

Ancient echoes

In his writings on church style, Moerdyk argued against the neo-Gothic as an appropriate style for the Afrikaans church. He associated this style with the cold northern countries, and found the architecture of southern Europe more suitable to South Africa's climate. He thus made a case for a Romanesque revival to suit the requirements of Afrikaner Calvinism. Something in the Afrikaner psyche seems drawn to early Christian culture. While Romanesque architecture may appear remote from the African present, strangely even more removed from us than the time of classical Rome, it is contemporary with the culture of Mapungubwe, which too seems more ancient than it really is. For some, perhaps, an association with distant times and ancient traditions holds out the promise of permanence.

E