IMANI
Center for Policy & Education
imaniafrica.org

The "National Cathedral" Through a Policy Lens

Ten Challenges with the "National Cathedral" Policy

Preface

In March 2018, the government of Ghana unveiled artistic impressions of a proposed National Cathedral.

Since then, the initiative has become bogged down in controversy over utility, propriety, finances, and transparency.

The "cathedral" project seems to have weathered initial storms, such as a lawsuit on secularism grounds, to take off. In recent weeks, however, more information has come to light to seriously question the long-term viability of the project.

This short briefing document by IMANI Center for Policy & Education, a think tank based in Accra, offers some perspectives from a public policy point of view.

As a policy brief, the document deliberately stays away from some fundamental questions of politics and morality. It does not, for instance, deliberate on the philosophical appropriateness of state funding for single-faith ventures.

IMANI is more focused in this document on the standard issues of "public interest", "public choice", "policy coherence" and "social costs and benefits". In this document, IMANI's analysts pay close attention to the design choices and administrative conduct of the President of Ghana, his government, and the frontline managers of the project, in such matters as socioeconomic justification, procurement, project management, and policy execution. The financial calamity that has now befallen the project raises issues of viability and sustainability that are captured through scrutiny of key contractors and consultants, notably the Architect, David Adjaye, and Italian construction major, the Eccher Group.

June 2022. Accra.

But, first, let us get some preliminary misconceptions out of the way.

No, it is Not “PHD” Hatred

Some government commentators have painted any scrutiny of the lead architect, David Adjaye, as the product of personal hatred. This is a bizarre posture.

David Adjaye and his firm are no strangers to criticism for getting involved in controversial projects. The intense controversy generated over such Adjaye projects as the Winter Park Library shows that this is standard fare and has nothing to do with any peculiar Ghanaian culture of “pull him down” (PHD).

No Rose without a Thorn

David Adjaye’s pink-hued Winter Park Library & Events Center finally debuts in Florida.

After numerous delays and more than a whiff of controversy, the Adjaye Associates–designed Winter Park Library & Events Center opened last month in the Orlando-adjacent Florida city. A self-described “intergenerational community hub,” the $41.7 million project spans three rose-pigmented concrete pavilions on a lakefront site in Winter Park’s 23-acre Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

David Adjaye, the Ghanaian British principal of Adjaye Associates, called the project “a new typology of the 21st-century knowledge campus.” It replaces Winter Park’s existing public library on East New England Avenue, completed in the late 1970s and expanded in the 1990s to replace another, older facility.

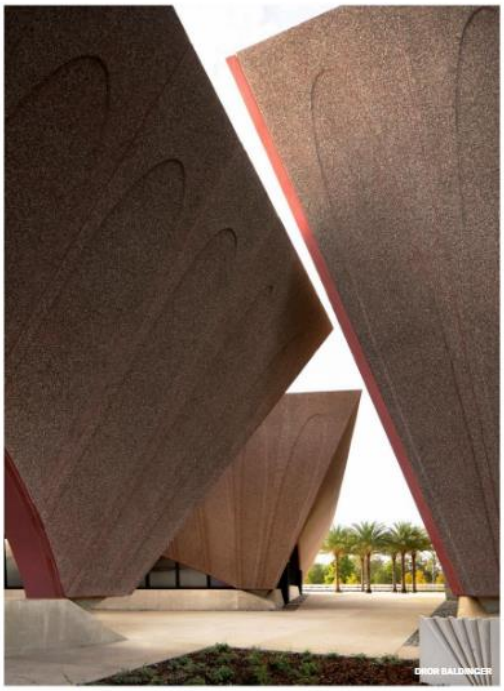
“I designed the Winter Park Library & Events Center as a collection of unique spaces and the additive ways in which their differences could overlap, coming closer to each other,” Adjaye **continued on page 6**

No, it is Not "PHD" Hatred

Several of Adjaye's projects have attracted similar levels of controversy. It would be ridiculous to suggest that the intense heat generated in these debates and criticisms stem from some kind of animosity for his person.

No Rose without a Thorn

David Adjaye's pink-hued Winter Park Library & Events Center finally debuts in Florida.



Top left: The Winter Park Library & Events is situated in Martin Luther King Jr. Park and overlooks Lake Mendsen.

Left: A sculptural stair leads down into an auditorium inside the 18,200-square-foot events center.

Above: The lakeside civic and cultural campus, which consists of three reddish pavilions, is laced with public green space.

continued from cover told *AN*. "I wanted the design to catalyze and imbricate the program, ensuring a greater amount of absorption, learning, and experience in each of the conditions."

Joining design architect Adjaye Associates for the project was the Orlando-based architect of record HuntonBrady Architects. Civil engineer and landscape firm LandDesign, envelope consultant Thornton Tomasetti, acoustic designer Gary Siebein, and MEP engineer TLC Engineering rounded out the design team.

The library and events center, with their unifying portico and plentiful green space, form a coherent architectural vision. The 35,000-square-foot Winter Park Library, housed in the largest pavilion, is considerably more spacious than its predecessor and increases the youth collection by 30 percent while doubling the amount of available public meeting space. The open-plan library, which is serviced by automated materials robots, also features an indoor auditorium, dedicated makerspaces, a recording studio, private reading rooms, and an entrepreneurship hub complete with technology portals, a business center, and continuing education spaces.

The adjacent 18,200-square-foot events center boasts a penthouse and rooftop terrace that is as ideal for open-air fetes of up to 150 people. Below, a grand ballroom has space for up to 250 table-seated guests (or 320 if seated theater style). Outside, a lakeside amphitheater offers a spectacular venue for performances.

As the smallest of the three pavilions, the 2,500-square-foot porte cochere acts as a campus connector, completing the ensemble.

The entire project employs extensive sustainability strategies, including an advanced stormwater management system, on-site solar energy production (expected to generate 37,865 kWh annually), and the use of locally and regionally sourced materials. Among those are ones for precast facade materials, which came from within 25 miles of the site. The structures themselves, with their generous shade-providing overhangs and insulating precast concrete walls, integrate a number of passive design strategies.

"The campus's configuration is inspired by the flora and fauna of Winter Park's tropical climate and this notion of tree top foliage," Adjaye explained. "The proximity between the buildings protects the glass from glare, cultivates moments of shade, and reduces the temperature naturally by using the mass of each structure to shield solar gain."

The project's path to realization was less than sure. Funding-related squabbles have been particularly fierce within the small, park-laden Orange County city of roughly 30,500, located just northeast of Orlando. Residents unsuccessfully sued the city in an attempt to block the contentious project, which voters approved in 2016, and in May of last year city commissioners considered halting construction work over budget and environmental concerns.

"After seven years of meticulous planning, budgeting, imagining, creating, designing and building, we are thrilled to celebrate the grand opening with our residents, partners and guests," said Randy Knight, Winter Park city manager, in a statement. "We have been honored to work alongside a team of world-class professionals as we built this magnificent facility for the community to come together as they continue to learn, celebrate, gather and grow."

Matt Hickman

Because Architecture and Construction are regulated industries, scrutiny of design work can sometimes even have a health and social safety basis. David Adjaye's work in New Orleans, for instance, came under fire, not for aesthetics, but because of project quality and safety issues.

David Adjaye-Designed House Built by Brad Pitt's Make It Right Foundation to Be Torn Down

Save this article

Written by **Edward Gunts** October 17, 2020

A small but nevertheless significant building designed by David Adjaye in the Lower Ninth Ward for Brad Pitt's Make It Right Foundation will be demolished because it has been deemed unsafe.

The city of New Orleans posted a "Notice of Emergency Demolition" on the vacant house at 1826 Reynes Street, saying that it is "in imminent danger of collapse and/or threat to life," according to NOLA.com.

In partnership with The Architect's Newspaper

Even the courts have seen it necessary to intervene to block Adjaye projects when circumstances warrant so

Adjaye and Arad's Holocaust Memorial rejection faces court challenge

3 MAY 2022 • BY ELLA JESSEL

1/4 Ron Arad Architects and Adjaye Associates' designs for the Holocaust Memorial in Westminster

The government has lodged an appeal against a High Court decision to block Adjaye Associates' and Ron Arad's plans for a national Holocaust Memorial in a Westminster park

In April, the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation was dealt a major blow when a High Court judge quashed permission for its controversial £100 million memorial and learning centre.

In her decision, Mrs Justice Thornton found the proposal was in breach of a 1900 law that required Victoria Tower Gardens to be kept as open space. Her ruling said there was 'an enduring obligation to retain the new garden land as a public garden and integral part of the existing Victoria Tower Gardens'.

But it might not be the end of the road. In the latest twist to the long-running saga, last Friday (29th April) housing minister Stuart Andrew applied for permission to appeal Thorton's decision.

ADVERTISEMENT

With the matter now before the courts, Andrew was unable to comment further. However a spokesperson for the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities department said:

'The Government has today lodged an appeal against the recent High Court decision to quash planning permission for the National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens.

And Adjaye has been forced by civic action at various times to considerably alter designs to accommodate discontent.

Adjaye forced to alter Holocaust Memorial designs

By Elizabeth Hopkirk | 30 April 2019

Revisions follow public consultation into contested scheme

David Adjaye's Holocaust Memorial scheme - as submitted in January after earlier revisions

The backers of David Adjaye's Holocaust Memorial have submitted a new planning application after being forced into a redesign, it has emerged.

The revisions, the details of which have not yet been released, include the design of the entrance pavilion, the entrance courtyard and the surrounding landscaping. The basement footprint has also been reduced.

Another misguided notion is that Adjaye makes so much money elsewhere that criticism of his charging practices in Ghana can only be driven by bile. In actual fact, during the firm's insolvency episode (2009 to 2011), total debt was "just" £1 million, yet the firm was unable to pay. Cash has clearly been tight rather than flush in the firm's operation. The large sums of money involved in the Ghanaian projects are thus totally noteworthy.

Alexander Topping

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Architect to Hollywood stars attempts to save firm from financial collapse

A top architect who has worked for Brad Pitt, Ewan McGregor and Alexander McQueen faces insolvency after four of his firm's major contracts were axed or delayed. Adjaye Associates - founded by award-winning Ghanaian architect David Adjaye - owes more than £1m to creditors, it emerged today.

Adjaye, known as a "starchitect" because of his connections, has agreed a company voluntary arrangement (CVA) with creditors to prevent financial collapse by rescheduling debts. They are believed to include £150,000 owed to HM Revenue and Customs and £500,000 to NatWest, although the bank is not covered by the agreement. Adjaye has ploughed £500,000 of his own money into the firm.

The measure had become necessary after the company maintained its staffing levels despite the loss of projects in the Midlands, Malaysia, India and Abu Dhabi, according to Valentine & Co, the insolvency experts in charge of the CVA.

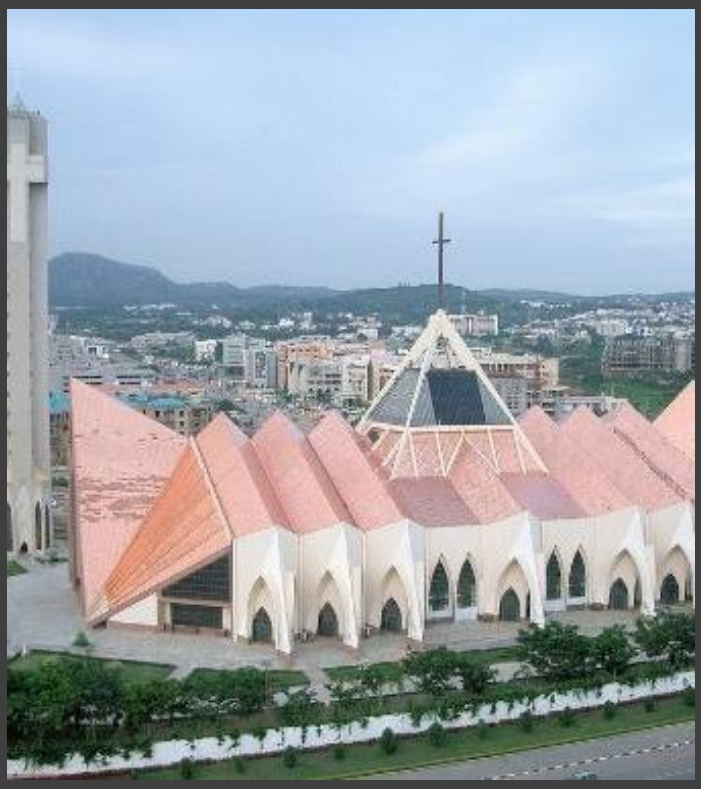
Now to weightier matters

Challenge One:
Value Proposition
Does *yet another* cathedral make a difference?

- Ghana already has 40 orthodox/traditional cathedrals
- There are also over 120 cathedral-scale Christian worship centers
- There is almost no native religion complex worthy of visit. Komfo Anokye's hometown has been completely neglected as have the Sakumono & Korle shrines. Given the large number of basilicas and cathedrals worldwide, can a 21st century cathedral with no history or spiritual pedigree distinguish itself? Is Ghanaian Christianity sufficiently distinctive to allow the creation of a visit-worthy site and Bible Museum?

Challenge Two
Communal Commitment

Why isn't the Christian Community, its philanthropic allies and the Faithful taking responsibility for building an extra "cathedral" if indeed they are as supportive as the government claims they are?



From Nigeria: a Most Relevant Case Study

- The National Ecumenical Center was started in 1989
- Christian denominations were responsible for finding the money.
- In 2004, Christians woke up to their responsibility and raised 3 billion Naira, which was then a reasonable $23 million to complete it by 2005.
- The Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, merely served as Treasurer for the project. **He did not pump public funds into the construction. He relied on his personal goodwill to mobilise private donations.**

Challenge Three:
Conceptual Confusion

Even before construction reached ground level, costs had ballooned from $100 million to $400 million. This is a clear and incontrovertible sign that the project was poorly designed from the start and the very concept mired in sheer confusion.

Challenge Four:
Financial Opacity

From an initial estimate of $100 million, the financial commitment climbed to $190 million, then $250 million. Late last year, it was said to be $350 million. And now, according to the General Counsel of the lead contractor, it is $400 million. None of the justifications for these estimate revisions have been shared with the public though public funds are being used.

What are the most significant cases or transactions that your legal team has recently been involved in?

Our legal team has just been able to finalise a $400m contract for the project of a cathedral in Ghana. We secured a €200m deal for the new headquarter of the European Investment Bank in Luxemburg. The Rizzani de Eccher legal team, has also been involved in the final arbitration hearing against a state of the Gulf for a total of $300m.

- Revelation by Simone Bagnariol

Source Error: Conceptual Defects

News

Site work begins on Ghana's controversial National Cathedral

GCR Staff
16.08.19

Work has begun on clearing the site for Ghana's "National Cathedral", which the government is promoting as a way of unifying the west African country. According to reports in the local press, the country's Passport Office and houses occupied by 14 court of appeal judges in Accra are being demolished and relocated to create a 70,000 sq m plot for the project.

Mustapha Abdul-Hamid, the minister for inner cities, told the Ghanaian press that the cathedral would be something that the population could gather around, "especially in a country like ours that is sharply divided on so many things: ethnicity, politics, etc. A nation like Ghana needs a symbol like that which allows us to come together".

The cathedral, which would be sited next to the Ghanaian parliament building in the centre of the capital, was proposed by the government in March 2017 as part of the celebration of Ghana's 60th anniversary of independence.

Efforts to raise finance began in 2018. President Nana Akufo-Addo said at the time: "The cathedral will address the missing link in our nation's architecture by providing a church of national purpose.

"It will be an interdenominational house of worship and prayer, as well as serve as the venue for formal state occasions of a religious nature, such as presidential inaugurations, state funerals, and national thanksgiving services."

Ironically, the plan immediately divided Ghanaians, who questioned whether a cathedral was the best use of public money in a country with a per capita income below $2,000. Others wondered whether a religious symbol was the best way to unite a country that is only 70% Christian. Â

Yaw Nsarkoh, vice-president of Unilever for Ghana and Nigeria, commented in the *Financial Times* in November last year: "At a time when taxes are going up, banks have collapsed and you can't pay for social programmes, is it really the thing to do to build a cathedral?"

A design for the project, which has been costed at around $100m, was produced by the British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye last year (pictured).

That design envisaged a cathedral containing a number of chapels, a baptistery, a music school, a choir rehearsal, a grand central hall and an auditorium with 5,000 seats. There would also be an art gallery and Africa's first Bible museum.

Image: Adjaye Associates' design for Ghana's National Cathedral

Challenge 5
Flagrant Disregard for Law

- Decision to sole-source the project to Adjaye despite the clear conditions and thresholds laid out in the procurement law for sole-sourcing not met.
- Committing the nation in contracts to spend far more than was expressly approved by the procurement authorities.
- Refusing to openly disclose spending plans in the budget so that funds can be appropriated for the project in a way that would ensure scrutiny by the legislative branch.
- Failing to disclose the full set of financial commitments, disbursements and liabilities to Parliament despite several budget cycles since project inception. Leading to strong suspicions of underhand spending, crooked dealings and corruption-related conduct.
- Decision to engage architects and contractors not yet in good standing with the appropriate regulatory authorities in the construction and architectural industry in Ghana.
- Actions and duties reserved for the Board of Directors of the National Cathedral under Ghanaian law have been appropriated by the Presidency.

Challenge Six

Potential for Interfaith Discord

(Introducing Sectarian Confusion by describing the building as a "National Cathedral" and making erroneous comparisons with other "national cathedrals" elsewhere.

Example:

The so-called Washington National Cathedral is NOT "America's National Cathedral". It is an Episcopalian cathedral known as the Cathedral of St. Paul and Peter. It was built through **private donations** at the cost of **$65 million**. Not a penny from the state goes into maintaining it.

The plan to hold civic ceremonies in the planned Ghanaian "National Cathedral" suggests a privileging of Christianity over other faiths that can in time undermine the positive interfaith relations being experienced presently.

$790 Million (cost of restoration) – Entirely Private

France: Notre Dame – it is a Catholic cathedral not a republican monument. It only served as a national site for civic ceremonies when Catholicism was the state religion and personal faith of the monarch.

Britain: St. Paul Cathedral – Anglican (in Britain, the monarch is also Supreme Governor of the Church of England)

• $**213 Million** – The budget for St. Paul (in today's terms) was funded through a Special Tariff on Coal berthing at the Port of London

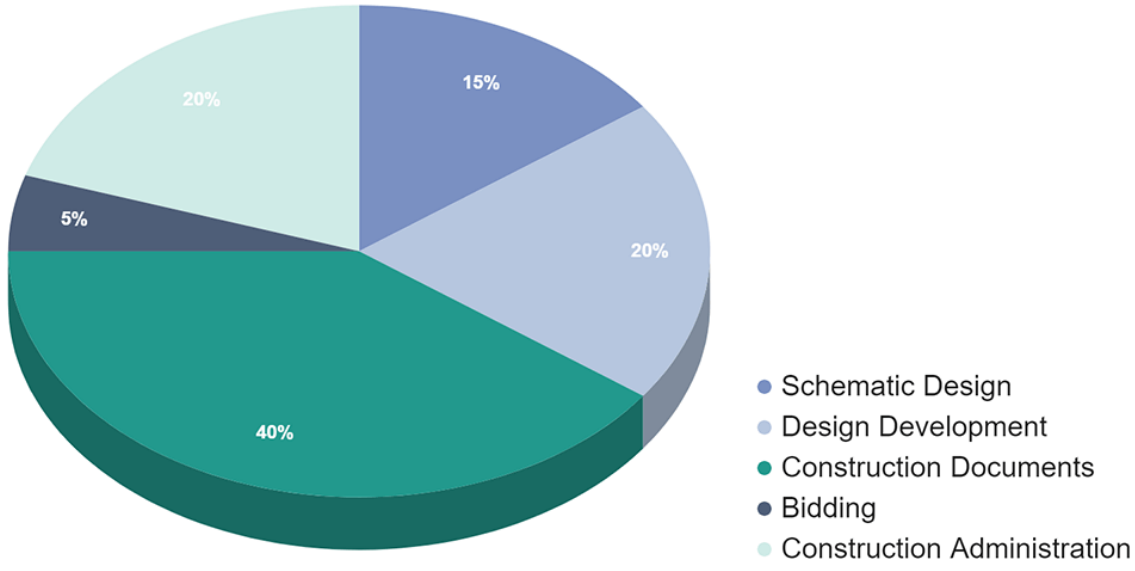
Denmark: The Church of Our Lady (Copenhagen) - Lutheran

It is the local church committee that manages the church building, the rectory, the cemetery and other local buildings and the church committee is obliged by law and legislative regulation to keep the buildings and cemeteries in good order.[15] This means that members of the church locally – being 50 per cent of the population as in some areas of Copenhagen or 95 per cent as in some areas in Jutland – are obliged to finance the keeping and maintenance of the local church buildings to a good standard. The recent restoration of *Our Savior's Church* in Copenhagen could be mentioned as an example. This church is visited by a good number of tourists every year, due to the attraction of walking up the staircase on the outer curve of the steeple (reaching a height of nearly 100m).[16] Even though that is the case, then the restoration running up to nearly 100 million DKK was paid for by the Copenhagen members of the church.

Challenge Seven
Categorical Confusion

- "Cathedral" is a technical term.
- Churches with an episcopal hierarchy build cathedrals.
- It is NOT a generic Christian term.
- A cathedral is the SEAT OF A BISHOP
- Ghana has no "National Bishop".
- There is NO established church so there cannot be a "National Cathedral".
- Hence why in Nigeria, they called theirs a "National Christian Center" and previously "National Ecumenical Center".
- Government's incorporation of an "interdenominational church" through the Museums Board confuses an already messy situation. At most, a "chaplaincy" model as used in Ghanaian universities, hospitals and the armed forces should have been adopted. The building itself should have been owned by a statutory body and operated by a chaplaincy system established by the Christian churches.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PHASE FEE BREAKDOWN



Incompetent fee scheduling has taken away the incentives of the design and build consultants and contractors to ensure sound project management. The project is now wracked by internal confusions among key project operators at design and execution level. Adjaye took as much as $6 million even before a basic alignment between the architects and the builders.

Challenge Eight
Massive Upfront Payments

MEDIAN FEE FOR PROJECTS WITHIN RIBA STAGES 1-7

RIBA Stages 1-7: Design + delivery	NEW BUILD		REFURBISHMENT	
	Traditional contract	Design + build contract	Traditional contract	Design + build contract
Project value	Median fee as % of project value			
£0-50,000	15%	n/a	10.25%	n/a
£51,000-100,000	8%	n/a	11.5%	15%
£101,000-250,000	8%	n/a	10%	n/a
£251,000-500,000	7.5%	3.5%	10.25%	8.25%
£501,000-999,000	6.5%	5.5%	11%	8.25%
£1,000,000-5,000,000	5%	3.5%	7.25%	3%
£6,000,000-10,000,000	6%	2.75%	6%	4.25%
£11,000,000-20,000,000	n/a	2.75%	4.5%	4.25%
£21,000,000-30,000,000	n/a	4%	n/a	4.5%
£31,000,000-40,000,000	n/a	3.5%	n/a	4.25%
£41,000,000-50,000,000	n/a	3.5%	n/a	4.25%
£ 51,000,000+	n/a	3.5%	n/a	4.25%

14.03 SCALE OF FEES:

The stages and corresponding fee payment arc as follows:

Stage of Normal Service		Percentage Charges (%)		Time Charges		Lump Sum Charges	
		New Works	Works to Existing Buildings	New Works	Works to Existing Buildings	New Works	Works to Existing Buildings
Pre-Contract	Inception	No fee	No fee	No fee	No fee	No fee	No fee
	Architectural designs	1.00	1.25	As per CIA Approved rates		No gofiable	
	Production Drawings	2.00	5.75	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto
Post-Contract	Supervision	3.00	4.00	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto
Total Fees Due		4.00	11.00				

Adjaye has been paid at a rate that is at least three times what the local regulators of the profession suggest to be reasonable and four times the median rate in the UK where he principally practices.

Challenge Nine:
Inflated Architectural & Design Costs

Given his 20-year industry record, it is noteworthy that Ghanaian public institutions will, since 2018, suddenly start awarding large contracts to Adjaye without any design competitions or even basic tenders taking place.

Sudden Single-Sourcing of a Long List of Projects to Adjaye & Associates since 2018

- Ghana Trade Fair Center
- Ghana Freedom Pavilion – Venice, Italy
- Agenda 111
- National Cathedral
- Marine Drive Ghana
- W.E.B. Du Bois Museum Complex
- New Bank of Ghana Complex
- New GNPC Complex

Especially against the background of Adjaye's known personal and professional affiliations with persons closely related to Ghana's First family.

- The projection of 60 million Christian tourists from Africa by the National Cathedral Secretariat is fanciful. Such a 40-fold jump in tourism will require tens of billions of dollars of investment.

- The cost of securing a collection of artefacts worth seeing in the Bible Museum will add several hundreds of millions of dollars to the project cost. Finding such artefacts is another matter.

- A spiritual pilgrimage site cannot be conjured by state fiat.

Challenge 10
Preposterous Cost-Benefit Analysis

The Bible Museum, Reliquaries & the Green Connection

The National Cathedral Executive Director Dr Paul Opoku-Mensah as well as NCG trustee Dr Mensa Otabil visited the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC on Wednesday.

The government has entered into secret pacts with the Museum of the Bible (MOTB), Nehemiah Group, and Cary Summers (all linked to the Green Organisation in the US) for assistance in developing Christian tourism around the “National Cathedral”. The experience of these individuals and organisations in their own backyard and operations prove that “bible museums” are extremely hard to run and fully cover costs. In MOTB’s desperation, it has had to grapple with artefact fraud and antiquities trafficking. Fundraising strategies developed for the Ghanaian “National Cathedral” have so far failed spectacularly.

Museum of the Bible (Washington DC), part of the bevy of international Christian tourism advisors to the National Cathedral, has faced lawsuits for antiquities fraud and smuggling and has come under state investigations.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CIVIL DIVISION

ROMANY ERIAN MELEK HETTA Plaintiff, v. MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE, INC. 7507 SW 44th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73179; JANE DOE Identity and Address UNKNOWN; JOHN DOES A AND B Identities and Addresses UNKNOWN; and OFFICER DOES 1 AND 2 Identities and Addresses UNKNOWN, Defendants.	Civil Action No. JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

COMPLAINT
(DC Human Rights Act – Public Accommodations; 42 U.S.C. § 1981 – Public Accommodations; Fourth Amendment – Detention Without Probable Cause 42 U.S.C. §1983; False Imprisonment; Defamation)

INTRODUCTION

1. This civil rights litigation arises out of actions taken by the Museum of the Bible, Inc. and its agents, officers and employees in subjecting Plaintiff, a visitor to the Museum, to racial profiling, discrimination, humiliation, detention, false imprisonment, interrogation – targeting him because of his race, color, ethnicity and appearance. After subjecting Plaintiff to this abuse, the ordeal did not end there. The Museum then falsely and

1

Ghana's "Bible Museum" dreams rest on an ally with no legs of their own

By **Daniel Burke**, CNN Religion Editor
Updated 0116 GMT (0916 HKT) March 16, 2020

Investigators find priceless museum artifacts are forgeries 00:56

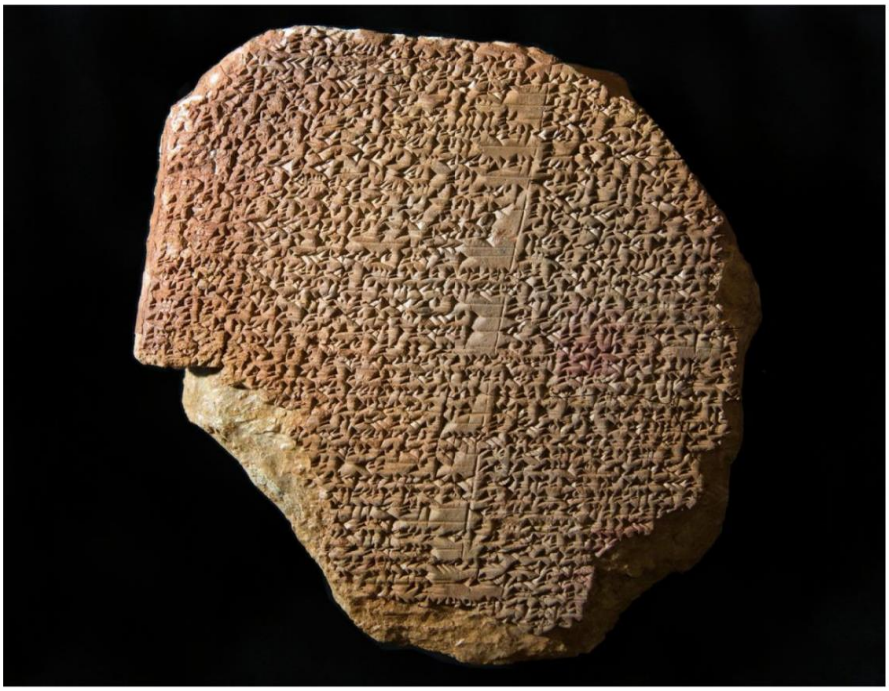
(CNN) — Last year, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC, said five of its most valuable artifacts -- once thought to be part of the historic Dead Sea Scrolls -- were fake.

Now the museum is facing a harder truth: All of its 16 expensive fragments are forgeries.

Amid Scrutiny, the Museum of the Bible's Founder Will Return a Staggering 11,500 Artifacts of Dubious Origin to the Middle East

Hobby Lobby tycoon Steve Green founded the museum.

Sarah Cascone, March 30, 2020



The Museum of the Bible had this cuneiform tablet featuring the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh on display, but is now one of 11,500 artifacts being repatriated to Iraq and Egypt due to lack of proper provenance documentation. Photo courtesy of the Museum of the Bible.

Conclusions

- By burning goodwill for the National Cathedral project because of lack of candour and various suspicious behaviours, the government has damaged the prospects of raising large private donations.
- The ongoing fiscal challenges and the risks in continuing to evade Parliament will make continued funding of the cathedral this year and in H1 2023 highly challenging.
- The longer the financing delays in this crucial phase of the program, the deeper the current rancour among the contractors, the government and the architect will grow, creating ongoing project confusion.
- The decision to base the success of the project on elements that are themselves major projects, like the Bible Museum, which have highly challenging success criteria, all but guarantees prolonged delays in delivering the full vision, and even greater public discontent.
- IMANI's analysts conclude that the only viable segment of the National Cathedral project within the 2024 timeframe is the auditorium aspect. However, any revision to scope to allow for commissioning of the cathedral by the original March 2024 timeline confronts massive contractual, design, political, administrative and technical challenges.
- Unless the government repurposes/pivot the central concept to a kind of "national civic center" with a much smaller interdenominational church component, and if the President continues to stick stubbornly to the original grandiose objectives, the project is likely to stall for much longer. A future government may then be forced to radically alter course.

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