

Effects of Pentecostalism on Ecclesiastical Architecture in Nigeria

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Abstract: *Many factors have been identified as elements of influence on ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria. Therefore, this study examined ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria with a view to identifying the effect of Pentecostalism. Lagos was chosen as the study area because it is arguably the most Pentecostal city in the world and the cradle of ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria. Since the study was explorative in nature, qualitative research methods were adopted in gathering the data and descriptive analysis was used. Findings of the study showed that at the emergence of Pentecostalism the theology and liturgy which were major determinants of ecclesiastical architecture underwent some epochal changes. Earlier practices transformed to evangelism with prosperity messages incorporating African ceremonial functions dominated their theology and liturgy respectively. The leadership of the Churches became predominantly indigenous and the construction of their buildings enjoys primarily local input in terms of construction method, labour and materials. Different building types transformed to adapted Church meeting places. Church buildings became industrial buildings with clear long span interiors because the Churches witnessed high population explosion. The study concluded that Pentecostalism has affected ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria in the areas of these findings not only as part of development but also as an intervention.*

Keywords: Effect, Pentecostalism, Ecclesiastical, Architecture, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Although ecclesiastical buildings existed in Nigeria before the emergence of Pentecostalism, the evolution and development of the Church and ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria were not without the influence of a number of internal and external factors. The internal factors were in the context of the development of the theological and liturgical precedence and the evolution of new activities which were in the purview and control of the Church. The external factors included but not limited to the external environmental influences that were outside the control of the Church. The theology and liturgy of the Church are classified as internal and as they developed or changed from time to time for example, they affected the style of architecture of the Church because architecture was the first physical expressive clue to these changes (McNamara, 2011). Precedence has shown that the development of denominations has also led to the development of different new styles of ecclesiastical architecture (Fairchild, 2007; Gonzalez, 2004). The Apostle's ending of Catholicism of 1054, schism between the East and the West between 1054 and 1500, 1500 - 1800 reformation and the freedom of religion which started in 1800 are examples of four stages that have shown this fact (Wikipedia, 2005).

Although Pentecostalism was formed from the word Pentecost which derived its origin from Bible days as a Jewish Feast of Weeks, Pentecostalism became one of the prominent phenomena that emerged as an intervention in the development of Christianity and inadvertently ecclesiastical architecture not only in Nigeria but also in developed world. Pentecostalism became a form of a renewal movement in Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal spiritual experience (Ayuk, 2002). Its emergence in Nigeria has been adduced to many sources. Although, Christianity certainly existed in Nigeria before the emergence of Pentecostalism, some assemblies from Europe had pioneered ecclesiastical architecture before

the evolution of Pentecostalism and African Independent Churches that brought about their own church building style. This study critically examined how Pentecostalism has influenced the development of Christianity and inadvertently affected ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria. Since it is an explorative qualitative and historical form of research, the data were collected by qualitative methods using fieldwork non-participant case study, some literatures were reviewed and unstructured interviews were conducted to collect data.. Analysis was done by description. In the context of this study the word Church used in this paper with capital "C" refers to the body of Christ while the church with small "c" is meant by the ecclesiastical building.

2. Study Area

Many reasons accounted for choosing Lagos State, in the Southwest Nigeria, as the study area. One of the reasons is that many studies have shown that Lagos State is the cradle of Christian evolution and growth in Nigeria (Anderson, 2002; Adekunle, 2007). The precursors of Christianity and ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria first succeeded in establishing Churches in Nigeria through the town called Badagry in 1845 before proceeding to the centre of Lagos and other parts of the country (Hildebrandt, 1981; Akinsemoyin and Vaughan-Richard, 1976; Freeman, 2006). Lagos pioneered ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria and it was the best place to carry out such a study like this, because it was arguably one of the most Pentecostal and perhaps Christian religious cities in the world having a long history of Independent African Churches that emphasized spiritual gifts, dating back to the time of the great influenza epidemic of 1918 (Anderson, 2002, Adeboye, 2013). Anderson (2003) noted that Pentecostalism is considered an urban phenomenon and the nature of Lagos, being one of the metropolitan mega cities, gives an impetus to the flourishing of the spread of religious activities.

3. Emergence and Development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Many theories have been postulated about the roots of African Pentecostalism. The first was that the generation of the movement from a black Church rooted in the African American culture of the nineteenth century played an extremely significant influence in this line of thought (Robeck, 1993). This is because William Seymour (May 2, 1870 – September 28, 1922) was a black who was one of the precursors of Pentecostalism and it was claimed that Africa must have been deeply affected by the black slave spirituality that embraced the inclusion of visions and dreams into public worship, healing through prayer, rhythmic hand clapping, and baptism by immersion (Gaiya, 2002).

Ayuk (2002), although, observed that the historical process that led to Pentecostalism in Nigeria had no clear beginning which can be pinpointed with precision, there were a number of predisposing causes and strands of ideas each with its own pedigree. At its formation, there was a general believe that there was the need for evangelism of the entire country Nigeria than the rate the existing Churches were doing. The progressive increase of poverty, ignorance, hunger, disease, unemployment, exploitation, alienation, oppression and dispossession in Nigeria since independence continued to influence the resort of Nigerians to a search for the spiritual essence of their being. Therefore, there was a desire of the Church to look for other alternative ways to deal with their problems. By nature Nigerians are spiritual and they saw Pentecostalism as alternative to witch doctors that some had left to embrace Christianity. The existing Churches were perceived as operating on the mindset of the West and could not reach them as expected. Nigerians, particularly the youth, who were active were no longer comfortable with the solemn mode of worship (McCain, 2005). The gradual resultant effects were that Pentecostalism began to evolve independently and within the existing Churches. Noticeable were the attraction of young people, migration of members and gradual transformation of other denominations to Pentecostal system.

As the people began to renounce secret societies, the African Independent and indigenous Pentecostal Churches too began to develop the idea of exporting mission work back to the West. Their concept of theology began to be futuristic in orientation wholly based on the biblical teachings and contextual to African situation, emphasising holiness. The Church tried to get involved in social actions, economic and political interventions making Nigeria being the fastest growing Churches in the world occasioned by Pentecostalism (Minchakpu, 2001). Adeboye (2005) observed that the first phase of Pentecostalism in Nigeria was traced to the 1930s when the movement originated but by the late 1960s it had establish its roots. This phase was characterized by interactions between indigenous Pentecostal forms called the *Aladura* and foreign denominational Pentecostal Churches from the United States of America (the Faith Tabernacle) and Britain (the Apostolic Church). Indigenous Churches such as the Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God

(RCCG) clearly supported this claim with their emphasis on miracles, healings, and fervent prayers.

Adeboye (2009) noted that the second phase of Pentecostalism which was between the 1970s and the 1980s witnessed the activities of interdenominational campus Fellowships, amplification of the holiness message and emphasis on biblical inerrancy. The Deeper Life Christian Ministry, for example, was a product of this phase. The period was also characterized by an evangelistic fervour. Church of God Missions established by Benson Idahosa (September 11, 1938 - March 12, 1998) and The Living Faith Church by David Oyedepo (27 September, 1954 - date) were other examples. These and other Pentecostal Churches of this period became increasingly intolerant not only of the mainline Churches, which were considered 'cold' but also of the *aladura* Churches for accommodating elements of traditional African religions. This phase encouraged house fellowship meeting places for congregations.

The third phase of Pentecostal development is the contemporary period which dated back from the early 1990s. This period was classified as neo-Pentecostal and it was characterized by a relaxation of the classical 'holiness doctrines' and the emphasis changed to the prosperity gospel and faith. A few of the Churches also emphasized deliverance and healing. As new Churches were established such as Mountain of Fire and Miracles (established in 1989), Christ Embassy (established in 1991), Fountain of Life Church (established in 1992), House on the Rock (established in 1994), Daystar Christian Centre (established in 1995), and a host of other older Churches such as the RCCG (established in 1952), and Living Faith (established in 1981), they began to expand and incorporate aspects of this neo-Pentecostalism.

Adeboye (2005) noted that by 2006, Pentecostal Churches already commanded the highest number of membership in the world and had already exerted its influence on the religious tradition of other Churches in Nigeria. One important attribute of this kind of Church has been their modality of disseminating their theology in form of evangelism, particularly in the use of the media, radio, television, newspaper, posters and electronic mail and the Internet. Cinema halls, shops, stores, disused houses, warehouses, bars, brothels, restaurants and nightclubs began to gain prominence in the emergence of a new set of Church meeting places (Gaiya, 2002; Adeboye, 2005). This helped the Pentecostal Churches to multiply astronomically in number at different places and resulting in congregational explosion. Their style of architecture therefore became important in the development of ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria.

Due to migration from other Churches, Pentecostalism carved a niche for itself as a religion of the lower and middle classes, as an urban phenomenon because it usually spreads from the urban to the rural areas, and as a movement that appeals more to the youth and women than to older men. In many Pentecostal congregations, women constitute up to two thirds of the total membership (Gaiya, 2002). Another interesting observation about Pentecostalism is its ability to

provoke parallel reforms in other religious traditions in Nigeria. In fact, it has caused '*pentecostalization*' of other Churches in Nigeria, so to say. It has also evoked the emergence of the Catholic Charismatic movement in recent time. More remarkable is the fact that even Muslim youth groups in southern Nigeria are becoming 'charismatic'. The NASFAT (Nasir Llahr Fathi), for instance, organizes night vigils, prayer camps, fasts, and prescribe rituals similar to those of Pentecostals (Bediako, 2000).

4. Ecclesiastical Architecture in Nigeria

It has been observed that people build churches because they believe in something and their belief is evident in the building styles, material and construction method of Churches and in biblical concepts. Mosaics, stained glass, and sculptures, for example, theologically all represent ideas about heaven and earth, as do features such as columns, floor plans, and soaring spires. Stylistic terms describe various building aspects such as shape, ornament, chronology, and location, and how people of different eras represented theological values. Adebayo (2014) noted that as each architectural epochal period tried to express its own time, early ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria was characterised by different types of Gothic styles with strong focus on verticality, pointed arches, rib vaults, flying buttresses, large stained glass windows, ornaments and pinnacles. It was noted that since the Churches were foreign established, the parent body dictated the pace of development. Its construction activities rested mainly on foreign input because of the administration of the Churches and financial resources supply depended on the parent bodies in Europe and America. The supply of building materials depended on importation and professionals in building industry were yet to experience a wind of change from the colonial to indigenous.

Godwin (2005) noted that the transition from colony to sovereignty and from dependence to independence in Nigeria started after the acceptance of the principle of self determination by the colonial power in the 1940's and this gave an impetus to eventual indigenisation of the Churches. By the late 40's, already the transition to more advanced building construction in most tropical dependencies had commenced but the technology was largely foreign and inspired by construction in other tropical countries. In architectural terms, the "wind of change" had already started to show as new solutions were sought. After the emergence of Pentecostalism the wind of change in the Churches too began show more clearly as they began to be particularly attracted to the auditorium and theatre types of plan layout because of their scientific claims to acoustical and visual correctness, as well as the belief that the form of a building should be determined by its function. The development in other Churches manifested in the modification of altar, tabernacle and sanctuary which was a commonplace, and often a pulpit or baptismal font replaced the altar as a focal point. In fact, evolution of austere Churches often began to resemble commercial or industrial/ factory buildings. Day Star and The Redeemed Evangelical Mission both in Lagos are good examples.

Further development showed that some Catholic and Orthodox/ Protestant Churches in Nigeria still believe in monumental structures that last long time while some Pentecostals prefer temporary structures with the notion that no matter how new a church building is, it will soon become orthodox (meaning usual). The Pentecostals, also, consider erecting these temporary structures with the notion that the world is a temporary abode and heaven is the permanent home. Therefore, cinema house, warehouse, disused house, uncompleted building, hotels, multi-purpose hall, open space and any possible adoptable space became common meeting places for Pentecostal churches. In fact, such meeting places outnumber the Pentecostal church buildings and some of their buildings do not arguably necessarily fall into any architectural design module (Adebayo, 2005; Ayuk, 2002). It is also observed that some contemporary Pentecostals have built structures of clear long span that could be classified as fantastic arising from a motivation to drive soul-winning programs which bring in a large number of worshippers to the Church making America definition of the term 'mega church' a mockery as the population of majority of the Churches gather more than two thousand worshippers on a Sunday morning service. With the widespread gospel of prosperity spreading like wide fire among the Pentecostals, there is the encouragement to erect buildings to augment the preached word. The effect on architecture is the requirement for large span buildings with clear vision and exhibition of modern architectural taste as it is described by some authors as when church became theatre (Kilde, 2005).

5. Findings and Analysis

Apart from literature case study, in order to further identify the effect of Pentecostalism on ecclesiastical architecture in the study area, life case studies were carried out on churches built before and after the emergence of Pentecostalism. The period under review was between 1845 when ecclesiastical architecture emerged in the study area up till 1980 when the first phase of Pentecostalism had matured.

5.1 Between 1845 and 1930AD

This period was characterised by a few number of Christian denominations as only Catholic, Anglican (although originated from Catholic), and Baptist were common type of Churches but the Anglican were more in number. African Independent Churches were yet to evolve although towards the end of this period globalization was precipitating its emergence. The purpose of planting these early church buildings was borne out of a mark of achievement and a registration of their presence or development of their Mission works in order to report back same to their foreign missionaries and priests. The Anglican Churches adopted a tradition of design where there was a hierarchy of sacred spaces. The immediate interior is approached through the main entrance door leading to the General (Congregation) from where the Holy (Ministers including Choir) is accessed and then to the Holy of Holies (Altar) as it was the tradition in the Old Testament tabernacles. The congregation sitting area was classified as the General; the Minister with the Choir area was the Holy while the altar was the Holy of Holies. The theology and liturgy played major factors of consideration and determinant of their church design plans.

The development rose to a level where the principal churches were regarded as Cathedrals with circular plans while other smaller churches were allowed to adopt any shape on plan which were convenient for them. The circular form was spiritually significant as it was considered a form of symbolising the unending love of God towards man.

Prominent among the early church buildings were five (5) church buildings that rose to the level that could be considered significant ecclesiastical architecture. These were: The First Baptist Church, No. 24 Breadfruit Street, Lagos (1883-1887); Holy Trinity Church, Ebute Ero, Lagos (1912-1929); The Cathedral Church of Christ, No. 29 Marina, Lagos (1925-1946); African Church Cathedral (Bethel), Broad Street, Lagos (1928); St Jude's Anglican Church, Ebute Meta, Lagos (1932). The form of architectural style was characterized by mainly Gothic even when it was the period, all over developed world, that there was the agitation and celebration of modern architecture where people had free expression of styles to exhibit the knowledge of the "masters". In Nigeria, Gothic style at that time was the only acceptable style of ecclesiastical architecture and was synonymous to church buildings as it was considered a true representation of what the Church stood for. Major building materials like bricks, iron and timber were generously used but were imported from Europe and America. Construction funds were mainly sourced from the parent Churches in Europe and America as little could be raised from meagre Church offering collections. At that time it was synonymous to describe a poor person as poor as church rat.

Church building sizes churches were usually small with a maximum sitting capacity of 500 worshippers. This was because there was only a small size of church attendees and the economic power of the members was little. Vehicular parking spaces were unnoticeable because only few church members could afford such luxury at that time. Construction completion period of church buildings usually took a minimum of ten years not because the buildings were too complicated to be built within shorter time but fund came in tinkle and importation of building materials took long time. One of the cases of the church buildings during the period is shown in one of the plates below which describes the Holy Cross Catholic Cathedral, Catholic Mission Street, Tafawabalewa Square, Lagos (1934-1950s). It was first constructed in 1897 but re-constructed in 1932. Another case is the Holy Trinity Church, Ebute Ero, Lagos (1912-1929). These two were good representativeness of the churches in this phase which show the building forms and characteristics of the church buildings during this first phase.

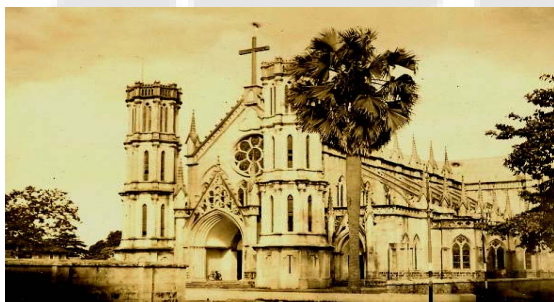


Plate 5.1.1: Holy Cross Catholic Cathedra



Plate 5.1.2: Holy Trinity Church, Ebute Ero, Lagos

Plate 5.1.1. 1Exterior view of the first building first constructed in 1897 but reconstructed in 1932 Holy Cross Catholic Cathedral, Catholic Mission Street, Tafawabalewa Square, Lagos Plate 5.1.2.Exterior view showing the tower and Gothic windows Holy Trinity Church, Ebute Ero, Lagos (1912-1929)

5.2 Between 1930 and 1980AD

This phase forms the second phase of ecclesiastical architecture development in Nigeria and it became the formative stage of Pentecostalism which was a transition between the first and the third phases of ecclesiastical architecture development in Nigeria. It was the period when many denominations, particularly Pentecostals and other African Independent Churches, began to develop in Nigeria. This period was a bridge between the early ecclesiastical architecture and the modern ones. One major characteristic that was known about Pentecostalism was the interactive nature between some African Indigenous Churches and some foreign Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches. The "Aladura" Churches, for example, had interactions and some working relationship with the Faith Tabernacle in the USA and the Apostolic Churches in Britain. The period was characterized by a number of factors. The leadership of Mission Churches began to gradually transform from the foreign Bishops and Priests to the indigenous ones. Other foreign Mission groups like the Presbyterian Missions began to establish centres in the country. Some African Indigenous Churches like "Aladura" began to make collaborations with other Churches and Missions outside the country.

Although there was still a flavour of Gothic characteristics in the foreign established church buildings, there was a gradual departure from this style in many. Transforming facilities of Foreign Mission and few African Indigenous Churches dominated the landscape. The church buildings constructed by Redeemed Christian Church of God (1952), Deeper Life Ministries (1971) Church of God Mission (1973) and the Living Faith World Wide (1981) were few Pentecostal Churches that emerged during this period. Other Pentecostal architecture structures were still at the formative stages because most of them were in form of house fellowships in rented halls and private houses but their theology and liturgy were centred on evangelism, faith, holiness and gifts of the Holy Spirit that did not encourage church buildings. Local input in the design and construction of church buildings began to enjoy some patronage as foreign inputs were already fading. Some building materials

were still being imported and the style of ecclesiastical architecture began to shift from the Gothic towards modern architecture with free expression of styles. The plates below show the building forms of the church buildings during this second phase.



Plate 5.2.1



Plate 5.2.2

Plate. 5.2..1 The Church of the Lord (Aladura) at No. 1 & 2, Ayinde Street, Yaba, Lagos State, Nigeria. The church was built in 1953, and underwent an eastward extension in 1973, and later on, went through a northward extension in the year 1975. Source: Field study in 2013

Plate. 5.2.2. Methodist Church of the Trinity, Nigeria is an Orthodox Church located at Tinubu Square in Lagos Island, Lagos and completed in 1966. Source: Field study in 2013

6. Conclusion

This study discovered that liturgy, theology, globalization and local environment were major influences on the evolution and development of ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria. Pentecostalism being grossly influenced by global and local factors, at the formative and developmental stages, has caused revolution not only in the theology, liturgy and religious traditions in Nigeria but has also impacted on the way churches are built. It cause a bridge between the global world and indigenous in Church theology, liturgy and ecclesiastical architecture. This form of Christianity has caused transformation in the way foreign based Churches build and has introduced their own form of adaptable sacred spaces by adopting many types of building forms, be it institutional/ complex, industrial, or residential for their Church meeting places. The concept has stirred up attraction

of indigenous people to embrace Christianity particularly the young ones and has turned many Churches in Nigeria to super mega requiring large span of buildings as worship centres. This requirement for building industrial products has encouraged technology. The study concluded that Pentecostalism has not only affected ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria in the areas development but also as an intervention.

The future prospect of this study includes but not limited to development of architecture through indigenization of religion and globalization through interactive exchange since Pentecostalism emerged in Nigeria as part of globalization.

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