts that change is accelerating; therefore, churches that refuse to change can experience decline or eventually die. As the Moravian Church reflects on its current state, being missional-minded, open, and receptive to fast-paced change is critical for its growth.

The dominant leadership theory that supports the results of this action research project is transformational leadership. According to Ming et al. (2021), change is theprimary focus of transformational leadership. Individuals, groups, and organizations use the transformational leadership style to produce constructive change in different spheres of life. In transformational leadership, leaders work beyond self-interest to inspire their followers to achieve their personal goals (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). According to Davis (2021), “Transformation is a core Christian competency” (p. 164).

[Jesus] used the existing communications tools of his day, "one-to-one" and "one-to-many" (evangelizing by "walking around"), meeting people where they lived, and being accessible to those in need of His message of love. In the process, He changed the world while re-branding the cross from an instrument of torture and death into a symbol of everlasting life and a worldwide icon of hope (p. 166).

Jesus Christ was the first Christian change agent in the world.

To effect the change required to develop its staff and members, members of the provincial and executive boards are encouraged to model the excellence required of those they lead. Additionally, church leaders must be good role models to members of their congregation and the community (Nicolaides & Duho, 2019). Chemin (2021) and Gaib et al. (2023) asserted that team-based leadership that promotes honest, open, and transparent communication encourages autonomy, allowing persons to be creative and effect change that may help the organization achieve its goals. Gaib et al. (2023) affirm that growth is influenced by transformational leadership. According to Rainer (2020),

The opportunity to lead change is likely greater than any other point in our lifetimes. Without a doubt, the world has changed. Without a doubt, western culture has shifted; And it has shifted largely against churches. Without a doubt, most church leaders have not been trained and equipped for this new season.

The church can embrace what Davis (2021) calls ‘“Churchpreneurs,” people who make creativity and innovation part of [the church’s] new DNA. ...take more risks ideating and developing new ministries, missions, and operational structures need to bring more people to Christ” (p. 124). Davis also said

perhaps we all need to follow Jesus’ lead and simplify the Church to save it. As Church-Leaders, we need to embrace change, not fear it, for otherwise, we will certainly fail in our duties. And lastly, we need to redefine our churches for a new population that right now either doesn’t know we exist because we’re not a part of the daily conversation they’re in or who outright reject us based on misconceptions and mistrust. The choice is ours (p. 124).

Ofori (2021) notes that the church is primarily about people and helping people positively transform their lives; therefore, transformational leaders motivate and encourage positive development for their followers. Muthuku et al., 2023 contended that transformational leaders foster a work environment with clear values, priorities, and standards. To fulfill the great commission, church leaders must model Jesus’ example as a transformational leader (Ming et al., 2021).

**Implications for Social Change**

The results of this action research project can help advance constructive social change through church leaders’ willingness and ability to engage in continuing education and equipping the saints for ministry through evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability. Parks (2021) affirmed that God has equipped the church, which is also the community, with all the resources it needs to provide long-term solutions that will offer sustainable outcomes to God’s people. Davis (2021) proposed that a divine shift in mindset and learning a new framework are necessary for church leaders to transform their sphere of influence collaboratively.

The church and its leaders are responsible for meeting society's different needs. The Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP) has the potential and resources to bring together diverse local churches to mobilize, collaborate, partner, and maximize the use of shared resources toward achieving a common goal of fulfilling the Great Commission. Throughout Scripture, Jesus ministered to the needs of all people (Davis, 2021). Jesus’ life in His community was relational; therefore, the church’s mission must begin with building healthy relationships with others.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Parks (2021) asserted that the church, God’s change agent, is viewed as irrelevant and out of touch with reality. Strommen (2020) said, “The church must be reshaped in order to hear the concerns of a new age and speak the gospel to people in a powerful way” (p. 59). There is a need for future research to include assessing the pulse of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies (MCEWIP) from the congregational viewpoint. Additional research is needed among church leaders at the conference and congregational levels to ascertain their giftings using the Clifton Strengths Assessment and the Enneagram. According to Ryan and Mosher (2021), humans are naturally social beings; thus, encouraging teamwork and teambuilding is crucial. Having staff complete the Clifton Strengths Finder Survey and the Enneagram to determine their top strength is one strategy for fostering togetherness.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Whether or not a church grows or declines depends on the church’s leadership. There was insufficient knowledge about what church leaders needed to do to evoke the substantial expansion of the church and its congregations. According to Schulz et al. (2019), church growth may depend on the church’s historical, sociological, societal, economic, and spiritual status, leadership, and practices. Further, various churches have different practices and principles that can aid their growth. To achieve church growth, church leaders must transcend overarching differences. According to several authors, churches are healthy when they align with God’s plan (Bolsinger, 2020; Rainer, 2020; Vaters, 2020).

Church leaders play a critical role in the church’s growth as leaders are responsible for building trust and open communication. Vaters (2020) said that trust is the currency of leadership. Church leaders are responsible for building healthy relationships and tending the fields so that the church may produce crops. The church is crucial in advancing God’s Kingdom through evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability (Sastrohartoyo et al., 2021). The church is called to be Great Commission Christians with an outward focus on winning and nurturing souls for the Lamb (Rainer, 2020). God’s power and people’s obedience to God will transform the world.

**APPENDIX A**

**Pre-Intervention Introductory Letter for Project Sponsors**

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

My name is Rev. Anique Elmes-Matthew, Ph.D. I am conducting an Action Research Project toward completing the Doctor of Social Leadership (DSL) program offered by Omega Graduate School, Dayton, Tennessee. The research focuses on church leaders' role in advancing church growth. To this end, I request your participation in this important project by completing a brief survey.

The study outcomes will include an analysis of the reported role of church leaders in advancing church growth in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province. The expected benefits of this study are an increase in the knowledge base and skill set of church leaders in advancing the church through evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability.The study consists of a demographic questionnaire and a survey related to the leadership and ministry of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP).

A software platform hosts the online survey that provides maximum security and integrity using industry standards for compliance and certification. Please click the link below for the online Letter of Consent and survey.A QR Bar Code is also provided; individuals can read this QR code using a smartphone, which will provide immediate access to the survey.

Thank you for participating.

**Survey URL:** <https://www.survio.com/survey/d/aem-arp23>

**QR Bar Code**

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I am grateful for your consideration and greatly appreciate your time and participation in this research project.

Anique Elmes-Matthew, Ph.D.

**APPENDIX B**

**Research Study Consent Form**

Research: Anique Elmes-Mathew, Ph.D., Doctoral Candidate, Omega Graduate School.

**Researcher’s statement**

Please read and consider the information carefully before agreeing to participate. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to decide whether to participate in the study. You may ask questions about the intent of the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the study or this form that is unclear. This process is called “informed consent.” You will receive a copy of this form for our records.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The research focused on church leaders’ role in advancing church growth. To this end request your participation in this important project by completing a brief survey. The study outcomes will include an analysis of the reported role of church leaders in advancing church growth in the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP). The expected benefits of this study are an increased knowledge base and skill set of church leaders in advancing the church through evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability. The study consists of a demographic questionnaire and a survey related to the leadership and ministry of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (MCEWIP).

**STUDY PROCEDURES**

Each church leader participant that provides access to the sample population is provided an introductory letter that describes the study. Data is collected from the responses to the online survey and subsequently exported into a spreadsheet for analysis.

Within two weeks of completing this survey, church leaders will be asked to participate in a 10-question survey that will focus on the major themes of the research. The questions will be organized logically to promote the transitions from question to question. The researcher will maintain the integrity of the data during the research process. The questionnaires will take at most 10 minutes to complete. The data will assess church leaders’ role in advancing church growth.

**Letter of Consent**: <https://www.survio.com/survey/d/aem-arp23>

**ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY**

Participation is optional.

**BENEFITS OF THE STUDY**

The expected benefits of this study are recognition of the role of church leaders in advancing church growth and encouraging prevention and intervention to decline in church growth. The data collected can provide insightful information for church leaders to use in enhancing church growth.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH INFORMATION**

The information you provide will be confidential. All data is coded by a unique identifier associated with your answer the researcher has no access to identifiable data the data collection does not elicit information that would require mandatory reporting (i.e., child abuse, or harm to self or others).

**Subject’s statement**:

The study has been explained to me, and I volunteer to participate in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. There are no significant risks expected from participating in this study. If I have questions later about the research, I can contact the researcher listed on the first page of this consent form.

I have read the above information and received answers to any questions. I offer my consent to participate in this study.

**APPENDIX C**

**Demographic Questionnaire**

Thank you for participating in this research study. Please answer each of the following questions.

1. What is your age range?

18 - 36

37 - 54

55 - 72

73 – 90+

1. Gender (M/F) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your Native Language?

English

Spanish

French

Other (specify)

1. Race/Ethnicity – Check all that apply.

Black/African American

Hispanic/Latino

White/Caucasian

Asian

Native American

Biracial/Multicultural

1. Current Relationship Status

Single

Married

Separated

Divorced

Widowed

1. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

* Less than a high school diploma
* High school degree or equivalent (GED)
* Some college, no degree
* Associate degree (AA, AS)
* Bachelor’s degree (BA, BS)
* Master’s degree (MA, MS, MEd)
* Professional degree (MD, DDS, DVM)
* Doctorate (DMin, DPhil, EdD, Ph.D.)

1. What is your current employment status within the church?

Full-time employment

Part-time employment

Leave of Absence

Furloughed

Secondment

Retired

Volunteer

1. Which income group does your household fall within (total income from all adults)

* Less than $20,000
* $21,000 – $30,000
* $31,000 to $40,000
* $41,000 to $50,000
* $51,000 to $60,000
* $60,000 to $75,000
* Over $75,000

1. How many adults are living in your household?\_\_\_
2. How many children 17 years and younger are living in your household?\_\_\_\_
3. Conference Affiliation

Antigua

Barbados

St. Kitts

Trinidad

Tobago

Virgin Islands

1. What is your leadership status?

* Full-Time Clergy
* Supplementary Minister
* Clergy, Probationer
* Lay Pastor
* Lay Minister of Christian Education
* Acolyte
* Executive Board (Laity)
* Provincial Board (Laity)

1. How long have you worked in or have been in leadership in the following Conference(s)?

(0-5 years) (6-10 years) (11-15 years) (16-20 years) (Over 20 years)

Antigua

(0-5 years) (6-10 years) (11-15 years) (16-20 years) (Over 20 years)

Barbados

(0-5 years) (6-10 years) (11-15 years) (16-20 years) (Over 20 years)

St. Kitts

(0-5 years) (6-10 years) (11-15 years) (16-20 years) (Over 20 years)

Trinidad

(0-5 years) (6-10 years) (11-15 years) (16-20 years) (Over 20 years)

Tobago

(0-5 years) (6-10 years) (11-15 years) (16-20 years) (Over 20 years)

Virgin Islands

(0-5 years) (6-10 years) (11-15 years) (16-20 years) (Over 20 years)

**APPENDIX D**

**Pre-Intervention Respondent Questionnaire**

**Church Leader Self-Assessment**

***(Clergy, Lay Pastors, Acolytes, Supplementary Ministers, Executive, and Provincial Boards)***

This questionnaire contains statements about your role as (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_). Next to each statement, circle the number that represents how strongly you feel about the statement by using the following scoring system:

**Almost Always True — 5; Mostly True — 4; Occasionally True — 3; Seldom True — 2; Almost Never True — 1 Not applicable - 0**

1. I am profoundly committed to listening attentively to others to ascertain the needs of the people I serve.
2. I am earnest about each individual’s personal, professional, and spiritual growth within the congregation/conference I serve.
3. I contextualize the Word of God by taking the unchanging Gospel into a changing culture.
4. I effectively communicate the vision and goals of the church.
5. I encourage the church’s members to support mission efforts.
6. I intentionally maintain relationships with non-believers to share my testimony.
7. I help others identify ministry gifts and become involved in ministry.
8. I am effective in equipping and empowering people for ministry.
9. The answer to poor finances in the church is better discipleship.
10. The answer to poor finances in the church is better stewardship.
11. The ministry of the church is relevant and contextual in this post-modern era.
12. I value the traditions of the church.
13. I support conference ministries.
14. I support provincial ministries.
15. The MCEWIP has adequate resources to support its staff and members.
16. I feel appreciated and valued by the PEC
17. I feel appreciated and valued by the Executive Board
18. The ministerial staff is provided with clear job descriptions.
19. I believe ministerial staff should be compensated based on credentials and years of experience.
20. The ministerial staff is adequately supported financially.
21. The ministerial staff takes advantage of learning opportunities (seminars, retreats, etc.) for personal growth and development.
22. Some ministerial staff members feel insecure about their work and need direction.
23. The ministerial staff ensures the smooth administrative function of the church.
24. The ministerial staff communicates the vision of the church.
25. The ministerial staff ensures that the entire congregation receives needed care.
26. I trust the administration of the church to do what is in the best interest of its staff.
27. I trust the administration of the church to do what is in the best interest of its members.
28. I have an honest, open, and transparent relationship with my colleagues.
29. I am missional in my approach to ministry.
30. I challenge people to examine and try new and innovative ways to engage in ministry.
31. I am knowledgeable about current issues in my community.
32. I am knowledgeable about current issues in my conference.
33. I am knowledgeable about current global issues.
34. I engage in social action reform (help for underserved or marginalized populations).
35. I set a personal example of what I expect of others.
36. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my skills and abilities.

**APPENDIX E**

**Post-Intervention Introductory Letter For Project Sponsors**

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

My name is Rev. Anique Elmes-Matthew, Ph.D. I am conducting an Action Research Project toward completing the Doctor of Social Leadership (DSL) program offered by Omega Graduate School, Dayton, Tennessee. The research focuses on church leaders' role in advancing church growth. To this end, I request your participation in this important project by completing a brief survey.

I appreciate the time that you took to complete the first survey. I am requesting your assistance in completing a post-intervention survey of five (5) questions. These questions reflect the constructs of evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability.

The respondents who took the initial survey are encouraged to use the same unique ID that you used in the first survey to 'sign' the consent form.

• An example of a way to remember the ID you selected in the first survey is to use the first 2 initials of your last name, the first 2 initials of your first name, and the last three digits of your phone number or birth year. Example: ElAn233.

• Respondents who did not complete the first survey are strongly encouraged to complete this important follow-up survey using the same ID format as the persons who completed the first survey as noted above. ElAn233.

A software platform hosts an online survey that provides maximum security and integrity using industry standards for compliance and certification. Please click the link below to access the online survey. A QR Bar Code is also provided; individuals can access this QR code using a smartphone’s camera, which will provide immediate access to the survey.

Thank you for participating. Your responses are critical to ascertain the role of church leaders in advancing church growth through evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability.

To access the survey, copy and paste the following URL into your web browser.

<https://www.survio.com/survey/d/B4H-aem-actionrp23>

or access using the following QR Bar Code.

QR Bar Code

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I am grateful for your consideration and greatly appreciate your time and participation in this research project.

Anique Elmes-Matthew, Ph.D.

**APPENDIX F**

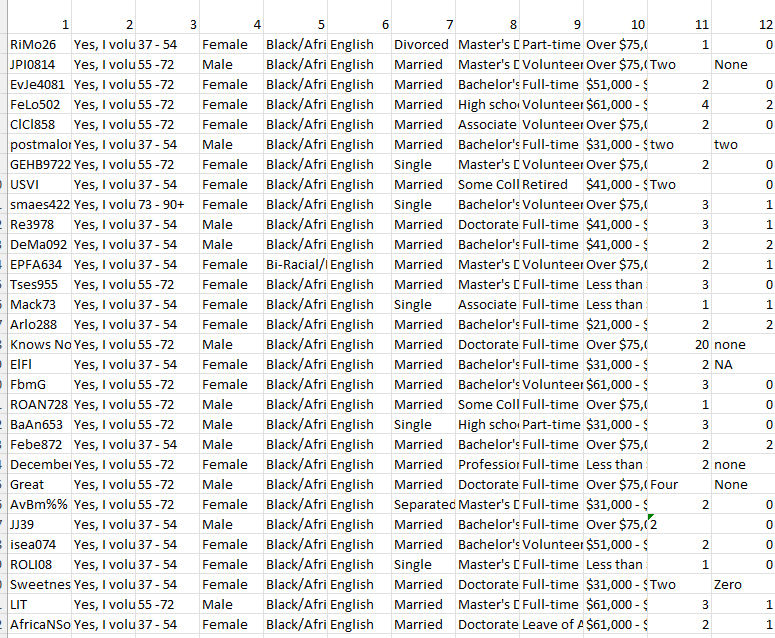
**Post-Intervention Respondent Questionnaire**

Please complete the post-intervention survey of five (5) questions. These questions reflect the constructs of evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, team-based leadership, and adaptability.

1. What additional resources are needed from MCEWIP to adequately support its staff and members in the work of the ministry?
2. How can the Executive Board aid church leaders in feeling appreciated and valued by the board?
3. How might ministerial staff be better equipped to care for and nurture members of the congregation as they engage in church leadership?
4. How can church leaders engage in social action reform (help for underserved or marginalized populations) as they engage in culture leadership?
5. In what ways can I seek out challenging opportunities to test my skills and abilities?

**APPENDIX G**

**Demographic Questionnaire Raw Data**



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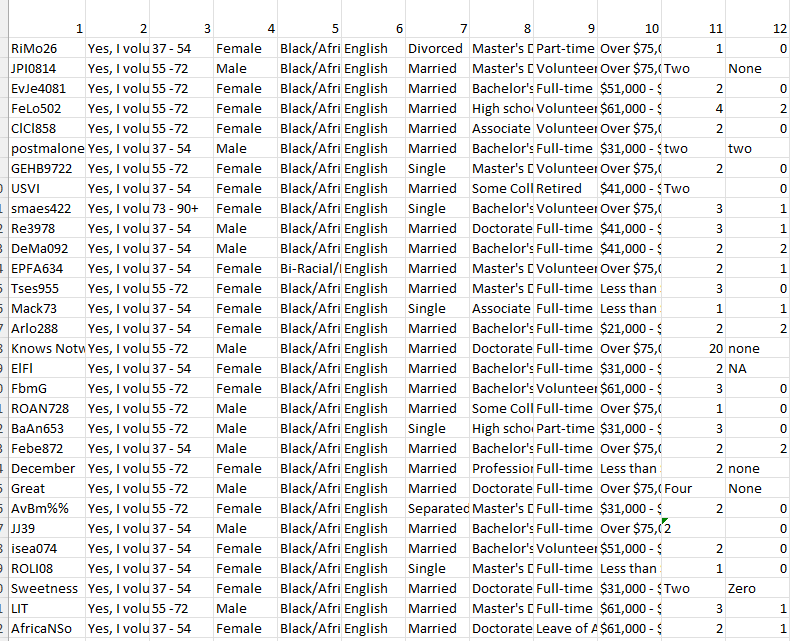
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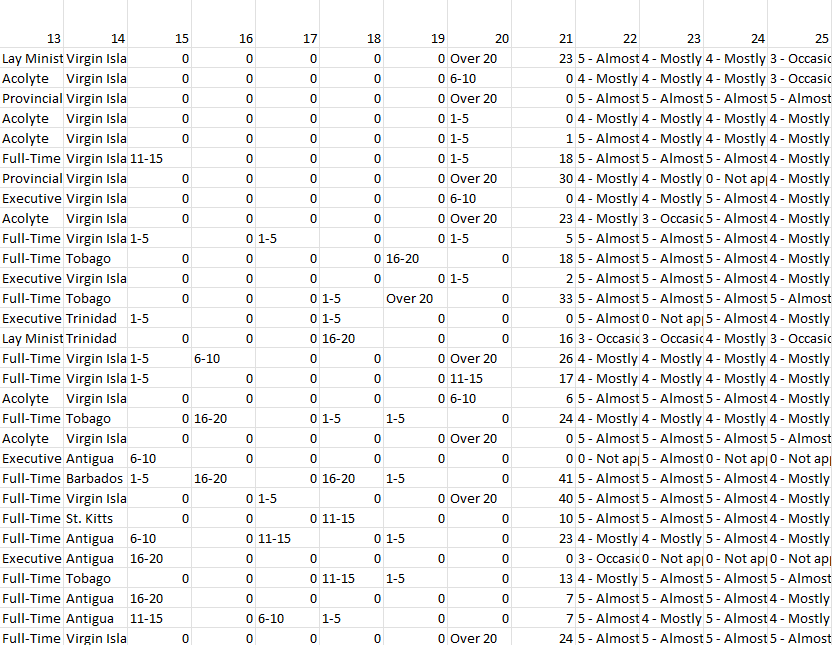
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**APPENDIX H**

**Pre-Intervention Respondent Questionnaire Raw Data**





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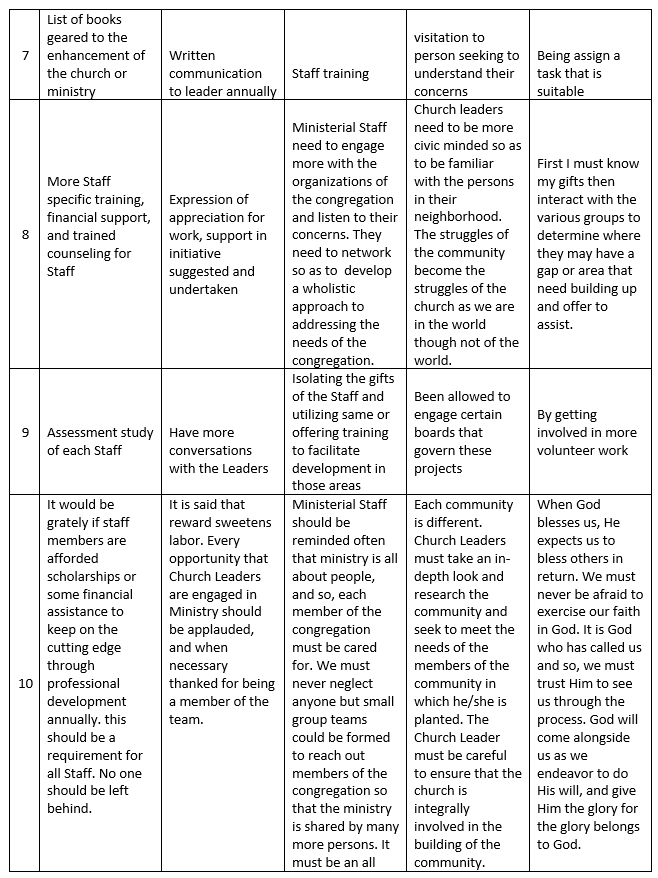
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**APPENDIX I**

**Post-Intervention Qualitative Questionnaire**

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