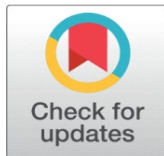


ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE IN NIGERIA: EXPLORING UNIFYING ELEMENTS IN THE DESIGN OF WORSHIP CENTERS

Bala Anita Alaere Jamila ¹  , Warebi Gabriel Brisibe ²  

¹ MSc Student, Architecture Department, Rivers State University, Nigeria

² Lecturer, Architecture Department, Rivers State University, Nigeria



Received 15 September 2022

Accepted 16 October 2022

Published 31 October 2022

Corresponding Author

Bala Anita Alaere Jamila,
a.belal@seu.edu.sa

DOI [10.29121/granthaalayah.v10.i10.2022.4626](https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v10.i10.2022.4626)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

The primary factor in ecumenism has been the church's unity. The World Council's Central Committee produced an agreed-upon definition of ecumenical in 1951. The word derives from the Greek word for inhabited earth, and it refers to the church and its efforts to spread the Gospel over the world. As a result, ecumenism is linked to the Christian faith's unique unity and mission in the context of the entire globe. In Nigeria, some State Governments have attempted to unify the key denominations of the Christian faith in an attempt to pursue this common mission by literally bringing them under one roof. In other to achieve that, markers, and features of sacred spaces for each of these denominations have to be identified and combined where possible. This paper explores how elements have been unified in the design of these Government initiated archetype.

Keywords: Ecumenism, Modern Architecture, Ecclesiastical Architecture, Design Elements, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Ecumenism is a plan to bring together the various branches of Christian faith (not that they will all become one church), but that Catholicism, Protestantism, and Pentecostalism will recognize one other as fellow Christian rather than rivals with similar architectural aspects.

The protestants are the charismatic Christians (Baptists, Anglicans, etc). They used the English gothic architecture style which has some distinct components for

instance, long stained glass, flying buttresses, ornamentation, pointed arches, large stained-glass windows, ribbed vaults, bar tracery, etc.

The Catholics are the sacramental Christians, and they used the Romanesque architecture style which has some distinct components for instance, semi-circular arches for windows, barrel vaults, massive columns, few windows, stained glass, rounded arches symmetrical plans, art, sculpture, painting, thick walls, stained glass, etc.

The Pentecostals are the evangelicals and they employed the postmodern architectural style in the design of large auditoriums. It has some distinct characteristics for instance, large windows, bright open spaces, flat roofs, rounded forms, asymmetry, etc.

An Ecumenical centre within the Nigerian context is a worship centre built by the government that accommodates different denominations of Christianity. It strives to bring Christians together irrespective of religious denomination. It is usually built and managed by the government and is used for government annual thanksgiving, dedication, weddings, crusades, etc. Christian symbolism should be general and natural elements which everybody believes in. Some symbols which depict God's creation and presence include Dove, cross, fish, tree, and sun. These symbols are not peculiar to a particular church but are symbols of unity in Christendom.

1.1. ORIGIN OF THE TERM

The word ecumenical comes from the Greek word *oikoumene*. Oikos is the root of this word, which refers to a structure in which a family lives together. It also refers to the entire human population of the planet. This is analogous to the trip traveled by means of another expression derived from the root of Oikos, economics, this started out as an administration of a household

As a result of early councils, such as the Council of Nicea in 325, the term ecumenical started to carry ecclesiastical connotations. Henri Dunant who founded the Red Cross in 1863, was a pioneer of the YMCA and was involved in Evangelical Alliance. He carried on some correspondence with YMCAs throughout the world, constantly stressing the need for an ecumenical spirit from his YMCA office in Geneva.

He defined ecumenical as: Christians of many denominations can and must unite in love, associate with one another, and work together in charity for the glory of God while keeping their individual liberty and even the right to defend their personal points of view and religious convictions, if necessary, but with tolerance and compassion. [Henri Dunant \(1949\)](#).

The development of the concept of ecumenism began to take hold but did not really become dominant until the period between the two world wars. Presiding from a seat (*cathedra*), reading the scriptures from a pulpit (*ambo*), worshiping the Lord at an altar (*kyrios*), and accommodating the community (*ekklesia*) are the five functional connections that define sacred space in Catholic churches (*Domus*). [McNally \(1985\)](#).

He goes beyond functionalism to argue that archetypal and atmospheric components are crucial to the worship aesthetic in order to unravel the mystery of the sacred environment. He defines aesthetics as "ordered vision," naming archetypal elements including stone, tree (cosmic pillar or axis Mundi), river, sky, earth, and mountain-city-temple, or "cosmic center." Silence, darkness, emptiness,

profusion, and monumentality are among the atmospheric aspects of sacred space, according to him. [McNally \(2010\)](#).

The entrance, center aisle, and altar are the three elements that constitute the sanctuary experience as a healing space. The central aisle, which runs through the heart of the chapel, symbolizes the journey to enlightenment and healing." Taylor (2010) argues that the altar, which is a generic phrase for the holy locus, signifies the location of new beginnings and new life, and is thus a focal point of the sanctuary.

In terms of shape, purpose, and style, the buildings' great size is characterized as an architectural style of cathedrals and churches, and it is associated with one of several branching architectural traditions deriving Ultimately from the architectural traditions of the early Christian church.

1.1.1. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

An ecumenical movement is a form of reconciliation that aims to bring the different denominations of Christianity together, recognising sacramental legitimacy and full communion among Christian denominations. It is a plan to bring together all branches of the Christian faith, not so much that they become one church, but so that Catholicism and diverse Protestant strains recognize one other as fellow Christian rather than rivals... Therefore, this study on church architecture helps to explore, identify, and borrow features of different church architecture styles to achieve an optimal worshipping atmosphere for all denominations of Christianity.

1.2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN ECUMENISM

"The true oneness and goal are to find a balance between the Church's mission to the world (apostolate) and its commitment and Church's obligation to be one" is the goal of ecumenism within Christianity. Ecumenism is thus the promotion of Christian unity or collaboration among various religious organizations or faiths. Ecumenism is not synonymous with interfaith pluralism, and the term should not be used interchangeably. The interfaith movement encourages greater respect, tolerance, and collaboration among the world's religions. Interfaith dialogue between leaders of many faiths may not always attempt to bring their followers into full, organic oneness, but rather to enhance relations between them.

1.2.1. MODERN ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE

Modern ecclesiastical architecture evolved following the advent of modern architecture as a result of a number of strands of ideas and disposing strands, such as advancement in development, loss of faith in past traditions, Industrial Revolution, emergence of new concepts, new materials, and new construction methods. [Curtis \(1987\)](#), [Mallgrave \(2005\)](#), [Benevolo \(1977\)](#).

Because each age was required to express its own time, it all stemmed from the idea of advancement as a symbol of development. As new ideas emerged, there was also a loss of faith in the theories that supported prior traditions. New materials and construction methods were made available as a result of the industrial revolution, as well as new patronage.

Each ecclesiastical architecture style relied on the preceding style for development prior to the rise of modernism, as each age of church development necessarily impacted the art it inherited, and as one style evolved from the preceding style through a succession of subtle adjustments. [Fletcher \(1996\)](#).

In contrast to the early period, which was characterised by Gothic designs imported from Europe, the first modification of church architecture was noted around 1930. [Adeboye \(2014\)](#).

Nigeria transcended three phases of development of ecclesiastical architecture from a study of trends [Adeboye \(2009\)](#).

In the beginning, when the majority of the Churches were foreign founded (1845 to 1930).

The beginning of the establishment of traditional African Churches as a result of the indigenization of Church leadership. (1930 to 1980).

The traditional churches experienced a period of evolution of indigenous Pentecostal staking the lead (1980 to 2005). This could then be classified as the modern ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria. [Adeboye \(2009\)](#)

Some construction methods depended mainly on foreign supplies, with little or no participation from the local community. Building materials were imported, and church structures were more like to foreign monuments than the contemporary industrial or improvised structures.

Nigeria began to transition from dependency to independence in the late 1940s, and the Church administration began to indigenize as a result. Most religious buildings had already begun to move to more advanced building construction by this time, although the technology was mostly foreign and influenced by construction in other nations.

The famed Gothic style of religious building gave way to an era of 'Masters' celebrations. Even in the twenty-first century, a few buildings, such as the new Anglican Cathedral in Lokoja and the Ecumenical Centre in Abuja, continue to lavishly celebrate the Gothic style. As theology and liturgy evolved, so did architecture in order to keep up with the new developments. As the use of modern industrial materials and the adoption of a theatre from the floor plan were adopted, this modern church architecture moved away from decoration and antique art.

1.2.2. SYMBOLISM IN CHURCH DESIGN

Symbolism in architecture is regarded as that conceptual idea that brings together various strands of unified totality of feelings, sentiments, wishes, hopes, and recollections. It is described as a comparison of the visible forms for the showing forth of the invisible [Nwankwegu \(2013\)](#).

The classical view of mental architecture is referred to as symbolic architecture. The mind is considered as a symbol-manipulation process in this theory. These symbols are transported between memory storage, such as long- and short-term memory, and are acted on in a certain order by an explicit set of rules.

The symbolic architecture is the way memory stores are linked together, as well as the set of rules that govern the system. [Andrews \(1995\)](#). Symbols have been used in various ways in church design to depict divine realities. They provide a kind of sign language representing that which cannot be portrayed in visible form. They provide a shortcut in making statements, especially of historical events. The dove, for example, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which cannot be depicted in a visible form. The cross is utilized as a symbol of mankind's redemption and salvation, which would have been difficult to depict otherwise. These symbols serve as a means of quickening our imaginations and should not be used merely as decorations.

Although there was some opposition to the term "ecumenical" being used as a title in English, the Oxford Conference used it to describe a wide range of topics. The

sacred space markers were divided into three groups. Architectural, Archetypal, and Atmospheric Ambiguities are the three types. [Hoffman \(2010\)](#).

1.2.3. ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

The relevance of three physical characteristics of holy space architecture: gate, pathway, and place, is a common thread in architectural and philosophical literature. The gate represents the pilgrim's goal, the path represents the pilgrim's journey, and the destination represents the Spiritual enlightenment attained by a traveller. This route to enlightenment is never a one-time event; rather, it is a cycle that the devotee repeats almost mantra-like in order to acquire ever-higher degrees of spiritual fulfilment. On the outside and inside, the architecture of buildings of worship can intensify this sensory cycle. The significance of the gate, path, and place as key contributions to the mood of sacred space is reinforced by careful design attention to entry, path, and destination. The explanations that follow explain these possibilities by first detailing the outer parts, then changing them into gateway aisles and placing them in the interior. [Hoffman \(2010\)](#).

- **Exterior**

- 1) **Gate** is a point of entry beyond a building's main entrance, ideally leading to a courtyard or ceremonial walk. Worship ceremonies, according to centuries of religious experience, necessitate preparation on the part of the participants. A devotee in the East, for example, must pass through multiple gates before being allowed to enter a temple. [Davies \(1965\)](#).
- 2) **Path** is a fairly detailed description of a walk path, requiring the usage of strong boundaries, uniformity, directionality, identifiable landmarks, and a distinct terminus from the point of entry. The core of path is ritualized movement that is framed by the architectural setting but not controlled by it. Complex, inlaid stone patterns in the floor at the main entrance were common in medieval cathedrals, symbolically evoking pilgrimage and actually directing a ritualized path of entry. [Davies \(1965\)](#).
- 3) **Place** is a simple shape that is limited in size, has a concentrated shape with pronounced borders, and serves as a focal point for gathering. As the path's endpoint, the worship space becomes a place of fulfilment, signifying transcendence. [Davies \(1965\)](#).

- **Interior**

- 1) **Portal** is a major point of entry that is typically bolstered by a visually intimidating gate experience. The emphasis on portal, or crossing the threshold into the sanctuary, emphasizes the journey's holy nature and identifies this as the sacred's final threshold. [Davies \(1965\)](#).
- 2) **Path** is an entering sequence that runs from the threshold to the focal point and is guided by the aisle. It can be axial, radial, grid-like, or circumambulatory; it's a continuation of the pathway experience that frames ritual movement within the sanctuary.
- 3) **Place** is the worship space's central focal point is the place. The altar, pulpit, ark, reading table, or mihrabs are all possibilities. It is also the sacred locus, as well as the focal point [Davies \(1965\)](#).

1.2.4. ARCHETYPAL ELEMENTS

Archetypal components are cosmic order symbols and a subconscious relationship to the divine realm. [Hoffman \(2010\)](#).

- 1) **Earth's** portrayal can take numerous forms, such as actual earthy regions like gardens or earthen-made objects like adobe architecture or clay pottery, and it is symbolic of life-giving renewal. The earth, often known as Mother Earth, is a symbol of fertility and healing.
- 2) **Air (or sky)** as a metaphorical representation is frequently done through the use of domes, skylights, clerestory windows, or other mechanisms that make the sky visible from inside the building. In many civilizations, the sky represents the heavens and the afterlife.
- 3) **Water** is the most frequently depicted element in religious art, as the waters represent the virtual universe; they are the *fansetori'go*, the reservoir of all existence's potentialities.
- 4) **Fire** In most religious architecture, fire is present, whether it is in the form of flickering candles in a cathedral or the light of the eternal flame in a synagogue.

1.2.5. RELIGIOUS/MYTHIC ELEMENTS

- 1) **Tree:** The tree is associated with human origins in many religious mythologies and crosses many cultural boundaries, symbolizing growth, rejuvenation, and knowledge. The tree also serves as a center or refound for the world, as Eliade points out "The Cosmic Tree, located in the heart of the Universe and upholding the three planets as upon one axis, is the most often stated version of the symbolism of the Centre."
- 2) **Stone:** Stones have been used to indicate sacred sites since Jacob placed a stone to mark the site (Beth-el) where God's presence was revealed to him in a dream, as recorded in Genesis chapter 28. "Stone, maybe more than any other material, has long been assumed to be magical, with the ability to heal, guide, shelter divinity, and designate burial sites."
- 3) **Mountain (sacred mountain):** Mountains rise to the sky and are depicted as steppingstones to the afterlife in religious mythology. Mountains are frequently regarded as the home of the gods in polytheistic societies. Sacred ceremonies, temples, and monasteries can all be found on mountaintop aeries.

1.2.6. ATMOSPHERIC AMBIGUITIES

Multiple interpretations of space are believed to serve as a threshold to the ambiguously expressed divine experience, with the meaning found in the transition zone between. [Hoffman \(2010\)](#).

- 1) **Silence and noise:** This are an example of this point of departure, which is a threshold to the sacred, which is the silence of a sanctuary before the noise, music, and singing of worship.
- 2) **Darkness and light:** The numinous as one become the other, or the effective and dramatic interplay of shadows and sunshine, is signalled by this transition between light and shade.

- 3) **Emptiness and profusion:** Sparseness and scarcity are juxtaposed with abundant embellishment and rhythmic features in this style. The juxtaposition between the austerity interiors of south-western adobe churches and the vibrantly painted altar screens is a striking instance of this principle.
- 4) **Humility and monumentality:** Massive, long-lasting, or historically significant settings that encourage humility exemplify this dichotomy. These locations are physically commanding as God's dominion, but they are also modest enough for human worship.

1.3. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- 1) **Ceiling height:** Great height ceilings assist to create the impression that the room is important, which helps to inspire reverence in the space.
- 2) **Symmetry:** A symmetrical worship setting can be achieved by using proportional spacing and balance. The sanctuary, platform, altar area, pulpit, and other main points of the worship space should be centered to provide an unobstructed view to the majority of the crowd.
- 3) **Colour selection:** Choose a palette that is off-white, cream, or a very light hue when choosing wall colors. Reading text or listening to music in a dark setting might be difficult.
- 4) **Fabrics:** To add warmth and color to a room, use rich materials. Fabrics, polished wood, lighting fixtures, artwork, and windows may all be used to provide drama and a sense of reverence to a space. Fabrics, colorful artwork, and accent paint can all help to set the tone for the worship space.
- 5) **Icons & artwork:** This is a set of figurative terms. Artwork should be appropriate for the location and have a strong visual effect. Statues, tapestries, sculptures, paintings, crosses, crucifixes, murals, mosaics, and ornate windows are examples of artwork.
- 6) **Decorative windows, woodwork & furnishing:** Stained glass refers to a type of decorative glass window in which the artist paints directly on the glass before burning it in a kiln to fuse the paint and glass together. Stained glass windows are simply one style of church window that can be attractive. Art glass, etched glass, and faceted glass windows are the other primary types of church windows.

1.3.1. BUILDING FORMS

1) Rectangular form

With the altar platform at one end and the seating arranged in rows facing the one focal point, this is the most frequent plan form. It's common to have a center aisle. It is basic, and there is no extra "performance" quality as long as the altar platform is inside the congregational volume.

The main issue arises when the seating capacity exceeds 500 people because the viewing distance becomes excessively lengthy, and worshipers in the back seats feel less involved.

Figure 1

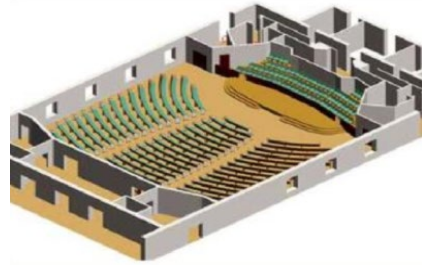


Figure 1 Graphic Representation of Rectangular Form
Source Google Photos

2) Cruciform plan form

Depending on the seating plan inside the arms of the cruciform structure, the altar area is often at the head of the cross or at the crossing; there may be a loss of congregational cohesiveness. The cruciform layout is frequently chosen for the reduced scale imparted to the building façade rather than the inherent symbolism.

Figure 2

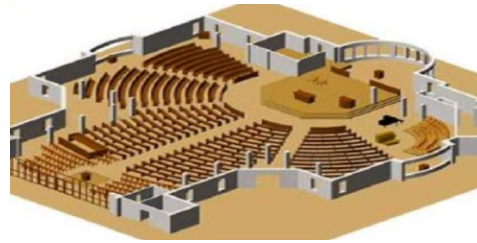


Figure 2 Graphic Representation of Cruciform Plan Form
Source Google Photo

3) Central plan (circular) form

Here altar is centrally located and surrounded by congregation. The nave could take any geometric shape. This type of plan expresses a continuity of space in which the architectural space does not end at the altar but continues around it and the altar automatically becomes the centre of attraction since, it is situated at the geometric centre of the form.

Problems associated with this kind of plan form is loss of eye contact by the preacher, celebrants would also back a portion of the congregation, Not all the seats will have good viewing angles for motion pictures or slides. Nevertheless, the sense of intimacy and oneness is very great and may overcome all objections

Figure 3



Figure 3 Graphic Representation of Central Plan (Circular) Form
Source Google Photos

4) Fan/ trapezoidal form

Here, rows of seats are set in concentric curves to provide each with a forward-facing view of the stage. The walls here can add to sound reinforcement by not allowing the angle of splay of each wall exceed 25° . This is achieved by using serrated or faceted walls, or by introducing vertical panels inclined at a smaller angle to the longitudinal axis. In a wide hall these side sections of seating may also be separated and raised to a higher level than those in the centre, in order to create variety in seating as well as more even lateral distribution of sound.

Figure 4

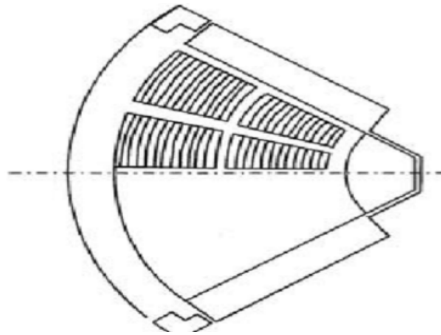


Figure 4 Graphic Representation of Fan/ Trapezoidal Form

Source Google Photos

5) Hexagonal form

This plan form and its extended or modified forms, has been used extensively as the basic plan shape for multipurpose halls because it provides compromise, giving good direct sound, controlling ceiling and lateral reflections and scope of variations in seating arrangements and levels within the auditorium.

To allow for a more flexible arrangement, the main floor is usually flat with retractable seating around the perimeter. This plan form is however faced with losing sight lines from the side sections as the framed width of the stage reduces.

Figure 5

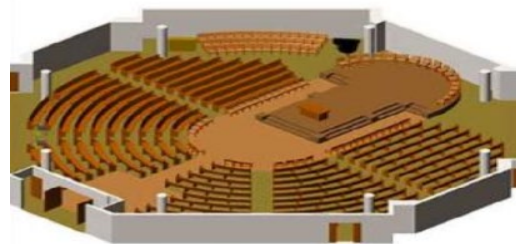


Figure 5 Graphic Representation of Hexagonal Form

Source Google Photos

1.3.2. BIBLICAL COLOURS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Biblical Colours are very significant in our worship of *Adonai*. These are basic colours which implied meanings. In some instances, the exact colour is mentioned in the Scriptures and with others it is implied and seen through spiritual eyes. [Olesen \(2013\)](#).

- **White:** purity (Daniel 12:10), Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22), blessedness, holiness (Ecclesiastes 9:8; Ephesians 4:24), righteousness (Isaiah 1:18), angels (John 20:12), saints (Psalm 30:4), peace (Hebrews 12:14). [Olesen \(2013\)](#).
- **Black:** Darkness, sin, Earth, affliction, humiliation, calamity, death, mourning [Olesen \(2013\)](#).
- **Gold:** Eternal Deity, the Godhead, foundation, sanctified (2 Timothy 2:20:21), altar (Genesis 44:8), beauty (Esther 1:6;7), purified out of the refining fire (Malachi 3:3), majesty (Esther 8:15). [Olesen \(2013\)](#).

1.4. SELECTED CASE STUDIES OF ECUMENICAL CENTRES IN NIGERIA

NATIONAL ECUMENICAL CENTRE ABUJA

Client: Christian association of Nigeria

Architect: Arc (Dr) Dele Adeyemi

Construction Firm: Gitto Construzioni Generali Nigeria Ltd.

Location: Gen. Abacha way Abuja, Nigeria.

Capacity: Six thousand (6000) worshipers.

Site Area: 17,250m² (1.8 Hectares)

Year: 1989 – 2005

1.4.1. BRIEF HISTORY

The National Ecumenical Center is an inter-denominational church located in Abuja, Nigeria a country with a substantial Christian population.

1.4.2. ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION

The church is built in a neo-gothic style Gothic architecture, also known as pointed architecture. The altar, placed at the centre of the church completes a full rotation every ten minutes. A pipe organ is fitted to the right wing of the church, close to which sits the choir. Stained glass windows which employ a simple but attractive mix of yellow, green, and red colours can be seen all around the church. When not being used for Christian ceremonies, it is open to the public.

1.4.3. MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION

This edifice is built with concrete wall of pivoted gothic arches and flying buttresses. The pivoted arches form the roof trusses. It has concrete roof covered with reddish copper roofing slate. The interior floor is finished with polished granite tiles. The exterior aisles are finished with abrasion resistant granite stone. The interior walls and ceiling are treated acoustically with sophisticated acoustic panels for good acoustical environment.

Figure 6

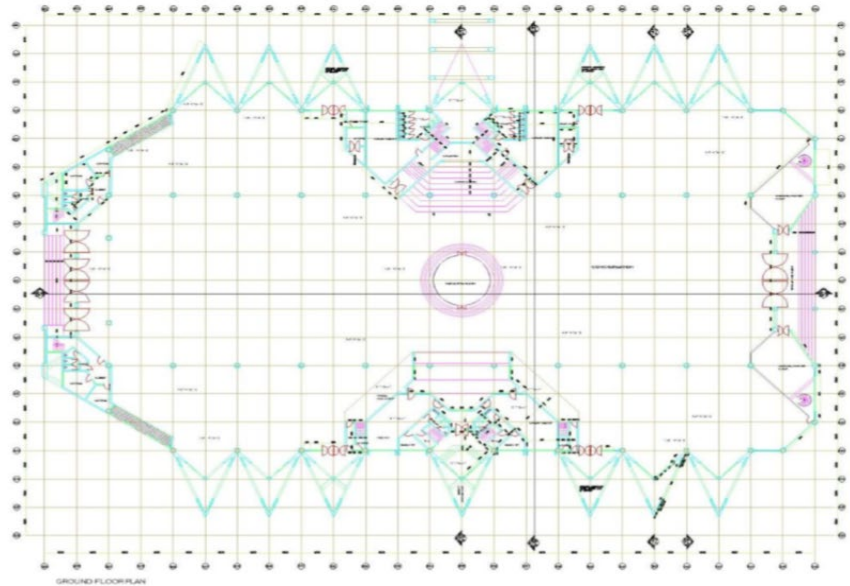


Figure 6 Ground Floor Plan - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Courtesy of Arc (Dr) Dele Adeyemi, CAN Secretariat Abuja

Figure 7

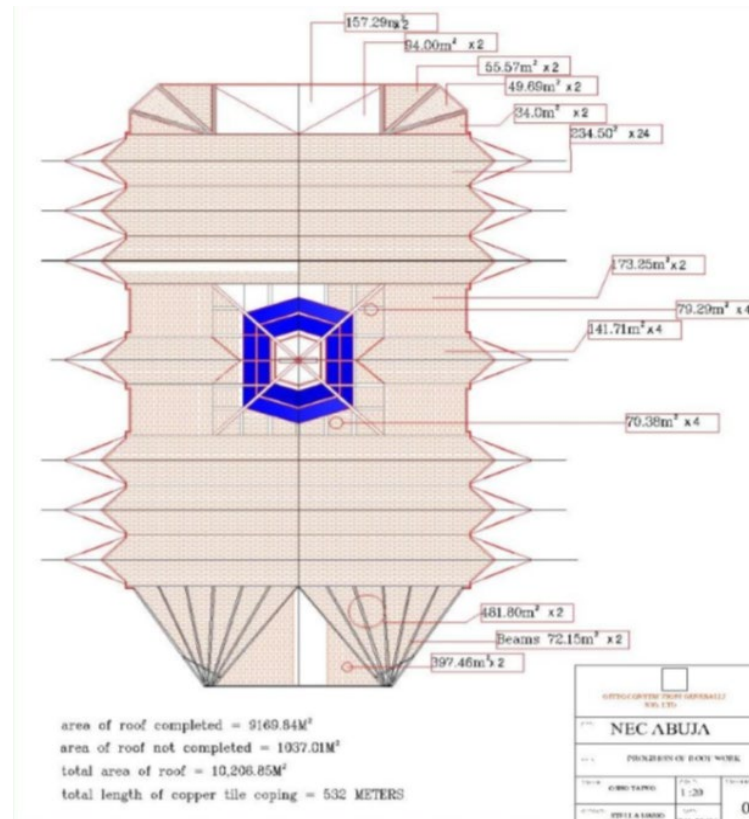


Figure 7 Roof Plan-National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Courtesy of Arc (Dr) Dele Adeyemi, CAN Secretariat Abuja

Figure 8



Figure 8 Stained Glass - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

Figure 9



Figure 9 Position of Organ - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

Figure 10



Figure 10 The Revolving Altar - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

Figure 11



Figure 11 Effects of Natural Light in the Church Interior - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

Figure 12

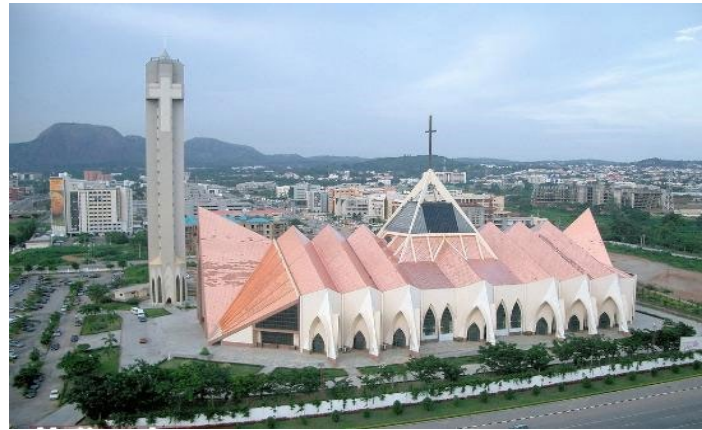


Figure 12 Perspective - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

Figure 13



Figure 13 Exterior view - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

Figure 14



Figure 14 Exterior Views – Flying Buttresses - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

Figure 15



Figure 15 Exterior View - National Ecumenical Center, Abuja
Source Google Photos

1.5. GOVERNMENT ECUMENICAL CENTER, IGBOGENE

Location: Yenegoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Capacity: Ten thousand (10,000) worshippers

Year of Construction: 2017

1.5.1. COMPOSITION

The Ecumenical Centre now serves as the headquarters of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Bayelsa Branch, and is governed by a Dickson-appointed board. The Ecumenical Centre, which the government boasts are the biggest in Nigeria, has a modern Christian library, rosary store, a restaurant, bookshop, and a choir gallery.

Other features of the worship centre include, a rotating alter, an archive, prayer rooms, a VIP section in the main auditorium, among other facilities.

1.5.2. MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION

The design is a Collegiate Gothic style with elements that reduce impact from sun, wind, sound. Design accommodated series of pointed arches supported by minimal buttresses also serve as decorations and create a certain rhythm along the

side facades. The design exhibits Rhythm and balance on the facade and the walls are treated with acoustic materials and enhanced with sound reinforcement system. The Design accommodated flying buttresses, arched windows or doors and arched ways

Figure 16

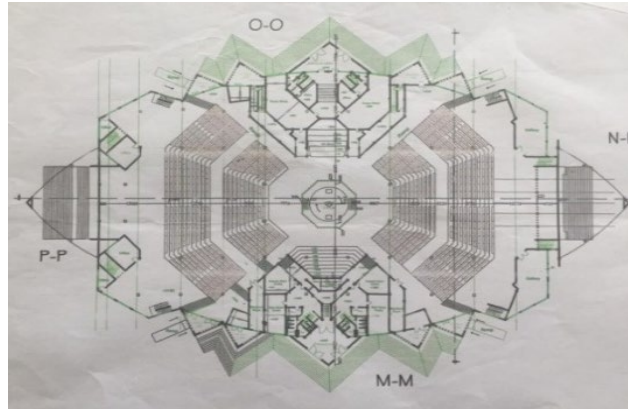


Figure 16 Ground Floor Plan - Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogone
Source courtesy of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Works, Architectural Department

Figure 17

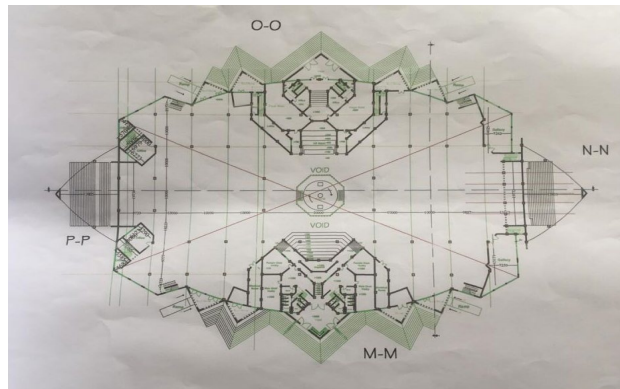


Figure 17 First Floor Plan - Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogone
Source courtesy of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Works, Architectural Department

Figure 18

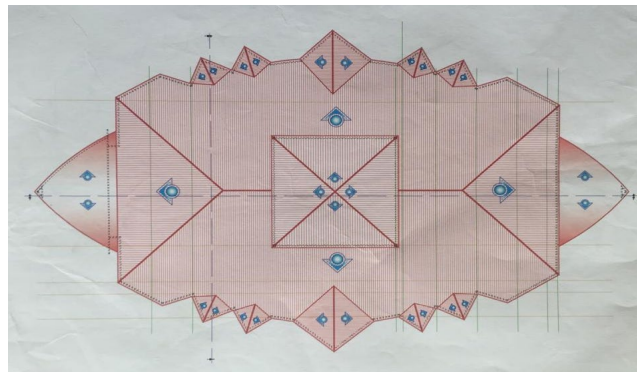


Figure 18 Roof Plan - Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogone
Source courtesy of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Works, Architectural Department

Figure 19

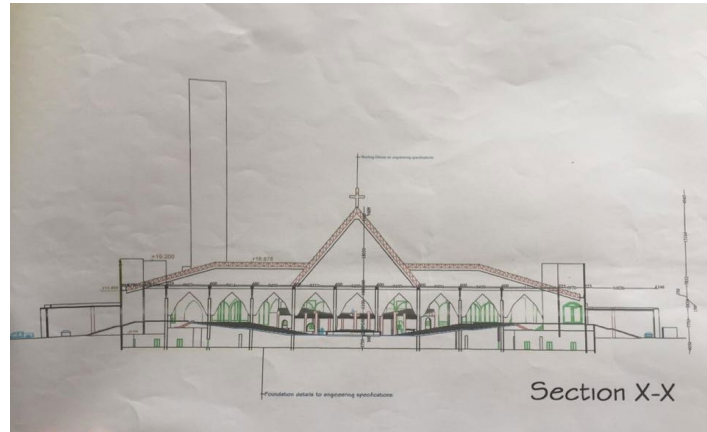


Figure 19 Cross Section X - X - Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogene
Source Courtesy of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Works, Architectural Department

Figure 20



Figure 20 Showing the Aisle - Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogene
Source Courtesy of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Works, Architectural Department.

Figure 21



Figure 21 Stained Glass and Rows of Seating - Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogene
Source courtesy of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Works, Architectural Department.

Figure 22



Figure 22 Showing the Pulpit - Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogene

Source Courtesy of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Works, Architectural Department

1.5.3. UNIFYING ELEMENTS IN SELECTED CASE STUDIES OF ECUMENICAL CENTRES IN NIGERIA

The National Ecumenical Center, Abuja, and the Government Ecumenical Center, Igbogene were built in a neo-gothic style Gothic architecture which originated in England in the late 1740s and was popular throughout Europe from the late 12th century to the 16th century, with some examples surviving into the 17th and 18th centuries. It arose from Romanesque architecture and was eventually replaced by Renaissance architecture. The Gothic architecture's defining element is the ogival or pointed arch. The flying buttress is a design element that is both innovative and distinctive. The pointed arch paved the way for the construction and use of flying buttresses and pointed rib vaults, as well as ornate tracery and stained-glass windows.

The National Ecumenical Center, Abuja, and the Government Ecumenical Center, Igbogene has several pivoted arches with a wide nave leading to the altar, they function as structural features. A pipe organ is installed in the right wing of the church, near the altar. Stained glass windows in a basic yet appealing mix of yellow, green, and red may be found throughout the church. The gate, pathway, and place are physical aspects of the architecture of sacred spaces with the gate representing the desire, path representing the journey, and place representing the attainment of spiritual insight.

The National Ecumenical Center, Abuja, and the Government Ecumenical center, Igbogene express well defined entry point that suggests that worship gatherings necessitate participant planning. (The Portal). Also has a very precise definition of path directed by the aisle from threshold to the focal point, highlighting continuity and directionality (the path). Also, a condensed form with strong edges, which creates a focal point for gathering. (The place).

2. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The architectural components of symbol and ritual are inextricably linked. Each component of the gate, walkway, and location complements the others. The historical catastrophes of the 19th and 20th centuries, especially the two world wars, helped to bring the question of the essence of Christianity into a new

perspective and to renewed significance. In the 20th century's ecumenical movement, different attempts to reflect upon the common essence of Christianity had been going on simultaneously. On the one side, there has been an endeavour to view the essence of Christianity according to its ethics; on this basis, for example, Christian churches joined together, first in Edinburgh (1910), later in Stockholm (1925) in life and work conferences which led to the foundation of the world council of churches in Amsterdam in 1948- which emphasised that the essence of Christianity.

The Government Ecumenical Centre, Igbogene which is built in the Collegiate Gothic architectural style and The National Ecumenical Center, Abuja designed by Arc (Dr) Dele Adeyemi designed in a neo-gothic architectural style, with multiple pivoting arches and a broad nave leading to the altar. The altar, which is located in the center of the church, rotates fully every 10 minutes, and a pipe organ is installed in the right wing, close to where the choir sits. The designed accommodated Stained-glass windows which employ a simple but attractive mix of yellow, green, and red colours can be seen all around the church which has biblical significance. These architectural elements tend to bring have distinct features that gives denominations of Christianity a sense of belonging in the facility and allows them make use of the space without upsetting their doctrines.

Although elements are self-contained, they are prone to overlapping and occasionally contradictory signals. Ambiguities in the atmosphere arouse the senses by setting the tone and enhancing the flavour of the worship experience. The interaction of these three aspects (architectural, archetypal, and atmospheric) gives the worship space depth and character. Finally, architectural markers function as sacred symbols, directing attention in a clear manner, encouraging creativity, nourishing, and enhancing religious experience, and conveying meaning in order to extract truth. Simply put, when these elements are joined and carefully designed, ordinary space becomes hallowed.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Adeboye (2014). Characteristics of Early Ecclesiastical Architecture in Lagos State in Nigeria, *Journal of Arts and Design Studies*, 19, 19-24.
- Adeboye, A. B. (2009). Trends in Ecclesiastical Architecture in South West Nigeria (1845-2005) An Unpublished Phd Thesis at Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria.
- Anderson, P. (2005). Formation of an Ecumenical Consciousness' in the Ecumenical Review. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Asprey, C. (2008). *Ecumenism Today : The Universal Church in the 21st Century*, Farnham, Ashgate. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315256993>
- Barrie, T. (1996). *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place*. Boston : Shambhala.
- Benevolo L, (1977). *History of Modern Architecture*. MIT Press.

- Chadwick, H. (2005). *The Early Church : Story of Emergent Christianity from the Apostolic Age to the Dividing of the Ways Between the Greek East and the Latin West*, London, Penguin.
- Collins, M., and Price, M.A. (1999). *The Story of Christianity : 2000 Years of Faith*. IllinoisTyndale House Publishers.
- Corkill, P.A., Puderbaugh, H., and Sawyers, H. K. (1992). *Structure and Architectural Design 2nd Edition*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Curtis, W. J. R. (1987). *Modern Architecture Since 1900 (2d ed. 1987)* Phaldon Press Limited, Littlegate House, Oxford.
- Davies, J. G. (1965). *The Early Christian Church*, Barnes & Noble Books, Union Square in New York City.
- Douglas, H., and Crosbie, M. J. (2010). *Seeking the Sacred in Contemporary Religious Architecture*. Kent State University Press.
- Fletcher, B. (1996). *A History of Architecture, Twentieth Edition*, The Royal Institute of British Architects and the University of London.
- Mallgrave, H. F (2005). *Modern Architectural Theory A Historical Survey, 1673-1968*. Cambridge University Press.
- Neill, S.C. (1965). *A History of the Ecumenical Movement Vol I, 1517-1948*. Geneva, WCC Publications.
- Nelson, L. P. (2008). *The Beauty of Holiness, Anglicanism and Architecture in the Colonial South*. Carolina : The University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill.
- Olesen, J. (2013). *Colour Meanings*, Copenhagen, Denmark. Est.
- Oskar Verkaai (2013). *Religious Architecture : Anthropological Perspectives*. Amsterdam : University Press and University of Chicago Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wp6sx>
- Rardin and Carroll (2014). *Church Design Concepts - Guidelines for Designing a Church*. Tennessee : The Church Designers Chattanooga.
- Rasmussen, L. (1995). 'Moral Community and Moral Formation' in *The Ecumenical Review*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6623.1995.tb03695.x>.
- Rosponi, C. (2006). *The Church in the City of the Third Millennium*. Trans Campus Journal December, 2011.
- Schleiermacher, F. T. and Clark, T. (1928). *The Christian Faith*, 2nd Edition. Edinburgh : T&T Clark Cornerstone 2016.
- Swan, J. (1990). *Sacred Places*. New Mexico : U.S.A. Bear & Company.
- Verhelst, D., and Pycke, N. (1995). *CICM Missionaries Past and Present 1987*. Leuven : Leuven University Press.
- Walter, E. V. (1988). *Placeways : A Theory of the Human Environment* Chapel Hill. Carolina : University of North Carolina Press.