


Article

Church-Franchise: Missional Innovation for Church Planting and Leadership Mentorship in Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches in Africa

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Abstract: The great commission, as traditionally understood in Christendom, has been the core basis for church growth. Passion for the lost, evangelism outreach, conversions, and baptism followed by congregating, have culminated in church establishments. Pentecostals, especially the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches have attracted huge crowds. The thrust towards fulfilling the *Missio Dei* has seen micro-Neo-Pentecostal Churches and Neo-Prophetic Churches in Africa becoming enormous ministries over a short period of time. However, growth within Neo-Pentecostalism and Neo-Prophetism in the African setting has been associated with all kinds of challenges: leadership crisis, fund misuse, and a lack of accountability. Furthermore, controversy with regard to some of the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic leaders running these ‘churches’, has made headlines on several accounts within the social media space. It seems that there is a lack of leadership mentorship as many of them do not belong to a denominational body or lack the idea of ‘belonging’. In view of the aforementioned reasons and other related challenges, this article proposes an innovative missional model of franchising. The thrust of this article is to explore the possibility of *church-franchising* and how the *Nnobo* mission concept proposed by White (2019) offers an alternative framework within which to engage the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches for church planting and leadership mentorship.

Keywords: church-franchise; *Nnobo* mission concept; missiology; African Pentecostalism; Neo-Pentecostal churches; Neo-Prophetic churches



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1. Introduction

The common and widely accepted organizational structure within Christendom is denominationalism. Church denominations are not exclusive to Pentecostals, protestants, and evangelicals. It should be noted that other micro-church groupings have also assumed a denominational structure. To embed ‘structures’ into the day-to-day activities of the church does not suggest secularism. ‘Structures’ in this context refers to “a system that outlines how certain activities are directed in order to achieve the goals of an organization” (Kenton 2021). Unlike companies, churches are dualistic in nature—augmenting spirituality and organizational order. Handling spiritual matters does not substitute the place of order and authority within any church setting. Therefore, churches can be understood as dynamic spiritual organizations. The dualistic nature of the church suggests that the two most important components of effective ‘churching’ are solid spirituality and concrete organizational structure. If one underperforms the other, the imbalance distorts the integrity of the church. Many people have stemmed out of various denominations because of the imbalanced nature of church leadership and structure. Nowadays, new church plants, constant church membership shuffling (church-shopping/church hopping),¹ and church splits are common trends among churches. African Pentecostalism has not been an exception but tops the headlines worldwide due to the nature of church splits and leadership fights.

In Africa, the Pentecostal churches have fragmented in various ways but have also grown. Most of the church slips and leadership disorder are found among Neo-Pentecostals and Neo-Prophetic churches.

It is important to note that prophetism in African Pentecostalism is not a recent phenomenon, as noted by academics, such as Christian Baëta (1962), Paul Gifford (2004), Asamoah-Gyadu (2015), and Joseph Quayesi-Amakye (2011). To satisfy the needs of the moment, it is practiced differently and with new qualities at various times. Prophetism has played a significant role in the activity of many Christian traditions in Africa and still does. However, the modern era has seen the rise of prophets within the Neo-Pentecostal branch of African Pentecostalism. The rise of the prophet, or “spiritual father”, has been associated with controversies within this setting. Prosperity theology, exploitation of the poor, and lack of sound doctrine have characterized the newer form of African Pentecostalism Owojaiye (2019). Continual complaints about the abusive tendencies of some Pastors and Prophets have drawn media attention within South Africa, calling for social intervention by the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission). A lack of a regulatory advisory body for Independent or Indigenous Neo-Pentecostal churches has widened the gap for abusive tendencies by prophets on vulnerable micro-church leaders who subscribe to spiritual fathering as a mentorship covering. This has raised concerns in countries, such as Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Rwanda, and other parts of Africa (Kgatle 2017; Osanjo 2016; Asamoah-Gyadu 2015; Quayesi-Amakye 2011).

In view of the above, the article examines church-franchising as a missional innovative model toward church planting and leadership mentorship within the context of Neo-Pentecostalism. The study further engages the *Nnobia* mission concept as a framework for cooperation among micro-churches.

Although the term franchise is mostly used in the business and corporate environment, we are of the view that the concept can also be applied to the church, especially among the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic movements. In view of this, the article was approached from an interdisciplinary perspective by adopting the concept of franchising from the field of business as an innovative way to address some of the challenges of the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches in Africa. The novelty of this article is the conceptualization of the term franchise in the context of missiology. The concept of church-franchise was therefore developed by the authors in addressing the research problem. The authors used literature study and observation as tools for data gathering, and the data were presented thematically in the article.

The article would start with a brief overview of Pentecostalism in Africa and discuss issues surrounding denominationalism/Independence, as well as challenges within the Pentecostal family. This would help us to establish a good foundation for the focus of the article. We would then zoom in to discuss the need for an innovative approach to address the identified challenges within the Neo-Pentecostals and Neo-Prophetic Churches. This would be approached by conceptualizing the argument for church-franchising and some of its possible benefits.

2. Pentecostalism in Africa

In this subheading, we would give a general overview of Pentecostalism in Africa and narrow the discussion to issues related to the emergence and challenges of Neo-Pentecostalism and the Neo-Prophetic movement in Africa.

Pentecostalism is defined as a branch of Christianity that emphasizes one’s own salvation in Christ as a supernatural encounter with the Holy Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005, p. 12). The term ‘African Pentecostalism’ is used generally to cover churches and denominations that are pneumatic in orientation in Africa (Wariboko 2017, p. 2). White (2022b, pp. 128–30) argues that there are two main traditions in the Pentecostal Movement. They are the Classical Pentecostalism and the Neo-Pentecostalism. He noted that “the majority of the Classical Pentecostal Churches have structured leadership and administration, well-written church

constitutions, and church polity. The Neo-Pentecostal Churches, on the other hand, are independent churches that came into existence after the charismatic renewal of the 1960s and 1970s both within and outside of mainline Protestant Churches" (White 2022a, p. 3). White (2022b, p. 129) defines the Neo-Prophetic churches as "those whose ethos, style, and emphasis are supposedly Pentecostal yet depart from mainstream Pentecostal traditions to syncretistic Christianity. Their beliefs and practices are fused with psycho-theology rather than biblical theology". He argues that "Neo-Prophetic churches of this nature cannot be called Pentecostal churches but rather Reformed African Spiritual Churches (RASC)" (White 2022b, p. 129).

Denominationalism or Independence

In a broader sense, Pentecostalism is not a denomination. It is within Pentecostalism that the Classical groupings, are classified as denominations. Denominations have growth, leadership, and accountability benefits. Other Pentecostal divisions have assumed other forms of doing church, such as para-churches, indigenous ministries, independent churches, or interdenominational movements. These newer categories generally fall under the Neo-Pentecostal bracket. According to Jeavons (1998, p. 80), the diversity of religious organizations is striking. Included is everything from small gatherings to multimillion dollar ecumenical groups. Denominationalism presents the denomination as a voluntaristic ecclesial body or form, an organized religious movement (Richey 2001).

The word denomination implies that a group of churches is referred to as one member, denominated by a particular name, constitution, and core beliefs (Hudson 2005, pp. 2286–91). Thus, denominationalism is an inclusive term symbolizing togetherness. Unfortunately, rather than galvanizing and unifying, the idea of denominationalism amongst Pentecostals is fast becoming vulnerable as denominational wars, internal politics, and scandals within leadership have tainted some of the groupings/denominations. In view of the leadership challenges among the mainline Pentecostal churches, many youngsters with giftedness are jettisoning the Classical ship seeking unique church experience elsewhere beyond denominationalism. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013, pp. 35–38) termed this phenomenon among Pentecostals as democratization of spiritual gifts and anointing. The phenomenon has therefore led to the establishment of 'independent' and non-denominational African Pentecostal Churches. They are known in the academic setting as Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches (White 2022a, p. 3; 2022b, p. 129). The non-denominational nature of Neo-Pentecostalism has seen the third strand of the Pentecostal wave experience exponential growth. The mode and style of delivery has widened the gap between Classical Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals. Although many Classical Pentecostal gatherings tend to flock together within denominations, the Neo-Pentecostals and Neo-Prophetic Churches have seen independent micro-churches subscribing to the phenomenon of 'spiritual fatherhood'² (DiMaggio 1998, p. 10). As a result, 'freedoms' associated with this phenomenon have led to the commodification of the gospel and the exploitation of micro church resources. Their independent approach to church leadership and structure has created an ecclesiastical gap for good leadership, stewardship, accountability, and sound theology and ministry praxis. In subsequent subheading, we will discuss some of the challenges associated with the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches in Africa.

3. Challenges within Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches

What influences Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic leaders to gravitate toward the 'spiritual fatherhood phenomenon', rather than belonging to a church fraternity is a salient area for study: The previously discussed grouping concept of denominationalism is widely accepted and is considered the legitimate religious grouping. Criticism toward Neo-Pentecostals and Neo-Prophetic Churches is on the rise due to the idea of having novice, untrained, and rogue leaders pioneering non-denominated churches. These newly established churches have attracted large crowds within city centers led by charismatic leaders who use prophecy as an anchor to the founding of these churches. Very few gatherings of these new church establishments are considered as serious churches (DiMaggio 1998, p. 19). What could be possible challenges experienced by these churches that inhibit their

acceptance as authentic church gatherings? This article discusses three possible challenges: growth, leadership controversy, and accounting irregularities/lack of good stewardship.

3.1. The Growth Challenge

Two major themes identified with Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic theologies are growth and fame. Although, growth is often interpreted as success, challenges can be encountered when growth is not handled properly. The uncoordinated and disconnectedness of Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches has contributed to the rapid spread of micro churches with no impact. Mainly city centers have been dominated by the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Church plants, attracting the affluent in society. These newly established churches are uncoordinated and non-affiliates. Hence, there is an over crowdedness of identical churches in a small local catchment. The growth pattern indicates two distinct numerical pointers; internally, growth in terms of church attendance and membership at a single church gathering and externally, growth in terms of new church plants who may not necessarily belong to the same church brand but belong to the Neo-Pentecostal or Neo-Prophetic grouping. These indicators of numerical growth are also indicative of the expansion taking place in other keys area of the 'church'.

However, a lack of proper management has brought the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic groupings under scrutiny in their operational communities. It is evidenced that all mismanagement boils down to the man leading the church. Complaints with regard to abusive tendencies have drawn media attention in many African countries (Kgatle 2017; Osanjo 2016; Asamoah-Gyadu 2015; Quayesi-Amakye 2011).

3.2. The Leadership Challenge

The failure or success of any organization is dependent on leadership. The leadership hierarchy within the Neo-Pentecostals and Neo-Prophetic settings is such that the top leader has exclusive powers (DiMaggio 1998, p. 13). The impact of such a model for leadership Mentorship is such that the quality of religiosity to whom an actor is linked, is weighted by the disposition of the central figure. The majority of the rogue leaders within Neo-Pentecostalism and Neo-Prophetic Churches have labelled themselves as 'prophets', insinuating the idea of 'being led by spirit'; hence, 'all' is under the leader's divine instruction and supervision. This position denotes elements of hegemony, and it shuns the idea of accountability to recognizable apostolic or ecumenical councils. Instead, up and coming prophets has chosen to submit to other wealthier prophets, who are considered as 'spiritual fathers'. Undoubtedly, the guild of prophets is endowed with charismatic powers, a challenge is experienced in terms of accountability to other 'Men or Women of God' who may not necessarily be saluted as prophets. The majority of Neo-Pentecostal or Neo-Prophetic Churches vanish from existence because of the founding 'prophet', who may get arrested or abandon the congregation. This pattern shows that the majority of these churches are primarily built on the personhood of the 'prophet' rather than doctrine or strong organizational structures. It should however be noted at this point that there are other Neo-Pentecostals, who do not affiliate with the spiritual fathering phenomenon but affiliate with other church organizations such as para-churches or missionary churches.

3.3. The Accountability Challenge

Accountability and good stewardship of resources is very important in leadership. However, where there are no regulations for leadership accountability, people tend to abuse their leadership authority in the area of resource management. This is exactly the case in many Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches in Africa. In the light of the gaps in good stewardship and accountability, one might argue that imposters may have entered into the 'church' because the very absence of regulation makes it easier to engage in fraud without detection (DiMaggio 1998, p. 13). A lack of denominational hierarchy among the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches in Africa has led to autonomy and haphazard and unconventional ways of doing church. The three stems,

growth, leadership, and accountability, have a direct link with a church's operations as an organization with set structures (White and Acheampong 2017). These therefore call for the need for innovative strategy.

4. The Need for Innovative Strategy

The church as a cohesive organism must learn to adapt or find better ways of doing things, especially in response to its environment (White 2019, p. 1). It is clear that activities of many Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches in Africa have been relegated to spiritual dealings without any importance placed on organizational structures. In view of this, it is therefore our argument that these churches should start thinking of adopting the concept of franchise in order to address some of their challenges. We are fully aware that the mentioning of the term 'franchise' over church organizations may invite criticism. However, early dismissal of the concept within a religious framework denies the church the innovative privilege. In this modern era whereby Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches are emerging everywhere led by untrained prophets, there is a need for a missional innovative strategy that enables leadership mentorship and innovative church planting strategies. The relevance of mentorship must be targeted at the youthful leaders founding these churches.

Furthermore, our submission is also based on the fact that the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches in Africa have drawn little attention from theorists in the area of organizational analysis (Jeavons 1998, p. 79). Hence, this article set an academic conversation toward the accommodation of innovative ideas in terms of church organization. The business world implements innovative and strategic plans to curb challenges faced by small- to medium-scale business. In like manner, there is a need for a non-commercial franchise in the context of the church. This approach therefore becomes relevant in the context of the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches. Our argument is based on the dual dynamic of the 'church' both as organization and spiritual house.

Churches may be considered as institutions because of the nature of service the church offer to the community. In addition to the above, since much of religious activity is institutionalized and carried out through formality, thus conducting church formally can be dubbed "organized Religion" (DiMaggio 1998, p. 10). We submit that beyond denominationalism or independence lays a clevis of untapped innovation of church-franchise. Before we propose a franchising model for Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches that are fragmented, there is a need to respond to the question, "How can franchising be religiously implemented?" In the attempt to find possible ideals, there is a need to cross-examine 'franchising' as a cooperative concept.

5. Franchising

The term "franchising" has been primarily used within the discipline of business studies. "Franchise" is a term used to refer to a method of licensing a business trademark or brand. Brand distribution can also be referred to as "franchising". This ubiquitous effect of franchises has granted consumers the opportunity to enjoy similar products anywhere in the world. Historically, franchising had a strong introduction by General Motors in 1908 and by Rexall in 1902. Firms within the fields of petroleum, soft drink bottling companies, auto accessories, and variety stores entered this method of distribution (Rothenberg 1967, p. 53). Franchise, licensing, or franchising can be used interchangeably (Rothenberg 1967, p. 57). The franchisee uses the franchisor's trademarks, business techniques, and some or all the merchandise. Furthermore, the relationship between the franchisor and the franchisee can be defined as continual, such that the total of the franchisor's knowledge, image, successes, and manufacturing or marketing techniques are supplied to a franchisee for a consideration (Rothenberg 1967, p. 57).

Conceptually, the Encyclopaedia of the Entrepreneur South Africa (2021), states that a franchisable business must have the following characteristics: it must be established and offer a unique concept that is teachable and provides adequate returns to potential franchisees.³ Additionally, there are six ingredients of a franchise business: technical knowl-

edge, managerial techniques, commercial knowledge, financial instruction, accounting controls, and protective safeguards (Rothenberg 1967, p. 54). Also, there three perspectives on franchising: limited resources, administrative efficiency, and risk management (Combs and Castrogiovanni 1994, p. 37). Furthermore, formulas are essential in the establishment of a variety of franchises: conventional, mobile, co-ownership, licensee, service, manufacturing, and geographical (Rothenberg 1967, p. 67). The common franchisor example is the McDonald's who sold hamburgers locally but chose to franchise. Unlike Ritzer (1993, p. 7), who formulated a quadrilateral model of what he dubbed the "McDonaldization" of society, referring to the 'franchising' aspect of modern organizations, this article does not suggest a McDonaldization of the church. Discussions in subsequent heading would clarify our conceptualization of the term franchise in the context of the church and missiological perspective.

Church-Franchise: An Innovative Missional Approach

Seeing the term 'church-franchise' may raise questions, such as: Can a church be "franchised" or does the church have capabilities to franchise? What aspects of a church can be franchised? To clarify this concern, the construction of the term church-franchising is comprised of two words, church and franchise. Franchising appeals to the organizational aspect, while liturgy appeals to the spiritual aspect of the church. The construction of these two terms do not imply a merger between that which is secular and that which is sacred. A church is not only an organization, but the life of the church in the world has assumed an institutional form (Ammerman 2005, p. 353). However, the institutional spectrum is not limited to a bimodal "faith" or "organization" bracket. Religious organizations do have a moral and spiritual dimension that distinguishes them from other voluntary organizations, but this spiritual dimension is not reducible to doctrinal rigidity that invariably dictates a uniquely "religious" institutional form (Ammerman 2005, p. 353).

Our objective for propounding the concept of church-franchise is to demystify the misconceptions and myths with regard to 'franchising'. Firstly, franchising is not 'commercializing'. Religious organizations, in the form of churches, differ from nonreligious organizations (DiMaggio 1998, p. 14). What constitutes a "church" to be considered as religious is the faith culture and spiritual beliefs in the triune God. The missional mandate of the church is to serve the community through the power of the Holy Spirit. Lyon (2000, p. 76) argues against secularization that reduces religion to a 'choice making' aspect of consumerism, whereby items are selected and purchased. Unlike businesses that are concerned with market value, profit, and products, churches produce less tangible things: worship services, educational programs, social activities, and works of service—most of which flow directly from voluntary collective participation (Wuthnow 1994). Secondly, franchising is not secularizing. Limiting the idea of franchising to business ventures shows that the concept is poorly understood. Understanding 'franchising' as a neutral term grants any organization the privilege to franchise because there is more to franchising than the commercial or secular effect. Fundamentally, understanding 'franchising' as a model of expansion and management becomes crucial. Against this critical reflection, there seems to be a ray of possibility for the construction of 'church-franchising' as a viable venture. One such possibility or benefit is missional branding of member churches.

Branding transforms how we manage an organizational identity, its culture, and innovation (Kornberger 2010, p. xi). It is a management weapon of choice to structure the internal functions of organizations (Kornberger 2010, p. 10). In linking branding to the field of missiology, White (2019, p. 2), defines missional branding as a process by which churches present themselves as a unique entity with a unique call in their participation in the *missio Dei*. Lyon (2000, p. 76) argues that faith brand building is a key source of sustainable advantage for the church because of the increasing rate of secularization that has linked religious choice to making a choice of consumer items. Branding is necessary when congregants are increasingly becoming brand conscious (White 2019, p. 2). Branding the church as a franchise invites collective independent ideas to pour

into a single organizational identity. Unlike denominations that uphold strict culture, at the center of the franchise is a brand, enabling franchisor assemblies to maintain their own unique culture. This suggests moving away from organizational culture onto organizational structure. Although serving a communal missional goal as denominational structures, the church-franchise grants the Neo-Pentecostal churches local church autonomy as well as accountability to the franchise in terms of branding. This therefore becomes an innovative missional approach in the context of franchise.

Combs and Castrogiovanni (1994, p. 37) developed three perspectives that can help us in interpreting this concept:

- the limited resource perspective suggests that the organizations use franchise arrangement to extend scarce cooperate resources—(*growth challenges*);
- the administrative efficiency suggests that leaders must be monitored to ensure that they are performing in line with agreed standards or brand—(*leadership challenges*);
- the risk management perspective focuses on the nature of risk and the preference to use franchising to manage risk—(*accountability*).

6. Possible Missional Benefits of Church-Franchise

Missional benefits for church-franchising are enormous, but, in this article, we focus on only two of them, namely, growth benefit and leadership and accountability benefits.

6.1. The Growth Benefits of Applying the Concept of Church-Franchise

Franchising is an innovative ways to scale up micro business ventures, hence churches can maintain healthy and sustainable churches through franchising. Churches grow due to conversion that leads to implantation and fellowship within a particular congregation (Verkuyl 1977, p. 184). It is interesting to compare successful religious organizations to a well-established franchise operation, in that both face challenges when it comes to expansion (DiMaggio 1998, p. 14). Church-franchising offers a hub of collective ideas and resources, maintaining oversight and guidance over localized action. This is called fragmented centralization, whereby resources come from the center, although other affiliate churches uphold different agendas and different rules (DiMaggio 1998, p. 12).

Unlike the ‘spiritual fatherhood’ concept among some Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches where the ‘spiritual father’ hoards resources from impoverished micro-churches, church-franchising maintains resources at the local level, granting surplus aid from collective schemes. At the organizational level, churches that maintain close ties with other churches will be more successful and effective in establishing joint services and more capable of solving internal problems that require external support (DiMaggio 1998, p. 18). In White and Dzor’s (2019) argument for the need for collective approaches in undertaking the missional mandate of the church, they proposed the *Nnobia* mission concept. The term *Nnobia* is derived from the Akan language of Ghana. *Nnobia* simply means “cooperative”, adopted from cooperative farming initiatives through trust, reciprocity, and communality (White and Dzor 2019, p. 228). The *Nnobia* mission concept is defined as “mobilizing effort of a community of Christianity (laity and clergy) and churches in fulfilling Christian mission and church planting” (White and Dzor 2019, p. 228). The *Nnobia* framework of collectivism is recommended against the idea of individualism. Franchised churches can use strategic and cost-effective church planting strategies by implementing the *Nnobia* mission concept (White and Dzor 2019, p. 228). This would help them to cooperatively support one another in diverse ways.

6.2. The Leadership and Accountability Benefit of Applying the Concept of Church-Franchise

According to Means (2008, p. 350), organizational management relates more closely to the stewardship of human and capital resources. Management presupposes authority, power, and prerogatives, and these are derived from some form of organized cooperation (White and Acheampong 2017, pp. 2–4). Despite the idea that African church leaders who do not have European ties cannot organize themselves, African leaders can manage

churches just as well as their European counterparts (Elphick 2012, p. 12). The betterment of Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic leaders lies in working together. Some of the major challenges leaders of Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic Churches are facing include but are not limited to little or no theological training and lack of leadership structure and accountability. We are of the view that church-franchising could be one of the possible ways to curb the above-named challenges. In the implication of church-franchising as an innovative missional approach, there should be requirements for leadership development, and a code of ethics one is required to comply as a member. If this is properly implemented, member churches would benefit in the area of leadership mentorship and training, as well as accountability and good stewardship.

At the organizational level, churches that maintain close ties with other churches will be more successful and effective in establishing joint services and more capable of solving internal problems that require external support (DiMaggio 1998, p. 18). A single Neo-Pentecostal or Neo-Prophetic church can affiliate, fit within, contribute to, and borrow from the larger franchise. The decision to join with other churches should be on a voluntary basis. The voluntary and consensual nature of these independent church units bring out a sense of respect, loyalty, and acknowledgement of the 'other'.

7. Conclusions

This article argues for church-franchising as an innovative missional strategy and framework for collectivism toward the fulfilment of the *Missio Dei* with specific reference to the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches in Africa. The article started with an overview of Pentecostalism in Africa. We also discussed the two major Pentecostal traditions as well as differences between them and the Neo-Prophetic Churches in Africa. The article considered some of the factors that have necessitated our call for the consideration of the concept of church-franchise as a missional tool in addressing some of the challenges of the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches in Africa. The article also discussed some of the possible missional benefits that may be derived from adopting the concept of church-franchise.

We argued that the need for strategic alliances, conglomerations, and cooperatives encapsulates the idea of collectivism as presented by the concept of franchise. Despite the challenge of bringing into agreement independent churches, there is hope in a collective idea of conducting church. Thus, the development of church-franchising as a missional innovative strategy would encourage cohesion rather than conflict within Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches in Africa. We are of the view that collective church resources cannot be limited to denominationalism, hence our proposal for church-franchise among the Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Prophetic churches in Africa.

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Notes

- ¹ The term 'church-shopping/church hopping' use in this article is in reference to situations where people move from one church to the other at any given time without a personal commitment to a particular church.

- ² The concept of spiritual fatherhood among the Neo-Pentecostals and Neo-Prophetic churches in Africa refers to a process whereby a younger Pastor or Prophet submits to a 'senior/influential' Prophet or Pastor for mentorship, ministerial oversight/covering, and recognition. It is sometimes approached in the form of affiliation.
- ³ Entrepreneur South Africa. 2021. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia/franchisable-> (accessed on 3 November 2021).

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