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THE PRESENCE OF MULTI-FAITH ARCHITECTURE: A CASE STUDY OF CALVARY CHURCH AND CALVARY CHURCH CONVENTION CENTRE TO CREATE A LESS ISOLATIONIST IMAGE IN A MULTIFAITH COMMUNITY

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to outline the design elements of church architecture and activities towards encouraging a less isolationist image within a multifaith community. The research case studies include Calvary Church (CC) and Calvary Convention Centre (CCC). Qualitative case studies through observations and interviews are conducted to get information on perceptions of the architectural spaces, programs, and design elements applied to the case studies. The data analysis approach used is content analysis and descriptive analysis for both case studies, creating a less isolationist image and encouraging the multifaith community urban context. The results revealed that intimacy, proximity, neutrality, universal character, and flexibility are essential for creating a positive shared space design for a church building.

Keywords:

Church Architecture, Multifaith Community, Architectural Elements, Social Inclusivity

Introduction

Due to its diversified population of 32 million people, Malaysia is a melting pot of multifaith groups. The presence of multiculturalism and the architecture of each sacred place is significant for the church, mosque or temple. Although, in general, the unity is present, the fraternity in the sacred space is not present. Most sacred spaces are designed for specific religions, which creates an isolationist image, although contextualism is rich. The fundamental design of a sacred place is to facilitate religious-related activities; however, social places are also essential to allow community gatherings. Therefore, a church, mosque, or temple should not be a singular function but also vital to promote a certain degree of live space for the multifaith community. Perhaps, one of the possible solutions is understanding multifaith architecture to create a welcoming image of a church place.

The trend of multifaith facilities is usually designed in public spaces such as airports and universities (Johnson & Laurence, 2012; Cadge, 2018). Multifaith spaces are a new sacred environment where anyone can pray whatever their religion (Crompton, 2013). A multifaith room cannot afford to look like a church or a mosque, or a temple. Based on this approach, the concept of multifaith space has the potential to allow the community to encroach on the church place. More profound and intricate conditions emerge when churches are a shared space, such as the boundary of shared space.

This research aims to outline the design elements of church architecture and activities to encourage a less isolationist image within a multifaith community. The objectives of the research are (i) to identify the principle of church and multifaith architecture for the community, (ii) to investigate the types of activities supporting the concept of multifaith gathering, and (iii) to examine the design element of churches place towards the multifaith architectural identity. The significance of the research is to create a more inclusive image of scared place character, especially for a church building.

Literature Review

The Architecture of Church

Daelemans' method for churches is constructed on three principles: the transposition of sacred space into 'synesthetic' space - the church as a perceived space by the body; 'kerygmatic' space - the church as conceived space and 'eucharistic' space'- the church as lived space (Daelemans, 2015). Whether individual or universal, space has a unique quality of experiencing space-defining elements (Ching, 2007). The relationship between the ordering of the space and the form of the structure; the configuration of the place for the assembly concerning the altar, ambo, and chair; the priority given to fostering unity and/or emphasising hierarchy in the church design; the inclusion of liturgical symbolism in the fabric of the church; and the values and needs of the Church community are all factors that influence the experience in the church (Boyer, 2015). Meanwhile, light is the central theme of sacred architecture that can define spaces in the church that symbolise the Trinitarian God. The existence of light in church architecture, the phenomenon, its immaterial presence, its unsettledness, its vanishing, and presence, as well as its nonappearance, are the determinants constituting its fundamental connection with the theological foundation of Christianity, thus supporting it as an important Christian symbol (Zorana & Igor, 2018).

The church is not a work of engineering but a symbol (Demetrescu, C., 2000). Kerygmatic space concerns the symbolical dimension of a church. The sacred is evoked by the metaphorical implications of a church's construction, furniture, and decoration, just as its aesthetic characteristics create a sense of the holy (Kieckhefer, 2004). In ages past, the buildings spoke to the people. Those who could not read learned about God every time they looked at a church's stained-glass windows or ceiling murals where there were scenes from salvation history, from the creation of Adam to the Final Judgment, as in the Sistine Chapel (P. Freeman, 2013). The issue of how architecture, like dancing and gardens, engages a community in progress toward the idea of the church as the universal sacrament of salvation was explored in Eucharistic space. A worshipping community must 'live' and devote themselves to a church. As a result, effective 'community building' with ethical, ecclesiological, and ecological ramifications can only occur if the community participates (Daelemans, 2015). According to studies by Katona (2015), the adequate articulation of the liturgical space, projected to multifunctional church complexes, explains the dynamics of the Christian life with greater success. Architectures that authentically reflect the spirit of liturgy show more interest in the sacrificial core of the church and define community buildings as structural extensions of the sacred (Katona, 2015). A church design holds strong fundamentals on the synthetic character of space whilst preserving the symbolism within the church building. Secondarily, the element of 'live' space creates a third-place opportunity for people and the community while the design elements such as form, order of space, the configuration of space, liturgical symbolism, lights, structure, furniture, decoration, aesthetic quality, landscaping, and malfunctions space/activities are crucial to accommodate the representation of church architecture.

Multifaith, Architecture and Communities

Theology and architecture are intertwined; Being human entails being situated, being with physical structures, both shaping and being shaped by them (Daelemans, 2015). (Spence, 2020). This aim usually draws attention and serves as the backdrop to our existence. On the other hand, Christian theology argues that God's presence is not limited to a certain location. Architectural symbolism, according to American Benedictine scholar Kevin Seasoltz, "functions as a theological nexus," where God and humans meet and build a relationship (Daelemans & S.J, 2015). To create a spiritual atmosphere, the spiritual journey's building form, material, and theology must all work together (Birch & Sinclair, 2013).

The purpose of architecture is to create a particular vision of the religious ideal: a way of being in the world that believers aspire to and foster a sense of identity and belonging in the present (Davies & Thate, 2017). Multifaith architecture is a modern version of old religious architecture with a much simpler design and a theme that adheres to contemporary designs (Crompton, 2013). He also suggested that the most critical element is the materiality and blurring of the line of the single faith community (Crompton, 2013). Believers and non-believers are likely to use multifaith spaces in the broadest meaning, including possible use as a space for isolation (Bobrowicz, 2018). Therefore, space should be built, executed, and organised so that it is appropriate or acceptable to all users and meets their minimum fundamental needs. The moment religions become closer and utilise the same places within a building, the structure becomes plain owing to the various uses for a faith group that loses its tradition and becomes interchangeable (Crompton, 2013).

In short, to relate the church architecture and multifaith architecture representation, it is essential to know the core function of the space and how the secondary purpose of the church is improved, especially in the multifaith community area. The architecture of shared space

needs to be considered to encourage a communal area within the church setback. The way to perceive it is through a positive or negative image of shared place quality in certain compound areas. Through literature, the possible elements are considering architectural style, materiality, landscaping, accessibilities, and boundaries. Through literature, the possible elements are considering architectural style, materiality, landscaping, light, accessibilities, and boundaries. Based on the relationship between the church architecture and multifaith architecture, elements such as landscape, architectural style, materiality, accessibility, and space ambient are significantly measured to understand the principle of the existing church in the Malaysian context.

Methodology

The method applied for the research is a qualitative case study approach. A qualitative case study is a research methodology that helps explore a phenomenon within some context through various data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It is also explored through various lenses to reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This study conducts a descriptive technique to describe an intervention or a phenomenon, as well as the real-world setting in which it occurred (Yin, 2003). The selected building for the case studies is Calvary Church (CC) and Calvary Convention Centre (CCC) under the same foundation. Although a qualitative case study is typically conducted through the interview, structured survey, observation, and document review (Mohd Tobi, 2019), this research will conduct an observation and semi-structured interview. Concerning context, both selected case studies are within the Klang Valley context. The CC is at Damansara Height, while the CCC is at Bukit Jalil. Calvary has the largest church congregations in Malaysia and is actively involved in religious activity and community building; hence both churches were selected.

The first method applied for the research is a semi-structured interview. An active member of CC and CCC are chosen in purposive sampling was conducted via a virtual platform. The interview questions developed comprised of two parts. The first part is the background information, and the second is the churches' facilities and activities related to multifaith presence. The analysis of semi-structured interviews is carried out through a content analysis approach. Preparation, organisation and reporting are all steps in the content analysis process (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The second method conducted for the research is through the direct observation approach. The criterion for the observation is the relationship of "live of space" and the multifaith aspect to reveal the present identity of the communal area in the church's complex context. The criteria are (i) context, (ii) scale and massing, (iii) form and architecture style, (iv) visual access, (v) materiality, and (vi) landscape. Photographs and video compilations were utilised to aid in the explanation of various elements. The primary data analysis approach for observation is through descriptive and comparative analysis to achieve the objectives.

The Calvary Architectural Representation

Calvary Church (CC), which began as a missionary church in 1960, has become one of Kuala Lumpur's largest Pentecostal megachurches, with over 3000 members (Su, 2013). The CC in Damansara Heights was established in 1968 to serve the Klang Valley community. Most CC's members are ethnic Chinese from the middle and upper classes, with middle-aged and baby-boomer cohorts dominating. Aside from that, CC exemplifies variety by including individuals of Indian ethnicity, Filipinos, Nigerians, Cambodians, and Dutch (Yip, 2018). The church established many ministries to cater to various selves and broaden its religious and social services reach. The church established various ministries to cater to different segments of its

congregation based on genders, age groups, languages, and various functions such as music and creative arts, training and equipping education, and social welfare to expand its coverage on both religious and social services (Yip, 2018). With the Calvary Convention Centre (CCC) opening in Bukit Jalil in 2012, CC increased its organisational scale even further. This research is to understand the character of the architectural representation of CC and CCC, the activities, and the social inclusion character of the multifaith design consideration. The first element is the contextualism character as per Figures 1 and 2. The CC is located within a residential development area surrounded by well-equipped facilities context within the surrounding.

In comparison, CCC is located within a commercial district surrounded by a golf club, park, high-rise residential, low-rise residential, shop lots, school, and stadium area. The commercial context has driven the CCC site context to be further explored and develop the new project within the district as the area has a diverse and robust development. However, CCC is developed in a context where the site does not hold a significant value to the Christian community.

Figure 1: Calvary Church Context

Figure 2: Calvary Convention Centre Context

The CC offers fewer programs for the activities and facilities relationship than CCC. CC programs such as children's worship, bible classes, worship service, prayer, intercession, and morning watch are more religion-oriented programs. At the same time, another program is related to the women club, blood donation and weddings. The CCC are more diverse as the

activities also focus on the community and education-oriented program. The program is not only an intergenerational program but also a multi-generational program. Some of the programs are royal rangers, missionettes club for the different age groups of children, mandarin service and women club. The complex scale facilities are proved suitable to facilitate event activities such as Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn, Mother's Day and Musical in a large-scale the participant group. One of the factors of its diversified quality is the contextual relation of the church location.

"CC is more commercialised as it can accommodate more events such as wedding, graduation ceremonies and corporate events, while Calvary Church focuses on worshipping activities."

Apart from that, the options of activities space are crucial. CC main hall can only accommodate 200-300 people, and the space also has a class and canteen area. Lack of space for activities may be less attractive to youth, while a complex scale offers more options to the visitors.

"At Damansara, I prefer to stay at the canteen rather than inside of the church. Not much space inside."

"I actually like to spend more time in the modern one. So, I would say I prefer that. Also, it is just bigger, more fun to hang out in."

A scale and building massing with the surrounding may influence the architectural and contextualism relationship's isolationist and less isolationist character. The similar character of the building height or plinth area with the surrounding offers a balance and harmonious presence of a sacred place. The finding on massing for research found that massing is associated with a sense of landmark and intimacy level between space.

"Compared to the Calvary Convention Centre, Calvary Church is smaller and more intimate, but it is pleasant."

"The CCC is larger and more comfortable, but the huge scale makes it more demanding and less intimate. On the other hand, Calvary Church is a smaller church closer to the community and has a variety of social groups."

Form and architectural style shall consider a neutrality symbolism. A strong sense of church architecture may create a significant territorial aspect of the church place. Modern and universal design, which is less interplay of sacred symbolism, helps break the conservative image of church design for CCC and offers a less intimidating environment based on participant perception.

"As the cavalry, it drew much attention from the public due to its contemporary design approach. The contemporary design reduced the oppressive atmosphere of a conservative and traditional church. The multifaith community can attend and participate in activities or events with less pressure and anxiety because the church portrays less intimidation."

"I think the Damansara one is like when you walk in; you immediately know it is a church because you see the cross on top, and then the building is very church-like, so it is a church." When entering the Bukit Jalil one, though, it is not entirely obvious."

Building visual access is directly related to the preview and facilitates preview activity of place or space. A smaller-scale building offers higher proximity of visual access and indirect interaction activity between participants. A complex scale building is less effective in offering visual access even when the transparency of the gate or fence is considered during the design stage. A transparent gate with landscapes such as bushes and trees is a possible design strategy to encourage visual access to the sacred building.

Materiality usually relates to the building finishes, either internal or external finishes. Materials selection can reflect and show the quality of space and architectural design. For example, the high-quality sacred space is designed with light, volume, structure and appropriate furniture layout to portray the holy image of the prayer hall. This can be seen in the CC interior space design of the main hall area.

"The Damansara one is a bit dark, and the inside of the worship area was all carpeted, and then the chairs are like just cloth. It is more utilitarian. The space is very small, and they try to make the best out of it."

For the CCC, the projection of colourful light to the external façade during the night help to enhance the landmark image of the building. The consistency of the external concept of CCC's exterior space is also reflected in the interior space, such as the auditorium, multipurpose hall, and theatres. The modern approach to internal space creates a flexible ambient to the space to suit diversified space quality.

"The one in Bukit Jalil, on the other hand, is like a well-designed auditorium or music hall, complete with a large stage and suitable auditorium chairs. It has everything you need to hold a concert. The one in Bukit Jalil is likewise more marble-like, with polished stone."

The last elements are the landscape. The landscape is one of the spaces mainly used for gathering purposes. However, the location and the design of landscape space are important whether it offers high flexibility of space utilisation or not. Lack of design consideration, such as the placement of trees, benches, and finishes material, may affect the social engagement intention of the space.

"Each church already has elements in place to draw in more people. "Just like the Calvary Church has waiting seats. The CCC has a major plaza with circular wooden benches in a garden environment and a well-known café on the site."

The comparative analysis of CC and CCC highlighted the design consideration and strategy to create a less isolationist character of the churches. Table II shows the comparative analysis of both churches' architecture and activities with a multifaith communal response.
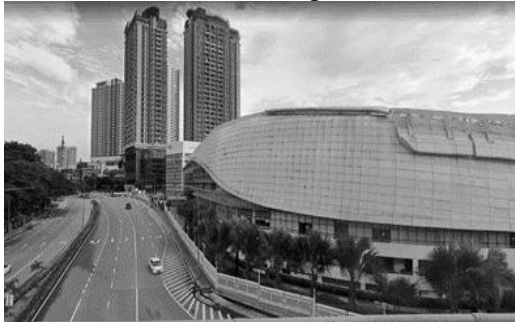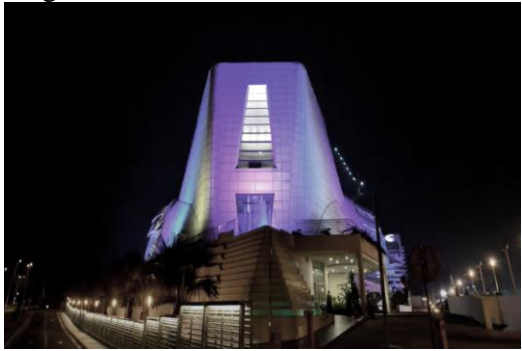
Domains	Sub-Domain	Design Quality	Design Application
Context	Contextualism	Residential zone	- The CC is at the heart of the residential zone, creating a closer image of third place to the Christian community, especially families.
		Commercial zone	- The CCC is in the commercial zone area with different typologies of context such as parks, residential, shophouses, schools and stadium complex.
Program and Facilities	Individuality and continuity of self	Religious oriented program	- The CC place and program relationships are more focused on the perceived and conceived church space, which is reflected in the program development where the religious-oriented program is the main body of the building.
		Diversified program	- The design enhances the analogies of lived space more than the perceived and conceived church space reflected in the activities and facilities at the CCC building. The program and the places have multi-generational activities for the benefit of the community. Concerning the multifaith activities, the facilities offer more continuity of self-options to the public.
Scale & Massing	The massing and contextual appearance	Subtle appearance	- The CC represents the subtle appearance with the context and massing of the surrounding building. The church has three storeys in height, whereas the building is mainly around two-storey residential areas. **Figure 3: Calvary Church Subtle Appearance**

		Salient appearance	- The CCC is a building designed with a vast envelope for the building's façade. The building is about six storeys in height, creating an iconic image with the surrounding context. The residential area is about 30+ storey in height, and the shop lot is about 5-6. Therefore, the CCC building's design has a salient appearance as the contextual buildings. **Figure 4: Calvary Convention Centre Salient Appearance**
	Responsive building scale	Medium-scale	- CC serves as a sense of landmark within the community neighbourhood context with sufficient building scale to meet the community's needs. - The building scale offers a high intimacy level for community usage.
		Complex scale	- CCC has a complex scale to serve the nation's place-making rather than a neighbourhood and locality needs. - The building offers a comfortable place at the same time, less intimate due to its scale.
Form and Architecture Style	Architecture style imageability and symbolism	High symbolism of sacred identity based on modernism and regional architectural influence	- The CC building has a high symbolism of sacred place identity, which the core design approach mainly enhances the character of horizontality and structural exploration for the core space. In addition, the cross symbolism creates a statement of modernism and regional architectural style building.

Figure 5: Calvary Church Symbolism

Universal adaptation based on modern contemporary architecture style	- CCC building form with envelop exploration mainly applies the modern contemporary architectural style. The design does not hold a sacred element of place as the building identity or character. The universal adaptation is the core approach for the building.

Figure 6: Calvary Convention Centre Modern Contemporary Architectural Style

Visual Access	External Preview	High visual access	- The proximity of the external area to the internal area of CC is significantly higher. In addition, the element of transparency through gate design allows a preview of place events and activities to the local community. **Figure 7: Calvary Church High Visual Access** **Figure 8: Calvary Church Transparency Element**
		Medium visual access	- The complex scale of CCC and the external relationship has created a lesser proximity connection. The fence's horizontal transparency does not facilitate preview activity from the street level due to a sense of distance. **Figure 9: Calvary Convention Centre Medium Visual Access**
Materiality and Ambient	Contextual Materiality	Identical contextual materiality	- The CC building has a high similarity with the contextual materiality. This creates a less isolationist image of the surroundings and offers a sense of partisanship.

		Complementary contextual materiality	- The CCC building has a high similarity with the contextual materiality. The vibrant materiality exploration creates a well vibrant cities image of Bukit Jalil area, which stands out during the day and the night. The lighting exploration offers attention and attraction to the building image. **Figure 10: Calvary Convention Centre Lighting At Night**
	Ambient	Positive shared space	- The generic ambient of CC building offers a negative shared space (unity by exclusion approach).
		Positive and negative shared space	- The CCC building portrays a high quality of positive shared space (unity by inclusion approach) as most of the spaces are naturally perceived spaces to the public. - The CCC building also portrays a less quality of negative shared space (unity by exclusion approach) for spaces to serve the religious activity.

		The strong influence of church space design	- The CC prayer hall reflects the quality of sacred symbolism through the structure, furniture arrangement and lighting illustration. In addition, the space serves its utilitarian.
			Figure 11: Calvary Church Has Sacred Symbolism
		The great influence of universal and modern space design	- CCC offers malfunctioning spaces such as auditorium, banquet hall, theatrettes, meeting room, plaza, and café. The spaces have a neutral representation of space with natural and artificial lighting to suit the flexibility of function. The lighting illustration does not carry any sacred architecture element as one of the space themes.
			Figure 12: Auditorium

Figure 13: Multipurpose Banquet Hall

Figure 14: Theatrette's Space Design

Landscape	The intensity and public space engagement	Decent landscape	- The CC building has allocated a decent landscape to fit the building scale and the activities. Open green spaces with trees and bushes are planted at the perimeter of the building boundary. The canteen is connecting space for indoor and outdoor. For the public spaces, the benches are allocated for the waiting area.
		Impermanence landscape	- The ascertain landscape of CCC offers a great possibility to extend the indoor activities to outdoor activities. - The plaza has a good sense of entrance with colours, texture, and natural lighting for the semi-outdoor events. Offer great flexibility and generous scale to suit different activities. - The open garden is not merely a landscape but also a space for event rental areas like weddings.

Figure 15: Plaza

Figure 16: Garden

Table 1: Comparative Analysis Of CC And CCC Architectural Representation

Discussion

In conclusion, CCC focuses on community engagement space-oriented while CC emphasises the locality religious space function. The study found a few elements to create a less isolationist image of a church building and a more inclusive multifaith strategy within a church building compound. The strategies are:

(i)   Scale and Massing: The balance of any harmony character with contextualism, potentially enhancing the landmark character and considering intimacy level.

(ii) Form and Architecture style: Neutrality and universal presence through modern contemporary design help break territorial symbolism, especially in the multifaith community area.

(iii) Visual Access: Preview and facilitate preview is crucial considering proximity and transparency character.

(iv) Material: the selection of the material will influence the ambient character of the space and place internally or externally.

(v)   Landscape: A good design of landscaping and open space have a higher potential to promote and accommodate different utilisation of space.

In short, intimacy, proximity, neutrality, universal character, and flexibility are the strategy to create a positive shared space design for a church building.

Acknowledgements

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