Architectural Philosophy and Morality of Sacred Spaces in Christian Worship Centre in Akure, Ondo State

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ABSTRACT

Architectural philosophy is the moral justification of Western architecture, the foundation of contemporary architecture, and the characteristics of modern architecture, which is concerned with the organization of human functional needs in spaces and the structural need of the work, constituting moral terms. Eventually, the morality of spaces concerning functionality and beauty expresses and communicates to the user, especially in sacred spaces of worship, which, due to the development of theological and liturgical teachings, has altered the anthropometrics of functionality and beauty of sacred spaces. This transition holds from the Traditional Gothic to the Contemporary style, having a lot of dimensional effects on the spiritual meaning, belief, and experience of the worshippers. Therefore, the study focused on investigating the effect of the philosophy and morality of the transition in Gothic and Contemporary styles of sacred spaces in Christian worship centers. The study identified the significance of sacred spaces of worship to the worshippers and further examines the impact of religious buildings and morality of church architecture and interiors in Akure to give directions on the effect of the two styles of sacred spaces in churches. Research methods were in two phases: unstructured interviews and non-participant case studies on five selected churches within the Gothic and Contemporary styles in Akure Ondo state. The close-ended questionnaire gave a constructive perspective of the worshipper's experience of the sacred spaces regarding the study objectives in the case study area. Content analysis and descriptions for the case studies and descriptive statistical tools concerning frequency for the questionnaires were used to arrive at the result, which revealed that dynamic belief, experience, and lifestyle to the ritual and teaching, among other events performed in these sacred spaces of churches being the integral effect of the transition.

Keywords: architectural morality, architectural philosophy, church architecture, sacred spaces, worship centres

INTRODUCTION

Architecture compared to any other form of art crosses so often with ethical issues that it is acceptable to suggest that there are more connections between architecture and morality (Carroll, 2015; Tatla, 2011). Theories that guide architecture are seen in the contexts of or set of forces that guides design actions or output (Brisibe & Daminabo 2016). Architecture is not entirely metaphorical, as Breitschmid (2007) pointed to aesthetics, art, and architecture as forms with which man closes the gap between reality and representation in philosophical and ethical terms". Architecture philosophy has a marked influence on ethical perception which has a pronounced influence on morally responsible to natures create habitable spaces, including spaces that facilitate quiet retreat, reflection and attention to many direct experiences (Haji, Cuypers & Joye, 2013). According to Tatla (2011), architectural philosophy is the movement moral justification of western architecture, foundation of contemporary

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architecture and characteristics of modern architecture which is concerned with the organisation of human functional need in spaces as well as the structural need of the work, constituting moral terms. Church architecture also align with these movement of western, contemporary and modern architectures accommodating certain special activities, such as worship, prayer, preaching and teaching, baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which are 'sacred' and specific to a church building (Falconer, 2017). Church architecture provide a response to the specific emotional and spiritual experience of faith and to the expression of the magnificence communion with God and with people'.

Morality of spaces in relation to functionality and beauty express and communicate to the user especially in sacred spaces which due to the development of theological and liturgical teachings, has altered the anthropometrics of functionality and beauty of sacred spaces. The church which is considered as a (sacred) space facilitate gathering where the exterior form expresses the activities or the functions of the interior which is the inner life exhibiting moral architectural honesty (Falconer, 2017). Falconer (2017) also opined that forms, spaces and aesthetics of church buildings should be designed creatively so as to communicate theological meaning and Biblical praxis. Though the alteration of the anthropometrics of functionality and beauty of sacred spaces holds from the Traditional Gothic to Contemporary style having a lot of dimensional effect on the spiritual meaning, belief and experience of the worshippers. Therefore, the study focus to investigate the effect of the philosophy and morality of the transition in Gothic and Contemporary styles of sacred spaces in Christian worship centres. The study identifies the significance of sacred spaces of worship to the worshippers in the dynamic belief, experience and life style to ritual and teaching among other events performed in these sacred spaces being the integral effect of the transition. The study further examines the impact of religious buildings, and morality of church architecture and interiors in Akure to give directions to garner the effect of the two style of sacred spaces in churches.

The study was furthermore expanded by raising fundamental questions of what are the significance of sacred spaces of worship? What are the impacts of religious buildings? What are morality of church architecture and interiors in Akure?. Method applied in answering the question raised were in three phases of literature review, unstructured interview and non-participant case studies on five selected churches within the Gothic and Contemporary styles in Akure Ondo state, close ended questionnaire which gave constructive perspective of worshipper's experience of the sacred spaces regarding the study question in the case study area. The study also emphasised that though the theological and liturgical dimension is the major drive of worship which has its philosophical and moral grounds to dictate its own style of architecture of the sacred space in the worship centre, there ripple effects from the expression, communication and experience on the direct and indirect worshippers which resultantly shaping the emotion and spiritual life and practise of the worshippers.

Purpose of Architectural Philosophy of Spaces

The purpose of Architectural Philosophy is to provide the platform to allow the field's self-identification process to begin, establish the field's standards, and identify the most pertinent topics (Spector, Fahey & Kollar, 2014). According to Tatla (2011, p. 346), architectural philosophy can be classified in three categories, the first is that "the moral justification of Western architecture was grounded mainly on religious, political and philosophical terms during Greek and Roman antiquity, medieval times and Renaissance, which shifted into social, political, rational and technological within the limits of Modern architecture". However, Tatla (2011, p. 346) based his second classification of architectural philosophy to the "moral foundation of contemporary architecture," this is based on the concept of the Zeitgeist, that is ideas predominant in a period and place, usually expressed in

the literature, philosophy and religion of that period and time. The third architectural philosophy characterises Modern architecture, which is concerned with the organization of human functional needs in space, as well as the structural needs of the work, constitute in moral terms".

Architecture is generally perceived to be expressive as it communicates by expressing the generative concepts and fundamental intentions of its designer in literary form (Brisibe et al., 2016, p. 56). "The closest accounts describing spiritual experiences or insights in architecture are from two areas: aesthetics and creativity. The former addresses the experience of something built (or natural) and the latter focuses on the process of design" (Barrie, Bermudez, Geva, & Teal, 2007, p. 5). However, design is a product of human cognition and every designer has their own way of thinking, though they have different background and approach to design that generate unique, individual design result which could be seen, measured, and analyzed to get more understanding on both the quality of design and on the process of design creations (Chan, 2012). Architects can be seen to be organizing spaces for morally assessable purposes, as spaces can also be organized for eminently righteous goals as in the case of much contemporary green architecture (Spector et al., 2014).

Morality of Aesthetics in Buildings

In ancient Greece, morality was believed to intertwine with beauty (Tatla, 2011, p. 347). Religious Architecture as discussed by Lang (2014, p. 44) is generally perceived to be majorly a concept of beauty with theology in view but in recent times, the idea of beauty as become a subjective judgment, in the context of modernity, the question of beauty has been reduced to a subjective judgment which can be narrowed to a particular reasoning. According to Tatla (2011, p. 348), "the beautiful reveals itself in the search for the good". An ancient Greek philosopher considered truth (aletheia) as part of the nature of the beautiful, and beauty cannot be mere symmetry but appearance itself (Tatla, 2011, p. 348). However, functional considerations frequently influence the aesthetic evaluation of an architectural work and aesthetically praise a building due to its functional beauty making it elegant with respect to meeting expectations efficiently in ingenious ways (Spector et al., 2014).

Rasaq and Femi (2011) opined that buildings are physical and they can be perceived, occupied and used, while it enhances the world's historic beauty and any space becomes functional when it meets the needs of its user. A building can be praised ethically for spatial adequacy and user-friendliness (Spector et al., 2014). Lang (2014, p. 47) reviewed Botta's lecture given at Zurich, he "observes that buildings have the capacity of communicating values that transcend their proper function" even as a building expresses the work, joy and effort of its designer as well as the "sentiments and aspirations the building thus holds a sacred potential as a memorial to the transforming force of human work". Brisibe et al (2016, p. 57) also pointed out that "a building is not an end to itself rather it frames, articulates, gives significance, relates, facilitates and prohibits architecture amongst other thing". Lang (2014, p. 55, 56) noted that one of such value of architecture is the sacred, he described as the awareness of a connection that leads us beyond the structural or functional characteristics of a building and allows us to evoke an experience of a reality that surpasses what is immediately perceptible to the sense. Lang (2014, p. 55) also noted that "Architecture is both an innovation and an invention, as it transforms old ideas to solve modern problems".

Church Architecture and its Significance

According to Adeboye (2015), church architecture is universally a tactile expression of theology, revealing to us who we are, what we believe and how we practise Christianity. While the content of the Gospel message is significantly more important than the building

itself. Moreover, studies revealed that architecture of the churches gave denominational identity and at the same time expressed their mode of theology and liturgy and should never be merely traditional but it must express the reality of God as expressed in the theology and liturgy (Adeboye, 2015). Theology expresses that sacred architecture that mediates between the earth and heaven since architecture is a potent symbolic vehicle for personal exploration. Spaces have theological symbolic meanings as seen in the architecture of some traditions where roof was believed to symbolize charity, which covers a multitude of sins; the floor symbolized the foundation of faith and the humility of the poor" (Adeboye 2015). The theology of any space could define the functional requirement and the requirement in turn determines the function as in what makes nave different from lectern, alter or narthex, for example, is simply theology. Plan forms, for example, have a way of symbolizing spirituality. An architectural space has both form and function and in both, it could represent values which could also house aspirations and as a great dynamic space with its shape and rhythms the dynamism could be seen (Adeboye 2015).

Hottovy (2002) noted that the church building should play a primary integral sacramental role in the liturgy as the structure or design of the church building was neither a secondary consideration nor simply a functional shell to protect the worshipping community from the environmental elements but a primary custodian of architectural heritage of the Church. It noted that as the liturgy could be revised, so, too, architectural design could be adjusted otherwise, liturgical architecture could not properly fulfill its role because in the history of the Church, the 'old' and the 'new' were always closely interwoven as the 'new' grew out of the 'old,' and the 'old' found a fuller expression in the 'new. Theological with liturgical convictions and church architecture are inseparable. Observing Pagan places of worship for example, one could see typically dark places and the window-less Aztec temples, the after-sunset Druid ceremonies, the dark interiors of Buddhist temples were all architectural expressions of a spiritual reality (Hottovy, 2002). Roman Catholic Churches too, for example, often placed (and still place) the font at the back of the sanctuary, reflecting their theological and liturgical position that baptism is required in order for "entrance" into the church.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This gave descriptive information on the objective of the study to gather findings in attempt to accentuate the effect of the sacred space in Christian worship centres. Review was based on book and articles review of the most considerable contribution to the field study of philosophy and morality of sacred spaces in worship centres. Study was carried out in different dimensions enabling scholarly literatures to be generally sourced within the frame work of the study questions which makes up the variables for the study that revealed the experience of sacred spaces in worship centres especially in Christian theology and liturgy of the church. The description of these experience as found in the literature varies which gave different meaning of experience.

Significance of Sacred Spaces of Worship

Kilde (2008) defined a religious space as a house where sacred ritual takes place and built to represent religious beliefs. Barrie et al. (2007); defined it as a "places built to symbolize religious beliefs and facilitate communal rituals." Generally speaking, some religions call such spaces temples while others refer to them as assembly, for example, Roman, Egyptian or Hindu temples is a place where gods dwell and individuals go there to offer sacrifices. Also, words such as synagogue, church and mosque has their root Greek meaning derived from the word "assembly" or "place of assembly" (Kieckhefer, 2014, p. 2). Lang (2014), in his book, mentioned that a prominent architect defines a church as "an

elementary space for the assembly, where for the faithful the original event of the Christian sacrifice is repeated." The description of a typical church is more complicated because it takes some attributes of an assembly and a temple. Also, the characteristics of a church depend on its religious traditions and ritual. In the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Anglican Church has a minimum of a nave where the congregation gather, and a sanctuary separated from the congregation. The priest officiates at the altar located within the sanctuary, the focal point where the congregation brings their offerings and administration of communion. Later, in the middle ages the statuary became open the preacher could be seen and heard effectively, galleries were introduced to accommodate more people. With time, more emphasis was attached to preaching and church architecture developed and similar forms of construction of cathedrals which are large and high buildings to accommodate more people (Kieckhefer, 2014, p. 2). Public worship of all "faiths and denominations" therefore needs a suitable place, its setting and symbolic objects that are exclusively dedicated so that it can be regarded as a place of worship with a sense of sacredness and places of worship can be supremely uplifting buildings (Historic England, 2017; Lang, 2014). Rasaq et al. (2011); Kilde (2008), traced the root of church architecture to the gathering of early Christians held at "converted Roman houses". These houses were usual Roman houses marked with the symbol of painted cross at the door post and interiors were decorated with Christian symbols and biblical accounts showing the concept of their new religion and way of worship created to express the essence of the belief and faith in Jesus Christ. As Christianity became more popular, it let to the construction Basilicas and cathedrals to accommodate the larger population (Rasaq et al., 2011).

According to Kieckhefer (2014, p. 2), the character of a building as an assembly place and the expected movement of worshipers into and within a sacred building is reflected in the design and furnishings of a temple or assembly, or a mixture of the two forms. Based on the investigation made by Khakpour and Kateb (2016), it is generally believed by Christians that the church is the incarnation of Christ on earth which is assumed to reflect in the spatial arrangement of churches, that is, "Jesus Christ's head corresponds with the church's back which is eastward and his open arms are the crossed arms of the church, his bust and legs are in the *"seraglio"* (main bowl to the entrance of the church) and his heart is in the main sanctuary; the man-god embodied in the holy building through ritual practices is the significant sacrifice that reconciles the heavens with the earth" (Khakpour & Kateb, 2016). A religious building expresses spiritually and has a sense of sacredness; it should be seen as an invitation to worship but not as a barrier (Rasaq et al., 2011). In any community, the place of worship is considered and renovated as substantial part of its architectural heritage and cultural sites (Roche, 2011) because they are often seen as one of the finest and most prominent buildings in their locality possessing architectural, historical and social significance (Roche, 2011). Also, the heritage significance and cultural patrimony of church buildings, including their fixtures and features, lies in their central role in the community as places of public worship, usually over many generations (Verkaaik, 2013). This patrimony is made up of works of architecture, painting and sculpture, as well as fittings and liturgical furnishings; features that have constituted the highest artistic expression of faith (Verkaaik, 2013).

However, Verkaaik (2013) pointed out that "religious buildings may not be crucial for religious reasons but are important in a social or political sense" also, they are seen to be significant in the spiritual and family lives of many people which is usually passed from one generation to another (Roche, 2011). This is seen in the case the Moorish style of synagogues or the neo-Gothic style of Catholic churches in nineteenth-century Europe, which were seen to serve the purpose of visibility and communal pride (LeCavalier, 2009; Verkaaik, 2013). Also, some religious buildings can be associated to the processes of liberation or

amalgamation (Verkaaik, 2013), such is the case of St. Thomas Anglican Church, Badagry the first church building in Nigeria built in 1845 in Gothic style. This was built out of the need to have a sacred space for Christian worship after the slave trade ended (Adeboye, Adeyemi & Moyo, 2014).

Impact of Religious Buildings

Looking at the history of cathedrals, they were massive, strong, structures, with significant styles and scales ranging from small, simple structures that either have a single space to vast cathedrals containing a complex arrangement of internal rooms and spaces (Beauchamp, 2008; Roche, 2011). Although, some might have simple exterior ornamentation with dramatic embellished element, portal, or doorway leading to the main interior space (Beauchamp, 2008), that are large enough to house worshipers and symbolically big enough for the presence of God (Rasaq et al., 2011). However, church architecture served as the figurative separation point between the earth and the heavens: leaving the earthly mind set and entering the ethereal, forming community with God and man (Beauchamp, 2008). Churches are designed to express the meaning of heaven in the language and symbols of architecture and art (Roche, 2011, p. 7). The architecture of a Church should therefore, never be merely traditional but it must express the reality of God as expressed in the theology and liturgy (Adeboye, 2015). The art and architecture of churches in Romanesque period were proposed to enrich teaching (Beauchamp, 2008), ornamented with Christian symbols and Biblical accounts (Rasaq et al., 2011), while that of the Gothic period was geared "to appeal to the emotional side of a joyless people who were steeped in ignorance and superstition" (Beauchamp, 2008). Gothic churches could be seen as symbolic resemblance of the Heavenly City itself as pronounced in Holy Cross Catholic Cathedral, Catholic Mission Street, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos shown in plate 1. The gothic traditional style is characterised with verticality, pointed arches, flying buttresses, towering columns and vaulted ceilings, towering walls faced with large stained glass window area to increase the amount of light entering into the building creating a grandeur in the minds of many worshipers, in an attempt to replicating divine magnitude (Kilde, 2008). Gothic churches achieved a high emotional quality because of their scale, honesty of structure and natural materials (Adeboye, 2015).

Plate 1: Holy Cross Catholic Cathedral, Catholic Mission Street, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos (Adeboye, 2015)

Thus, the Gothic had been possibly the most spiritual style that brought theology and liturgy to elevate the soul of man towards his God by fulfilling the aspirations of the Church theology and liturgy (Adeboye, 2015). Lang (2014) pointed out that the connection of a building with its exterior environment is of key importance which can be seen in most religious buildings that makes them stand out from any other form of building and the interior

is the actual liturgical space sowing an expression of worship and faith (Lang, 2014). In a world marked with fear and superstition, these symbolic ornaments in form of creepy creatures undoubtedly encouraged many to seek solace and safety inside a church or cathedral- protected from the demons and ghouls which roamed outside. The pulpit, altar, and font witnessed to the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Ghost). The ascending and descending stained glass windows contained in the nave of the interior of the Downside Abbey Church. Richard Irvine, Russia shown in plate 2, were meant to portray symbolically the ladder to heaven (Adeboye, 2015).

Plate 2: The interior of the Downside Abbey Church. Richard Irvine Russia (Verkaaik, 2013)

In Ireland, between eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Roman Catholic churches were rebuilt to be modest in scale and where located back streets of towns. Architect John Roberts during the 1790s built a magnificent Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity in Waterford, and this was an exception to other church buildings. Gradually, the design of churches became larger and more attention was given to church buildings especially towards the end of the nineteenth century, after the Catholic emancipation in 1829 (Roche, 2011). Although, from Verkaaik's (2013) view "there is a tendency across all contemporary religions to argue that the heart of religion lies in individual faith, the community, charitable deeds, ritual or doctrine, but not primarily in the religious building". Consequently, Lang (2014) noted the writing of Rahner, "Man does not enter a temple, a fane which encloses the holy and cuts it off from a godless and secular world which remains outside". But rather a temple is just an erected "landmark" signifying that God is the owner of the world, and can be worship or reverenced anywhere. Lang (2014, p. 46) also mentioned in Le Corbusier explanation that "the requirements of religion" had little influence on the design of any religious building but the form given is just to evoke "the psychophysiology of the feelings". Also, another prominent architect Mies van der Rohe, shared his view "when he designed the chapel at the Illinois Institute of Technology (1952), is said to have been "interested not in the specific solution for the church but in the universal form; an architecture which could accommodate any function." In addition, predominantly secular and multicultural societies have emergence of new secular or multi-faith retreats which offer some of the facilities that mosques, churches, synagogues and temples also offer (Verkaaik, 2013).

Morality of Church Architecture and Interiors in Nigeria

The St. Thomas Anglican Church, Badagry built in 1845 in Gothic style is the first church building in Nigeria built out of the need to have a sacred space for Christian worship after the slave trade ended leading to Christianity in Africa by missionaries because of their desire to expand the gospel all over Africa (Adeboye, Adeyemi & Moyo, 2014). Around

1863, building construction in Nigeria gained prominence, also mission work began to spread in Nigeria, these gave room for the construction of "monumental church buildings" in Nigeria (Adeboye et al., 2014). This was before Pentecostalism in Nigeria; therefore, churches were built and overseen by foreign missions and liturgical and theological where the major influence on the architecture of established church buildings (Adeboye et al., 2014). These early established Churches attached liturgical and theological meanings to the architecture of their church buildings which were similar even when the denominations were different because they all adopted varieties of Gothic style. They introduced the ornamentation around the entrance porch to announce the holiness of the interior sacred space. The aisle tried to draw the congregation to the altar and the pews on either side became the gangway of a ship carrying worshippers to God. The altar, the holy heart of the building, was contained in a separated and sacred space.

Over time, there was a gradual departure from absolute Gothic because of the emergence of many denominations especially the African Independent Churches and the early formation of Pentecostal Churches coupled with industrial development (Adeboye, 2015). While theology and liturgy were still given expression as influenced by precedence, some cinema houses, warehouses, disused houses, uncompleted buildings, hotels, multi-purpose halls, open spaces and any possible adoptable spaces became worship centres with the notion that any location or place could be adopted for theological and liturgical activity. Church growth and gospel teaching became the main focus of the church and its buildings began to take form of lecture theatre and long span roofing emerged looking like industrial buildings because there was the need to accommodate the surging congregation (Adeboye, 2015). The identity of some buildings without the cross sign on them could be mistaken for commercial, industrial or any other public buildings. Adeboye (2015) argues that most contemporary mega church architecture is unfortunately an expression of consumer-capitalist ideology, and fails to contrast itself as 'other', by aligning itself with secular architectural typologies.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology adopted was divided in two phases according to the information gathering technique. The aim was to answer the following study questions as affecting the worshipper: What are the significance of sacred spaces of worship? What are the impact of religious buildings? What are the morality of church architecture and interiors in Nigeria? The first methodological phase which is also in relation to the study question justifies the relative implication of the study question on Nigerian churches through case studies of five churches in Akure, the capital city of Ondo state Nigeria.

It involves case study of five selected churches either within the network and categories of churches covering the Contemporary Sacramental church or Gothic Style (the Orthodox, Methodist and Baptist) Churches and the Contemporary Mega Church (African independent church and protestant churches) in Akure. Akure was chosen because it is the city centre of Ondo state which has a conglomerate of churches within the ambient of the categories of churches and close to the researcher. Selection of churches was based on random selection of churches within the study area. Factors which influenced selection of churches includes closeness to researcher for at most 5km to the researcher, must be located around the city centre of the study area, at most each of them must fall within the different categories of church, accessibility to reach of information. Since this study is theoretical and historical in nature, qualitative methods in form of unstructured interview, and non-participant case study were employed in collecting data. Pictures of both the interior, exterior and surrounding view of the churches were taking while content analysis and descriptions were adopted for the analysis in relation with the study question to draw a logical conclusion about the study.

Analysis were based on availability of religious symbols, expression, and communications of elements of the sacred spaces and space itself, anthropometrics of sacred spaces and implications, aesthetics implication of both the sacred space and the religious building, moral justification of the sacred spaces in terms of functionality and order, theological and liturgical experience of the sacred space, and architectural philosophy drawn from the sacred space that classify and categories the worship centre attracting and affecting the spiritual belief and wellbeing of the worshippers and passersby. Relative juxtaposition was made from the analysis given a direct result of the survey.

Second methodological phase, investigate the perceptive layer of the worshipers' opinion about their church in relation to the study questions through administering of questionnaire at the five case studied churches in Akure, the capital city of Ondo state Nigeria. It involved a survey of the same five selected churches in Akure which was conducted within one week from the mid-week of July to the end of July 2018. Close ended questionnaire was prepared in order to understand the subjective experience of worshippers in these churches relating their perspective to the study questions. Questionnaire structure was divided into the three fundamental questions of the study to capture a constructive perspective of the worshipper as regarding the study question. Demographic data on gender, age, education and number of children of respondent were also collected. People included in the survey were aged 18 and above. A balanced number of responses from each church (40 worshippers each) making the total number of administered questionnaire to be 200 which were based on random selection of respondent, since worshippers were not living in the place of worship and 164 respondents returned the questionnaire after it had been independently completed by the respondents. Questionnaire administration to respondent were on the basis of first point of contact on respondent acceptance after persuasions to provide the required information. Descriptive statistical tool (Histogram, Bar Chart and Pie Chart) in relation to frequency gathered from result of the respondent were used to represent the perspectives of the respondent (worshipper's) in relation to the focal study questions. While chi-square was used to test the hypothesis below:

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between attendance of church programs and how church spaces connect worshippers in serving God.

H_{11}: There is significant relationship between attendance of church programs and how church spaces connect worshippers in serving God.

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between the impact of religious buildings (form of building) and the morality of church architecture and interiors in Nigeria (Structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls).

H_{12}: There is significant relationship between the impact of religious buildings (form of building) and the morality of church architecture and interiors in Akure, Ondo state (Structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Case Studies of Five Churches in Akure

Case studies and analysis were carried out to assess the availability of religious symbols, expression and communication of elements with anthropometrics of sacred spaces and aesthetics implication of both the sacred space and the religious building, moral justification of the sacred spaces in terms of functionality and order, theological and liturgical experience of the sacred space, and architectural philosophy drawn from the sacred space that classify and categories the worship center attracts and affecting the spiritual belief and well-being of the worshippers and passersby. Relative juxtaposition was made from the analysis given a direct result of the survey.

Sacred Heart Catholic Cathedral Church

The church is located at the cathedral junction in Akure Ondo state, Nigeria. The cathedral is a roman catholic church as seen in plate 3 below, and it has characteristic features of the Romanesque architecture. The building is characterized on the exterior with tall entrances doors and vestibule which lack ornamentation of artistic symbols. The doors of the church are located in the southern, western and eastern sides. There are long strip windows with clearstories seating at the nave sectional walls of the cathedral which throws additional light to the interior spaces and radiate beauty and communicate firmness with rhythm in praising and worshipping God. The building has a huge space in the interior with high head room and very slim semi-circular windows with semi-circular arches on slender columns separating the nave from the aisle. The alter is finished with marble tiles, wood and flowers as ornaments and decoration which carry high sense of beauty in the sacred spaces expressing beauty of worship.

Plate 3: Main entrance of Sacred Heart Catholic Cathedral with no ornamentation
Source: Researcher's field work, 2018

CAC Glory of God Church

The CAC, glory of God church located at cassava junction along FUTA Junction in Akure Ondo state, Nigeria is also an example of a church built to convey the liturgy. Although the building is an example of contemporary church design finished with modern materials, it has a grand entrance with 2 large doors at the entrance and single doors at the east and west side shown in plate 4. It is a double volume building with clerestory windows at two sides of the building. The aisle tried to draw the congregation to the altar separated from the nave and the pews on either side became the gangway of a ship carrying worshippers to God. The building has gallery at two sides of the building as shown in plate 8.

Plate 4: Main entrance and interior space of to the CAC Glory of God church
Source: Researcher's field work, 2018

Agape Christian assembly

The church which is located at Agape Avenue in Oyemekun road, Akure, Ondo state, Nigeria is also a typical example of a contemporary church design finished with modern materials. Plate 5 shows the concept of the church design, which is a cross and an important symbol of the Christians faith that signifies the suffering of Jesus Christ. However, the altar is the focal point of the building which is at the centre of the building. The building does not have a double volume height neither does it have clerestory windows and the windows are often cladded with curtains to allow for artificial lighting and ventilation. It has two main entrances with an average door height on the south and other doors at the east and west wing. The entire interior of the church along the walls are covered with fabric, to reduce distraction from the external part of the church which reveals that focus on God is the essence of worship and mission on earth. The floor of the church is finished with rug to trap and eliminate all forms of noise which depicts that the church is sacred space and quietness is the part to holiness. The chairs are all arranged to focus on the alter bringing to mind the need to focus on God at all times. The right wing of church showing average height of windows and door. This indicates the flatness of the auditorium which portrays the closeness of God to the worshippers during any part of the experience including teaching worship in the sacred spaces.
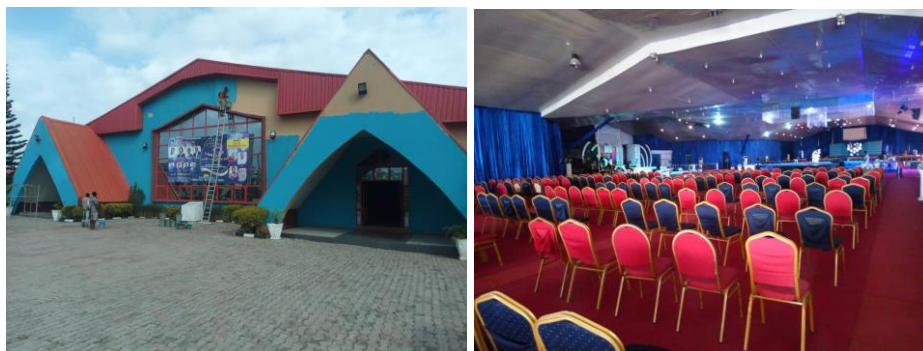

Plate 5: Main entrance to the Agape Christian Assembly
Source: Researcher's field work, 2018

Mary Queen of Angels Catholic Church

The church building has characteristic features of the Baroque architecture. The building is a single space double height space with extensive use of dramatic symbols, paintings and ornaments which can be seen from the facade of the building to focus on theology and appeal to the senses of worshipers shown in plate 6. The doors of the church are located in the western, northern and southern sides. The main entrance has a very large door and brings worshipers directly to the large nave with the altar as the focal point of the interior space. The alter is separated from the nerve and the walls are very high with clerestory windows at the three sides of the church. The windows are large painted windows that bring in sufficient light into the church.

Plate 6: Main entrance of Mary Queen of Angels church with ornamentation and decoration
Source: Researcher's field work, 2018

St Thomas's Anglican Church

The St Thomas's Anglican Church building has characteristic features of the Romanesque architecture with little ornamentation and symbols from the bible. The building is characterized on the exterior with high entrances doors and large windows as shown in plate 7. The doors of the church are located in the southern, western and eastern sides. The building has a huge space in the interior with very high head room and very slim semi-circular clerestory windows with semi-circular arches on slender columns separating the nave from the aisle. The building as a gallery to occupy the large congregation that it has. The gallery seats on the main entrance of the church which portray the overflow of his blessings from the piercing of the sacred sides, head, hands back to the feet of Jesus. The columns in the interior of the church shows the firmness in the presence of God and the source of his grace. The interior of the church is decorated with holy images of events found on the stain glasses of the windows at the north, east, west and south axes which also assist worship experience.

Plate 7: Main entrance of St Thomas's Anglican church with little ornamentation
Source: Researcher's field work, 2018

Study Questionnaire

Analysis was based on the 164 questionnaires responded to. Descriptive statistic was used to describe the involvement of the worshippers in Akure to the sacred spaces of Agape Christian church of God, Glory of God C.A.C church, Mary Queen of Angels Catholic church, Redeem Christian church of God church province 4, and Saint Thomas's Anglican Church in Akure, Ondo State. Results and analysis were as follows.

Distribution of church attended

Table 1 shows the distribution of church attended by the respondents. Result from analysis shows that the respondents attend Agape (17.1%), Christ Apostolic Church (19.5%),

Mary Queen of Angels (24.4%), Redeemed Christian Church of God (22%) and Saint Thomas Anglican Church (17.1%).

Table 1. Distribution of church attended

Church	Frequency	Percent
Agape	28	17.1
CAC	32	19.5
Mary Queen of Angels	40	24.4
Redeemed Christian Church of God	36	22.0
Saint Thomas Anglican Church	28	17.1
Total	164	100

Age of the respondents

The age distribution of the respondents is presented on Table 2. Most of the respondents are between ages 21-30 years old (45%) while others are below 20 years (5%), 31-40 years (35%), 41-50 years (10%) and above 50 years (5%).

Table 2. Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 20	8	5.0
21-30	72	45.0
31-40	56	35.0
41-50	16	10.0
Above 50	8	5.0
Total	160	100

Years of being a Christian

Number of years spent being a Christian is shown on Figure 1. The result shows that majority of the respondents have spent 11-20 (34.2%) and 21-30 (34.2%) years as a Christian. Just 2.6% of the respondents have spent above 50 years as a Christian.
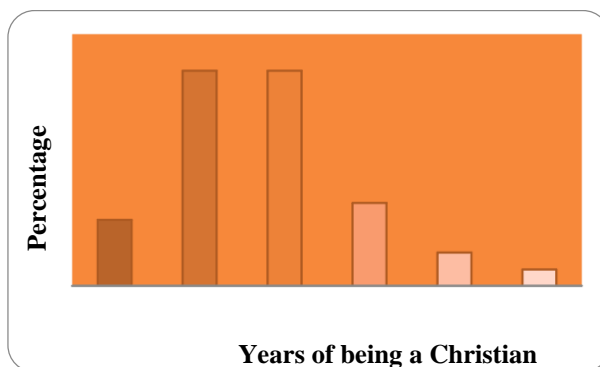

Figure 1. Years of being a Christian

Attendance of church programs

Figure 2 shows the frequency of attendance of church programs. Result obtained shows that 80.5% of the respondents attend church programs regularly while others attend occasionally (4.9%), moderately (12.2%) and are not involved (2.4%).
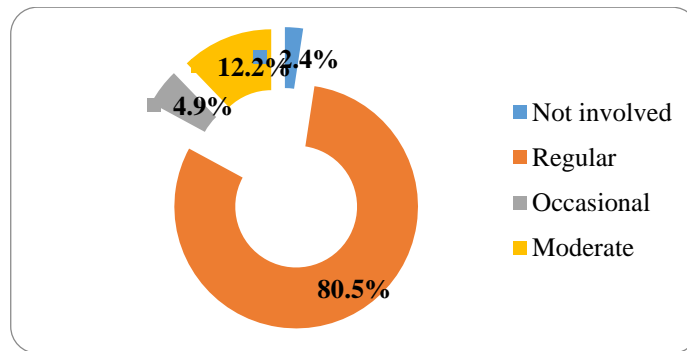
Figure 2. Attendance of church programs

Experience of the two style of architectural sacred space of worship

Result on respondents' experience of the two style of architectural sacred space of worship is presented on Figure 3. Most (58.5%) of the respondents have not experience the two style of architectural sacred space of worship while 41.5 % agreed to have the experience.
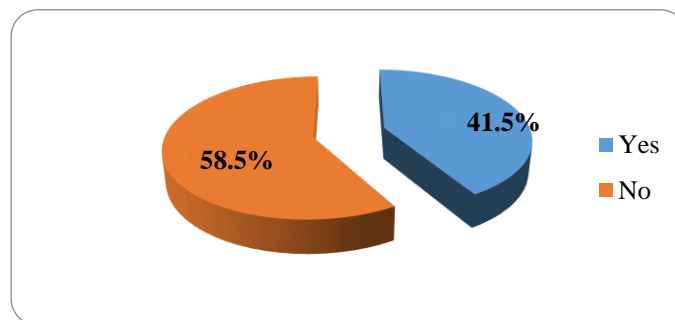

Figure 3. Experience of the two style of architectural sacred space of worship

Does spaces mean anything and connect you in serving God

Result on the question "does spaces mean anything and connect you in serving God" is as shown on Figure 4. The result shows that majority (82.9%) of the respondents agreed that spaces mean something to them and connect them when serving God while 17.1% think otherwise.
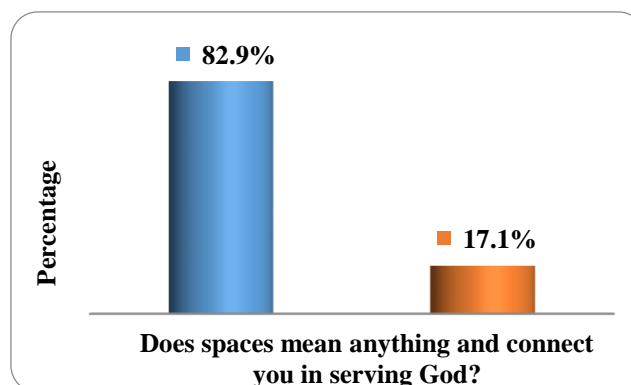

Figure 4. Does spaces mean anything and connect you in serving God

Level of emotional attachment to church

Result on the level of emotional attachment to church is presented on Table 3. The result revealed that 31.7% and 48.8% of the respondents have average and weak emotional attachment to church.

Table 3. Level of emotional attachment to church

Level of emotional attachment to church	Frequency	Percent
No emotion	16	9.8
Weak emotion	16	9.8
Average emotion	52	31.7
Strong emotion	80	48.8
Total	164	100

What attracts you to worship?

Table 4 shows what attracts the respondents to worship. The result shows that the respondents are attracted to worship because of church's liturgy (43.9%), theology (36.6%), sacred spaces (14.6%) and building (4.9%).

Table 4. What attracts you to worship?

What attracts you to worship	Frequency	Percent
Theology	60	36.6
Liturgy	72	43.9
Sacred spaces	24	14.6
Church building	8	4.9
Total	164	100

Does your church have symbolic character of expression to drive experience in her sacred spaces?

Result on the presence of symbolic character of expression in church to drive experience in sacred spaces is presented in Table 5. 65.9% of the respondents attest to the presence of symbolic character of expression in church to drive experience in sacred spaces.

Table 5. Does your church has symbolic character of expression to drive experience in her sacred spaces

Does your church have symbolic character of expression to drive experience in her sacred spaces	Frequency	Percent
Yes	108	65.9
No	56	34.1
Total	164	100

Does high head, windows and large volume of space affect experience in sacred spaces?

Figure 5 shows respondents' perception of the effect of high head, windows and large volume of space on experience in sacred spaces. The result obtained shows that majority agreed (61%) that high head, windows and large volume of space affects experience in sacred spaces while others strongly disagree (7.3%), disagree (14.6%) and strongly agree (17.1%).
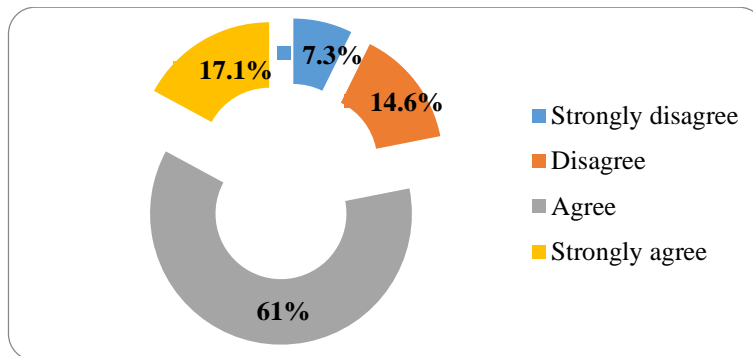
Figure 5. Does high head, windows and large volume of space affect experience in sacred spaces

Aspect of church building that attracts respondents to worship and affect their experience

Table 6 shows aspect of church building that attracts respondents to worship and affect their experience. Majority of the respondent agreed that images on buildings (31.7%) and traditional use of nave and aisle (36.6%) do not attract them to worship and affect their experience. Majority of the respondent agreed that contemporary style (43.9), concept (contemporary/Gothic), height of building (46.3%), height of roof (39%), presence of galleries (41.5%), use of gothic arc (293%), ornamentations on buildings (43.9%), high doors (41.5%), contemporary use if open movement (48.8%), clear stories (41.5%), revolving alter at centre open to access (31.7%) and use of pews (34.1%) averagely attract them to worship and affect their experience. Majority of the respondent agreed that form of the building (43.9%), gothic symbol (31.7%), presence of cross (51.2%) and fixed alter at centre open to access (41.5%) strongly attract them to worship and affect their experience. This result further shows that form of the building (1st), fixed alter at centre open to access (2nd), height of the building (3rd), height of roof (4th) and concept (contemporary/Gothic) (5th) are the strongest aspect of the church building that attract them to worship and affect their experience while high doors (17th), images on building (17th), traditional use of nave and aisle (19th) and clear stories (19th) are the least aspect of the church that attract them to worship and affect their experience.

Table 6. Aspect of church building that attracts respondents to worship and affect their experience

Aspect of church building that attracts respondents to worship and affect their experience	Freq/%				Score	Rank
	None	Weak	Average	Strong		
Traditional Gothic style	44 (26.8)	32 (19.5)	44 (26.8)	44 (26.8)	1.54	14th
Contemporary style	12 (7.3)	44 (26.8)	72 (43.9)	36 (22.0)	1.80	8th
Concept (contemporary/Gothic)	24 (14.6)	20 (12.2)	76 (46.3)	44 (26.8)	1.85	5th
Form of the building	8 (4.9)	20 (12.2)	64 (39.0)	72 (43.9)	2.22	1st
Height of the building	20 (12.2)	16 (9.8)	76 (46.3)	52 (31.7)	1.98	3rd
Height of roof	16 (9.8)	28 (17.1)	64 (39.0)	56 (34.1)	1.98	3rd
Presence of galleries	28 (17.1)	20 (12.2)	68 (41.5)	48 (29.3)	1.83	6th
Use of Gothic arc	36 (22.0)	40 (24.4)	48 (29.3)	40 (24.4)	1.56	12th
Gothic symbolic	48 (29.3)	28 (17.1)	36 (22.0)	52 (31.7)	1.56	12th
Images on buildings	52 (31.7)	32 (19.5)	40 (24.4)	40 (24.4)	1.41	17th

Ornamentations on buildings	24 (14.6)	40 (24.4)	72 (43.9)	28 (17.1)	1.63	11th
High doors	32 (19.5)	48 (29.3)	68 (41.5)	16 (9.8)	1.41	17th
Presence of the cross	56 (34.1)	12 (7.3)	12 (7.3)	84 (51.2)	1.76	10th
Traditional use of nave and aisle	60 (36.6)	24 (14.6)	40 (24.4)	40 (24.4)	1.37	19th
Contemporary use of open movement	40 (24.4)	24 (14.6)	80 (48.8)	20 (12.2)	1.49	16th
Clear stories	56 (34.1)	16 (9.8)	68 (41.5)	24 (14.6)	1.37	19th
Revolving alter at centre open to access	44 (26.8)	28 (17.1)	52 (31.7)	40 (24.4)	1.54	14th
Fix alter at centre bounded wall	28 (17.1)	8 (4.9)	60 (36.6)	68 (41.5)	2.02	2nd
Use of pews	24 (14.6)	32 (19.5)	56 (34.1)	52 (31.7)	1.83	6th
Use of convection chairs	20 (12.2)	48 (29.3)	48 (29.3)	48 (29.3)	1.76	9th

Effect of ornamentals emotional and spiritual experience during worship

Table 7 shows the ornament respondents agree affect their emotional and spiritual experience during worship. Most of the respondents agree that sacred pictures of event (31.3%), artistic drawings and paintings of spiritual activities or events (34.4%), use of symbolic materials to create expression like use of woods, pop, iron to carve spiritual meanings (24.5%), use of flowers (34.4%), use of plain fabrics and decorated fabrics (46.6%), use of decorative objects, like stones, tiles, doors and other worship materials carrying express (29.4%) and structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls (31.9%) affect their emotional and spiritual experience during worship. Furthermore, the result ranked the ornaments' effect on the emotional and spiritual experience during worship by respondents as structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls (1st), use of plain fabrics and decorated fabrics (2nd), use of flowers (3rd), use of decorative objects, like stones, tiles, doors and other worship materials carrying express (3rd), sacred pictures of event (5th), drawings and paintings of spiritual activities or events (6th) and use of symbolic materials to create expression like use of woods, pop, iron to carve spiritual meanings (7th).

Table 7. Effect of ornamentals emotional and spiritual experience during worship

Effect of ornamentals emotional and spiritual experience during worship	Freq/%					Score	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5		
Sacred pictures of event	20 (12.3)	16 (9.8)	36 (22.1)	51 (31.3)	40 (24.5)	3.46	5th
Artistic drawings and paintings of spiritual activities or events	24 (14.7)	24 (14.7)	23 (14.1)	56 (34.4)	36 (22.1)	3.34	6th
Use of symbolic materials to create expression like use of woods, pop, iron to carve spiritual meanings	24 (14.7)	16 (9.8)	47 (28.8)	40 (24.5)	36 (22.1)	3.29	7th
Use of flowers	12 (7.4)	24 (14.7)	23 (14.1)	56 (34.4)	48 (29.4)	3.64	3rd
Use of plain fabrics and decorated fabrics	8 (4.9)	16 (9.8)	31 (19.0)	76 (46.6)	32 (19.6)	3.66	2nd

Use of decorative objects, like stones, tiles, doors and other worship materials carrying express	8 (4.9)	16 (9.8)	47 (28.8)	48 (29.4)	44 (27.0)	3.64	3rd
Structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls	8 (4.9)	12 (7.4)	47 (28.8)	52 (31.9)	44 (27.0)	3.69	1st

Study Hypotheses

The main purpose of the study is to examine the Architectural philosophy and morality of sacred spaces in worship centres in Akure Ondo state. Therefore, the main hypothesis is:

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between attendance of church programs and how church spaces connect worshippers in serving God.

H_{11}: There is significant relationship between attendance of church programs and how church spaces connect worshippers in serving God.

Table 8. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.61	3	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	14.40	3	0.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.65	1	0.000
No of Valid Cases	164		

Cross tabulation

Attendance of Church Programs	Does spaces mean anything and connect you in serving God (Freq/%)		Total
	Yes	No	
Not involved	4 (2.4)	0 (0)	4 (2.4)
Regular	116 (70.7)	16 (9.8)	132 (80.5)
Occasional	4 (2.4)	4 (2.4)	8 (4.9)
Moderate	12 (7.3)	8 (4.9)	20 (12.2)
Total	136 (82.9)	28 (17.1)	164 (100)

Table 8 shows the sum of the chi-square from each cell is the Pearson chi-square statistic which is 16.61. Since the P-value (0.001) is less than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is relationship between attendance of church programs and how church space connect you in serving God. This study shows that respondents who attend church regularly are connected to God because of church sacred spaces while respondents who are not involved in church activities are not connected to God because of church spaces.

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between the impact of religious buildings (form of building) and the morality of church architecture and interiors in Nigeria (Structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls).

H_{12}: There is significant relationship between the impact of religious buildings (form of building) and the morality of church architecture and interiors in Akure, Ondo state (Structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls).

Table 9. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.07	12	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	102.04	12	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	59.46	1	0.000
No of Valid Cases	163		

Cross tabulation

Form of the building	Structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls (Freq/%)					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	
None	4 (2.5)	0 (0)	4 (2.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (4.9)
Weak	0 (0)	4 (2.5)	11 (6.7)	4 (2.5)	0 (0)	19 (11.7)
Average	4 (2.5)	8 (4.9)	20 (12.3)	28 (17.2)	4 (2.5)	64 (39.3)
Strong	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (7.4)	20 (12.3)	40 (24.5)	72 (44.2)
Total	8 (4.9)	12 (7.4)	47 (28.8)	52 (31.9)	44 (27.0)	163 (100)

Table 9 shows the sum of the chi-square from each cell is the Pearson chi-square statistic which is 1.07. Since the P-value (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is relationship between the impact of religious buildings (form of building) and morality of church architecture and interiors in Akure, Ondo state (Structural decoration of columns, beams, arcs and walls).

CONCLUSION

From the study above, traditional gothic style has the potency to drive emotional and spiritual experience compared to contemporary style. Although theology and liturgy contributes to the attachment of sacredness of a space, it is the basis for every worship in centres. Sacred spaces where rituals are performed promote the morality and philosophy of such spaces. The philosophical beliefs and ethics of the traditional gothic and contemporary church suggest the concept and components of the edifice of a church, the anthropometrics of the spaces, decorations, ornamentals, symbolic characteristics and acceptability of its effect on the worshippers. Since there are connections between worshippers and God through constant attendance of church program in sacred spaces, hence the significance of sacred spaces applies to the emotional and spiritual experience of the worshippers within the sacred spaces. The interior and exterior of the church should expressed the presence of God and communicate a strong meaning and attachment to the development of faith and believe to the creator. The morality in sacredness of spaces are attached to the religious building called the church and its form, concept and ideals should be beautiful and uphold strong sense of dedication and worship. The transition from the Gothic to contemporary rather than leaving a gap in the experience of worship, should facilitate mutual experience to portray the church as the fielder of the gap between the heavens and the earth. Moreso, the desired link and confluence missing in the experience from the gothic to contemporary possess threat to the extinction of the sacredness of the church. Hence there is need to further investigate the confluence between the traditional gothic and contemporary style to develop emotional and spiritual experience and give rise to feeling, use and belief of the church to be sacred enough not to reduce its quality to virtual space of no moral and ethical underpinnings.

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