

# 'Go deeper papa, prophesy, do something': The popularity and commercialisation of prophetic deliverance in African Pentecostalism

**Author:**Mookgo S. Kgatle<sup>1</sup> **Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, School of Humanities, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

**Corresponding author:**

Mookgo Kgatle,  
kgatls@unisa.ac.za

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Traditionally, the ministry of deliverance in African Pentecostalism involves the deliverance from generational curses, deliverance as spiritual warfare against witchcraft and other demonic forces and deliverance for healing. Most scholars have already covered the traditional practices of the ministry of deliverance. In this article what is new is the study of deliverance ministry within New Prophetic Churches (NPCs) in South Africa, which the article argues that it is different from the traditional practices. The deliverance ministry among the NPCs is a prophetic dimension that involves the consultation with the prophet to receive freedom from one's predicaments. This dimension of deliverance raises a challenge of commercialisation within the practice of deliverance in Africa. To deal with the commercialisation of the ministry of deliverance, NPC pastors should heed the call of Jesus in Matthew 10:8 to give freely as they have received freely.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** Jesus' call for his disciples to minister freely to the needs of the people in the New Testament is juxtaposed with the missiological approaches on the commercialisation of religion in the context of the ministry of deliverance within NPCs such as Enlightened Christian Gathering in South Africa.

**Keywords:** deliverance; Pentecostalism; commercialisation; prophecy; witchcraft; healing; generational curses.

## Introduction

Deliverance is a phenomenon that can be traced in the ministry of Jesus in the gospels, the ministry of his disciples in the early church (Luke-Acts) and the various African contexts. In the ministry of Jesus and his disciples, it has the significance of liberating people from demonic power and influence; hence, Jesus and his disciples' ministries were involved in the casting out of demons from people (Hammond 1991, cf. Bottari 2000). This makes the phenomenon of deliverance to be closely linked with exorcism in the casting out of demons. However, deliverance goes further than the casting out of demons, it has other roles such as bringing healing and provoking the spirit world through the prayer of deliverance (see Maddox 2013, cf. Horrobin 2008). Similarly, in the African traditional worldview, deliverance is not limited to exorcism but deals with other challenges in the spirit world such as illnesses, misfortunes, evil, witchcraft, failures, miscarriages, barrenness, lack of employment and others. Therefore, the demand on African traditional practices including visiting a traditional doctor is informed by the quest to receive deliverance from challenges such as those highlighted above.

Deliverance is practiced in the Pentecostal tradition. Pentecostalism is a movement that emphasises the direct relationship with God through the work of the Holy Spirit (see Anderson 1991; Hollenweger 1997; Kalu 2008). In South Africa, Pentecostalism can be divided into four sub-traditions: classical Pentecostalism, independent Pentecostalism, charismatic movement and the prophetic Pentecostalism also known as New Prophetic Churches (NPCs).<sup>1</sup> However, the ministry of deliverance is not common among the classical Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Contrarily, these churches use the conventional ways, such as the laying on of hands and prayer when

1. By the NPCs in South Africa, one refers to churches that have maintained some of the features of traditional Pentecostalism but are very much peculiar in their theology. These churches are known for prophetic consultations, prophetic objects, prophetic miracles, and prophetic titles. These are churches like the Enlightened Christian Gathering of the controversial Prophet Shepherd Bushiri, Alleluia ministries of Pastor Alph Lukau and incredible happenings of Pastor Paseka Motsoeneng (see Kgatle 2019a).

**Note:** Special Collection: African Hermeneutics.

confronted with different challenges. It is also correct to point out that the NPCs emphasise the importance of deliverance than all other sub-traditions of Pentecostalism in South Africa (see Aloorh 2018). These churches agree with the African traditional worldview in the use of deliverance to confront African challenges. The NPCs like Jesus and his disciples define salvation as not only involving conversion but as including deliverance that deals with the challenges of Africans as caused by the spirit world. However, a closer look at the ministry of deliverance among these churches reveals that it is a commercialised entity that is inconsistent with the way Jesus and his disciples practiced the ministry of deliverance. Hence, this article recommends a different practice of the ministry of deliverance.

Literature review shows that Pentecostal Scholars interested in the study of the ministry of deliverance in an African context have highlighted how deliverance is related to freedom from generational curses (Asamoah-Gyadu 2004). Other studies reflected on deliverance as spiritual warfare against witchcraft and other demonic forces (Onyinah 2002, cf. Asamoah-Gyadu 2015; Garrard 2017; Gifford 2014; eds. Währisch-Oblau & Wrogemann 2015). Hence, deliverance is commonly practiced in night vigils whereby those looking for deliverance are willing to engage in spiritual warfare by praying the whole night (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007). Deliverance is also done to receive healing for sicknesses that western medicine cannot deal with in the African context (Baffour 2005, cf. Chitando & Biri 2016). Hence, Gifford (2004:89) found similarities between deliverance and the pre-Christian traditional practices that address peculiar challenges in Africa. Therefore, according to Gifford (2001:73), deliverance can be defined as Africa's creative way of addressing challenges in the continent (Gifford 2001:73). In this article, the prophetic dimension of deliverance is addressed as brought about by the NPCs in South Africa. This article has five sections; in the first section, the article introduces the traditional practices of the ministry of deliverance, the second section will deal with the prophetic dimension of the ministry of deliverance among the NPCs, the third section is about the popularity of the prophetic dimension of deliverance ministry in South Africa, the fourth section reflects on the challenge of commercialisation of the prophetic dimension as brought about by the NPCs and the last section is a recommendation on the ministry of 'giving freely' as taught by Jesus in Matthew 10:8 to address the problem of the commercialisation of the prophetic dimension in the ministry of deliverance among the NPCs.

## The traditional practices of deliverance

Central to the ministry of deliverance is the deliverance from generational curses, which is connected to socio-cultural aspects of the life in the global south (Yong 2010). Generational curses in this instance refer to the events that happened within a particular family from one generation to another generation. The perception is that these curses are

the main cause of stagnation or a lack of progress in a particular family (Asamoah-Gyadu 2004:389). Thus, deliverance comes as a remedy to generational curses upon the lives of the people or a family and the other role of deliverance is to reverse such a curse to the original source from where it emanated. Therefore, the phrase 'back to the sender' is very common among the deliverance practitioners in Africa. Some churches in Africa believe that salvation is incomplete without deliverance; hence, once delivered, the candidate is free and can enjoy the fruit of salvation upon their lives (Asamoah-Gyadu 2004:389). The reason a complete salvation comes only after deliverance is the argument that even if one is born again, the person can still carry generational curses. Therefore, in Africa, salvation should be accompanied by the work of deliverance for the believer to experience release from all kinds of curses in all the areas of their lives (Onyinah 2002:107).

The second traditional practice is deliverance as it relates to the confrontation of witchcraft. Anderson (2006:120) says, 'Witchcraft' and 'demons' are now virtually interchangeable and synonymous terms in African Pentecostalism'. The theme of witchcraft and deliverance is so strong such that in many churches, it has replaced the usual preaching of the gospel (Garrard 2017:52). The theme is related to an engagement in spiritual warfare to fight witchcraft and other demonic forces. In the words of Adogame (2012:76), 'One main thrust of African Pentecostal religiosity is the preponderance of deliverance and spiritual warfare rituals in their cosmological tradition'. Adogame (2012:93) continues to say that this spiritual warfare against witchcraft is expressed in warfare rhetoric such as 'warfare prayers, battle cry, bullets of fire, spiritual terrorists, deliverance by fire, sword of deliverance, prayer warriors, divine revolution, military strategy, militant prayers' and so forth. Many Africans have initially doubted the western Christianity in terms of dealing with evil in the spirit world. Thus, according to Anderson (2003:181) quoted in Shilubane (2017:13), the confrontation of witchcraft through spiritual warfare in African Pentecostalism is done to bring confidence in the Christian belief. Hence, in areas where the fear of witchcraft is prevalent, the ministry of deliverance also thrives, especially among Pentecostals who have recently joined their churches (Garrard 2017:53).

The last traditional practice is deliverance as it relates to healing. Asamoah-Gyadu (2015:24) explains that when medical diagnosis and treatment fails, Pentecostals are quick to interpret the ailment or any sickness as being caused by a spiritual problem, which will then call for divine healing. Hence, there is a strong element of the supernatural in Pentecostalism for both the diagnosis and the healing of diseases (Asamoah-Gyadu 2016:1646). This type of healing according to Haustein (2011:538) includes 'words of knowledge describing the presence of people with medical or psychological symptoms of possessions, such as headaches, excessive worries, or lack of sleep'. Moreover, in deliverance, according to Chitando (2009:38), there is a claim to be able to treat patients

suffering from all manner of illnesses caused by 'witchcraft and sorcery, chronic headaches, barrenness, impotence, stomach-ache, sexually transmitted infections, and a variety of cancers'. However, Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:98) argues that in an African context where there are so many challenges facing many nations, healing is not only about dealing with sickness but also seeking God's hand in other challenges. Asamoah-Gyadu explains why Pentecostals see a need for a holistic healing that involves body, soul and spirit not only the healing of a physical illness. Therefore, in Pentecostalism according to Baffour (2005:269), 'The ultimate purpose of healing and deliverance is to provide well-being and relief from afflictions through the power of the Holy Spirit'.

## The prophetic dimension of deliverance

New Prophetic Church prophets like Prophet Shepherd Bushiri of Enlightened Christian Gathering (ECG) based in South Africa, Pastor Alph Lukau of Alleluia ministries and others are involved with the ministry of deliverance (Banda 2019; Ramantswana 2019; Dube 2020). Alph Lukau is a renowned author and power televangelist with hundreds of thousands of men and women under his direct leadership. He is the senior Pastor and General Overseer of Alleluia Ministries International, which he has founded in February 2002 in Johannesburg. Prophet Shepherd Bushiri is the most popular and controversial within the circles of prophetic churches in South Africa. The NPC prophets like Bushiri acknowledge the traditional practices like deliverance from generational curses, deliverance from witchcraft and deliverance for healing but add the 'prophetic dimension'. Bushiri gained his experience on the prophetic from his so-called 'spiritual father', Uebert Angel, a British-Zimbabwean Businessman and prophet (see Kgatle 2019b:1). Angel practiced prophetic deliverance in Zimbabwe for a long time but now lives in the United Kingdom and has imparted the gift to his son Bushiri. However, there are other prophets in Zimbabwe that have kept the prophetic dimension, which is very much related to the phenomenon in South Africa. These according to Chitando and Biri (2016:1, cf. Shumba & Mutara 2018:1.) include the likes of Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa of United Family International Church (UFIC) and Walter Magaya of Prophetic Healing Deliverance Ministries (P.H.D). Both Makandiwa and Magaya practice the prophetic dimension of deliverance ministries in Zimbabwe and are the close allies of Prophet Shepherd Bushiri. The two are also popular in South Africa as many followers of NPCs visit Zimbabwe to receive prophecies in relation to their lives. However, Bushiri is on his own league when it comes to the prophetic (Kgatle 2019b:1).

This type of churches might have become popular in the last few years in South Africa but have footprints in other regions in Africa specifically West Africa. From a Ghanaian perspective, Omenyo (2011) reflected on these churches and highlighted some similarities that exist between them and other old traditions of African Pentecostalism. However, in

his other article, Omenyo and Arthur (2013) argue that the NPCs have been able to find synergy between biblical hermeneutics and African culture, which is something that other traditional Pentecostal movements have not done in the past. The unique contribution of NPCs is what Kgatle and Mofokeng (2019) have also found to be the reality in a South African context. Another Ghanaian contribution is Quayesi-Amakye's (2015) 'Prophetism in Ghana's New Prophetic Churches', which highlighted the centrality of the prophet within these types of churches (cf Ramantswana 2019:1). Quayesi-Amakye (2015) also raised the issues of the dependability of the society towards the prophets and their gullibility to bizarre acts by many prophets. Again, the bizarre acts as highlighted in Ghana is the hallmark of the NPCs in South Africa (Kgatle 2017). However, Tsekpo (2019:285) argues that regardless of the challenges of bizarre acts, the prophetic ministry has a role to play in Pentecostalism, and thus weaknesses and strengths should properly be examined to move forward.

According to Shilubane (2017:13, 88), the prophetic dimension is different from other traditional practices because the prophet can provide the diagnosis to the cause of the problem in order to bring healing. Ramantswana (2019:4) makes an interesting point that while the prophetic voice aimed at the ecumenical church is slowly dying, the prophetic voice that concentrated on the prophecy to an individual emerged. The prophecies delivered to individuals make the prophetic dimension of deliverance in South Africa to be a unique one. According to Ramantswana (2019:4), the prophetic office and the prophecies play a key role in the NPCs. He further explains that the prophetic dimension of deliverance should not be confused with the African Independent Churches<sup>2</sup> (AICs) like in the Zion Christian Church<sup>3</sup> (ZCC) where those who have the gift can prophesy, in NPCs the main leader is the one prophesying and the congregants should only shout, 'We receive'. Ramantswana (2019:5) concludes, 'What is becoming prevalent through the neo-prophetic churches is the person-centred pilgrimage instead of the place-centred pilgrimage'.

The role of the prophet in deliverance ministry is to act as a channel through which demons and other evil spirits can be removed from an individual receiving the prophecy (Ramantswana 2019:5). This type of deliverance is done through what is known as One-on-One<sup>4</sup> prophecy where the recipient comes into the presence of the prophet and receives their prophecy (Kgatle 2019b:4). Because most of the NPCs are large churches where a prophet cannot minister to all his

2. African Independent Churches are churches that broke away from classical Pentecostal churches in order to become more relevant to the practice of religion in an African context. These churches practice prophecy equally among the believers; the main leader is the only prophet in the church but anyone including women can become a prophet.

3. The ZCC is the largest AIC located in the Limpopo province in South Africa and is led by Bishop Engenas Lekganyane. Zion Christian Church practices prophecy and anyone gifted in this area can practice in the local churches.

4. The concept of One-on-One prophecy in South African is well known, and it refers to a consultation where an individual gets an opportunity to visit the prophet in his office. The unique practice of One-on-One is that the visitor is expected to pay a certain fee to see the prophet. Thus, the NPC prophets have a propensity of having One-on-One programs where believers can make an appointment with the man or woman of God.

congregants in one service, the concept of One-on-One is very familiar within NPCs. This works in the psyche of the followers because they turn to believe that their problems are well addressed in the consultative room of the prophet than in the public. Thus, believers will try to ensure that they are able to see the prophet One-on-One. It is in these One-on-One sessions where believers are charged exorbitant amounts to make an appointment with the prophet. This phenomenon of paying high amounts of money to see the prophet is defined as the commercialisation of religion in the paper that I discuss with other elements in fifth section.

## The popularity of the prophetic dimension

Prophetic dimension of deliverance ministry is very much popular in South Africa especially by the phrases 'Go deeper papa, prophesy, do something'.<sup>5</sup> This type of churches is popular for good reasons, Quayesi-Amakye (2015:63) opines that prophetic churches are popular because of 'verbal theology, conscious pneumatic expression and normalization, and existential concerns'. According to Shilubane (2017:6), the ministry appeals to South Africans because it is mainly about foretelling of the future, and it also maintains the traditional practices highlighted above like deliverance from general curses, evil powers of witchcraft and offers both spiritual and physical healing. Chitando and Biri (2016:73) add that these types of churches gain their popularity and can attract more members because of their emphasis on prophecy in their healing and deliverance ministries. Tsekpoe (2019) adds:

The activities of the prophetic ministries that serve as an important tool for evangelism in Africa since it seems to communicate the Christian message meaningfully to the African in a context they can understand. (p. 287)

However, spirituality is not the only reason for the popularity of these churches, Chitando (2009:31) has shown that in Zimbabwe, the changes in social, economic and political conditions of the citizens have driven them towards prophetic churches for solutions to their predicaments. In seeking promotions and other ways to make their lives better, Chitando (2009:42) continues to say, 'Some highly educated professionals are actively involved in the prophetic activities'. Therefore, in the context where so many people continue to suffer because of poverty, unemployment, inequality, NPCs have a bigger role to play in the empowerment of the people. Moreover, in a context where many people do not have medical aid and cannot get help from government hospitals when they are sick of various ailments, NPCs become that difference in people's lives (Banda 2019:2). It is for the reasons stated above that scholars like Banda (2019:10) have argued against the regulation of religion as it might disadvantage the poor and the marginalised in South Africa.

However, these churches are also popular for bad reasons like the performance of miracles that are questionable before the public (Dube 2020:5). One common miracle by the NPC

5. These phrases are well known in South Africa that each time a prophet releases a word the recipient of the prophecy should shout these words to demonstrate that the prophecy is accurate.

prophets is miracle money, whereby money appears in the accounts of people without them working for it (Vengeyi 2013:29). Other miracles include the one where Bushiri claims to be walking on air, but in essence, there were people assisting him on the sides. According to Dube (2020:5), another miracle was performed by Alph Lukau, which caused confusion among the people with some people calling foreign pastors to go to their home countries. A person arrived at Alleluia ministry where Lukau is pastoring in coffin, Lukau began to pray for the person and he was resurrected from the coffin. However, Lukau denied claiming this to be a miracle but said he just prayed for the person, but he did not know he was dead. Other than questionable miracles some NPCs were involved in bizarre acts like the eating of snakes, drinking of petrol, taking selfies in heaven, spraying of doom insecticide and others (see Kgatle 2017:1-8). The main challenge is that all these staged miracles, bizarre acts and other criminal elements in the prophetic dimension of deliverance ministry raise the problem of commercialisation.

## The prophetic dimension and commercialisation

Commercialisation of religion or the gospel is defined by Gitonga (2011) in Resane (2017:2, cf. Masenya & Masenya 2018) as:

[P]resentation of the Biblical message either as a commodity for sale for material gain or as an object of investment for personal aggrandizement. The former refers to the sale of spiritual benefits, such as spiritual healing and offer of prayers for special needs. The latter refers to the donation of money or item(s) to the Church with an expectation that God will repay much more in return. (p. 320)

Given the definition of commercialisation of religion above, it can be deduced that the prophetic dimension is highly commercialised as members of the church are expected to pay huge amounts like R7000 for visiting the prophet for their deliverance in what is known as One-on-One with the prophet (see Tsekpoe 2019:285). In addition, according to Shilubane (2017:38), the members are expected to buy products like the anointed water, anointed oil and stickers for their protection on the roads, workplace, households and so forth. The anointing oil is the most common one as it is used for healing in wounded areas. Furthermore, the followers according to Chitando and Biri (2016:76) are expected to buy 'customised bracelets, T-shirts with distinctive messages, photographs of the leader and his wife' that helps with the branding and marketing of NPCs. It is commercialisation because according to Tsekpoe (2019:285) 'When these items have been prayed for, they normally become more expensive than one could get them ordinarily from the market'. Ramantswana (2019) adds:

When the prophets pray for the people, make prophetic utterances, display divine power that brings about economic empowerment of the people and deliverance from various other forms of suffering, they also benefit economically in the process, as the people give money and offerings to the prophet or his or her ministry. (p. 5)

Moreover, many of the NPC prophets have joined the message of the prosperity gospel<sup>6</sup> in requesting people to sow seeds so that they can receive blessings. According to Ramantswana (2019:6), believers are promised 'blessings in the form of health, protection over one's material possessions, release from the curse of poverty, financial breakthrough, flourishing of business and an increase in material wealth'. However, as believers are called upon to give, according to Mashau and Kgatle (2019:2), it is only the prophets who receive the blessing. However, most prophets in South Africa deny taking advantage of the people but say, they are wealthy because of other interests. For example, Bushiri is quoted in Dube (2020) as saying:

I am a businessman and that is separate from being a prophet. My prosperity is from private businesses. Such questions are not asked from leaders of white churches but when an African man prospers, then it's a problem. (p. 5)

Nonetheless, commercialisation of the gospel is a problem in South Africa according to Methula (2017) when:

The phenomenon of the materialisation of spirituality, the commercialisation of the church and the commodification of religion leads to the unethical and immoral practice of the monetisation of faith and blessings. (p. 4)

Commercialisation is problematic, as it has put the character of Christianity in South Africa to test and found it wanting, thus tainting the image of the gospel (Resane 2017:3). Commercialisation is a challenge when the NPCs take advantage of the poor such that instead of enriching the people it places them in deep poverty (Dube 2020:5). Furthermore, commercialisation of the gospel is done through criminal elements combined with the plotting of fake miracles and fake prophecies. Commercialisation of the gospel is done by using the bizarre acts that people perceive as real miracles but represent the abuse of religion in the name of making money. Thus, the commercialisation of the prophetic dimension of deliverance among the NPC calls for an alternative ministry of giving freely that I discuss below.

The people remain vulnerable to the commercialisation of the gospel as caused by the prophetic dimension of deliverance because of their levels of poverty and other hardships. In other words, as unemployment and poverty are growing higher among the youth in many African countries, prophetic deliverance becomes a source of hope on one hand while taking advantage of the people on the other. Thus, in a continent where young people cannot find jobs and cannot access health facilities, the prophet in town or city becomes the source of hope for the future. They think that the prophet has the power to do something about their situation, and hence they encourage him or her to 'prophesy' to 'do something'. It is for this reason that these prophets charge exorbitant fees for prophecies and prayers because they know people have no where else to go as they have lost hope

6. Prosperity gospel is a notion of relating the accumulation of material possession to a divine blessing. The message of the prosperity gospel is that believers must tithe, sow seeds and give other offerings as an access to the divine blessing that will ultimately unlock the physical blessing or material wealth (see Gbote & Kgatla 2014; Heuser 2015; Togarasei 2011).

in their governments and political leaders. When people do not have the platform to confront the political system in order to bring change in their lives, they opt for the deliverance. Put differently, people will never blame their governments nor their prophets but rather think that there is something wrong with their lives and hence the need for deliverance. Therefore, the deliverance ministry sells in Africa because of the many economic and health challenges faced by people in Africa.

## Condemnation on the selling of spiritual gift

Prophets in the NPCs are not the first ones to commercialise the spiritual gift. Simon Magus sought to purchase the spiritual gift from the Apostles of Jesus to have the power of conferring the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Ac 8:18-24, cf. Resane 2020). In condemning the commercialisation of the gospel, Peter rebuked Simon Magus by saying that the spiritual gift that came from God cannot be sold with money. And those whose hearts are aligned to the commercialisation of the gospel, that is, those that seek to sell or buy spiritual gifts should not be part of the ministry of Jesus. Peter did not only rebuke Simon but requested him to repent from his evil ways of trying to buy a spiritual gift or commercialise the gospel. This passage of scripture is very much linked with the practice of the prophetic dimension of deliverance who is currently involved in the selling and buying of spiritual gifts. Therefore, the commercialisation of the gospel through prophetic deliverance is condemned in scripture as it is not aligned to what God desires in his ministry.

The demand made by the NPC prophets to pay a certain fee when asking for prayers is inconsistent with Christian practices and Christian ethics. A pastor or any spiritual leader in the Christian tradition cannot receive money directly from the congregants but such monies that are traditionally collected as tithes and offerings are received by the church. A pastor in most Christian churches does not have to charge a fee for prayers and other services. Therefore, it might be concluded that prophets in the NPCs engaged in the commercialisation of the gospel do so inconsistent with the ecclesiastical law in the Christian doctrine. It can also be concluded that their practices are also inconsistent with basic Christian ethics of how money should be collected and managed in the church. Therefore, the question is how should the ministry of deliverance be practiced in a way that is consistent with the scriptures? This article offers a few recommendations:

## A call for ministry of 'giving freely'

The prophetic dimension of deliverance among NPCs has many weaknesses like fake miracles, bizarre acts and other criminal elements that result in the commercialisation of religion. However, they also have strengths like ministering relevantly to the people of Africa and solving other socio-economic challenges like poverty. Therefore, the NPCs play a

major role in Pentecostalism and ultimately in the religious landscape of Africa; hence it is important to deal with their weaknesses as suggested by scholars in the preceding sections. One of the ways to deal with the specific challenge of commercialisation is the consideration of the ministry of giving freely as suggested by Jesus in Matthew 10:8 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give'.<sup>7</sup> The context of this scripture is the calling of the disciples of Jesus and the instructions he gave to them when sending them out for ministry. In doing so, Jesus encourages his disciples to continue with the ministry of deliverance like casting out demons and healing of the sick but warns them that they should give freely as they have been given freely. This implies that the disciples were not required to charge anything for the services of deliverance rendered on the people.

Is this ministry of giving freely relevant and applicable today? Can NPC prophets minister without receiving anything in return? Obviously not, as Jesus explained in Matthew 10:10 that the labourer is worth his or her pay. However, giving freely in the context of NPCs means that the prophets do not have to charge individuals like in One-on-One session. This means that congregants can be prayed over in a church service and when prophets are overwhelmed; they can ask help from their elders and deacons. By sharing these words with his disciples, Jesus was already aware that the disciples might use the gospel for personal gain. Therefore, the ministry of giving freely is for preventing personal gain by the prophets in One-on-One sessions. Consequently, the ministry of giving freely can prevent the commercialisation of the gospel specially the prophetic dimension of the ministry of deliverance. In conclusion, the NPC prophets should continue with the ministry of deliverance but should heed the call by Jesus to conduct this ministry without charging a specific price to their congregants and followers. Contrarily, the NPC prophets should think about the many people in Africa who view prayer as their last hope for survival in the context of poverty and other social ills facing the continent.

## Conclusion

This article studied the practice of the ministry of deliverance in the NPCs, which is linked to the New Testament practices and African worldview. However, unlike in the ministry of Jesus and his disciples, the ministry of deliverance is highly commercialised among the NPCs in South Africa. Prophets in these churches charge exorbitant consultation fees to their members when praying for them for deliverance. They charge a high price when giving a prophecy. Commercialisation of the gospel is inconsistent with the biblical practice of deliverance; hence it is condemned in scriptures such as Acts 8:18–245. In addition, this practice is inconsistent with the basic Christian practices and ethics. This article recommends a ministry of giving freely in Matthew 10:8 in contrast to the commercialisation of the gospel by the NPC prophets. Failure to heed to this call as made by Jesus will further exacerbate

7. This scripture has been taken from the New King James version.

the commercialisation of the gospel where pastors will charge more fees to pray for their own congregants. The practice will also affect the reputation of other churches in the Christian tradition specifically other Pentecostal and charismatic churches and ministries.

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## Author's contributions

M.S.K. is the sole author of this article.

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Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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