

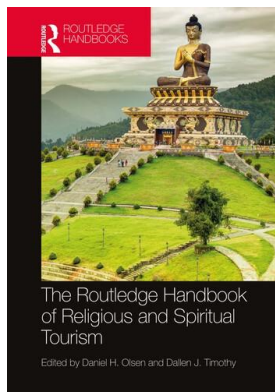
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The Routledge Handbook of Religious and Spiritual Tourism

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RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY, AND TOURISM

Emerging and future directions

Dallen J. Timothy and Daniel H. Olsen

Introduction

This handbook is about faith, religion, spirituality, and the sacred and the secular and how these intersect with the moderating variable of tourism. Through the current academic literature, much is known regarding people's motivations for undertaking pilgrimages and seeking spiritual experiences through travel. These include religious obligations, penance and forgiveness, promotion of faith and testimony, increasing proximity to deity, socializing with family and other likeminded devotees, and seeking an existential understanding of self. Indeed, much research has been done on the marketing and management of sacrosanct places and the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of mega and small-scale religious events and religious festivals, as well as religious and spiritual tourism more generally. Much of this knowledge has been eruditely reviewed in this book, but we have also tried to go beyond normative familiarity to identify and address lesser-known elements of religious tourism and spiritual travel.

This handbook has discussed a wide range of perspectives on many traditional elements of religious tourism and spiritual travel, with the chapters herein presenting many unique viewpoints that are not yet well documented in the literature. These include, for example, popular culture, political economy, religious theme parks, the UNESCO branding of religious heritage, gender, and authenticity. Although these subjects are well established in the social sciences and tourism studies more generally, until now they have not been systematically examined in the context of religious and spiritual tourism. At the same time, many avenues of research regarding the intersections of religion, spirituality, and tourism have not been covered in this handbook. As such, this concluding chapter suggests areas that are in particular need of additional research attention in the near future. In particular, the chapter focuses on six areas of potentially fruitful research: unusual spaces and places of religious tourism, dark tourism and pilgrimage, slow and religious tourism, religious hospitality, emerging travel markets and motives, and the effects of globalization on religious tourism.

Spaces of religious tourism

The contributors in this book have discussed pilgrimage, religious tourism, and spiritual travel in many different contexts and venues. The most common venues for these forms of tourism are, of course, temples, mosques, churches, shrines, archaeological sites, grottos and other natural areas, visitor centers, and various themed environments in both urban and rural settings. Yet, there are multitudes of other types of spaces, places, and venues that have not been discussed widely in the scholarly literature, even though they may have different impacts on the visitor experience and facilitate religious tourism differently. This dearth of academic attention derives from the relative newness of such alternative spaces in modern-day religious tourism, as well as the dominance of scholarship that focuses on prescribed holy places (e.g., the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, the Western Wall in Jerusalem, and the Ghats and Ganges River in Varanasi) or proscribed places to avoid in mainstream pilgrimage traditions (Gürey 2017). Although alternative pilgrimage and religious tourism spaces could fill volumes, given our space limitations, this section is limited to the role of museums, trails, and cruise ships and resorts.

Museums

Museums are a prominent asset for heritage tourism, although people do not always think of them in the context of religious tourism (Timothy 2021b). There are essentially three types of religious museums. The first is comprised of religious archaeological sites and buildings, such as churches, temples, or mosques, which are classified as museums for the purpose of conserving artifacts and educating the public (Farra-Haddad 2020; Koren-Lawrence & Collins-Kreiner 2019). While they were not built with tourists in mind, many of these sites are now managed and marketed to cater to this tourism niche market. One of the best and most controversial examples of this is the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, the fourth-century cathedral and later fifteenth-century mosque, which for many years has been Turkey's most visited tourist attraction. In 1931, the mosque was decommissioned and closed, but it opened in 1935 as a museum and functioned as such until July 2020 when, by presidential decree, it reverted to a functioning mosque and lost its museum status (Olsen & Emmett 2021). In Europe, it is common for cathedrals or other functioning houses of worship to contain sections cordoned off and managed specifically as museums (Shackley 2002). Likewise, the Mediterranean Basin and the Levant are full of religious archaeological sites that are major visitor attractions and functioning museums.

The second type of religious museum is comprised of buildings or staging areas that were built intentionally as archival stores to protect historical relics associated with a certain faith or several faiths within a region. These represent normative purpose-built museums where people go to learn about religious history by participating in interpretive programs and viewing artifacts and hearing narrations of history. The Coptic Museum in Cairo, Egypt, the Digambar Jain Sanghalay in Ujjain, India, the Confucius Museum in Qufu, China, and the International Buddhist Museum in Kandy, Sri Lanka, are highly-regarded examples of this type of attraction.

Third, religious museums may also be classified as 'themed environments' or 'theme parks' (Paine 2019; Ron & Timothy 2019; Shinde 2021; see Chapter 13) where religious subjects are on display or acted out by interpreter-actors. These religious theme parks serve three purposes: to spread a message of faith, to interpret religious heritage, and to entertain.

Famous examples of this category include the Ark Encounter in Kentucky, USA, the Holy Land Experience in Florida, USA, and Nazareth Village outdoor living museum in Israel (Bielo 2018; Chmielewska-Szlajfer 2017; Ron & Feldman 2009; Shoval 2000).

Trails and routes

Much has been written about pilgrims' experiences on the way to the center of faith and how the route or journey was the most arduous and impactful part of the experience (e.g., Buzinde et al. 2014; Damari & Mansfeld 2016; Maddrell 2011; Wu, Chang & Wu 2019). However, relatively little is known about today's trail-based experiences, except that researchers have distinguished between the recreation and religious users of various pilgrim trails (Murray & Graham 1997; Øian 2019; Olsen & Trono 2018).

Timothy and Boyd (2015) distinguish between purposive and organic tourism trails, organic trails being those that evolved naturally or which were not built specifically to be trails, but now function as such. This includes most pilgrimage routes, trade routes, railway lines, canal towpaths, and similar trails. Purposive trails are those that are put together for use in recreation or tourism. They are designed to link attractions and places that share a common historical theme. Historical pilgrim pathways fit the definition of organic trails, which many pilgrims and non-pilgrims use to this day. Many traditional pilgrimage routes, such as the Camino de Santiago, St Olaf's Way and Via Francigena, went into disuse during the Reformation but have now been resurrected as outdoor linear corridors for both pilgrims and other tourists. These are now marketed as some of Europe's most scenic hiking trails, and the majority of their users are non-religious, although many claim to have had 'spiritual' experiences while utilizing the trail (Lois-González, Santos & Romero 2018; Ron & Timothy 2019). Israel has recently developed a couple of long-distance Christian trails: the Jesus Trail and the Gospel Trail, both of which highlight localities that are mentioned in the New Testament, being part of the ministry of Christ (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot 2016). There are also several major purposive routes in Europe with religious themes, which the Council of Europe has been instrumental in developing as a tool for tourism development and cultural conservation. Some of these include the European Route of Jewish Heritage, the European Route of Cistercian Abbeys, and the Routes of the Reformation (Timothy & Olsen 2018).

Cruise ships and resorts

A uniquely modern manifestation of religious tourism is faith-based cruises and resort stays. Cruise ships and resorts are not typical or traditional venues for pilgrimage or spiritual experiences, and yet they are increasingly important for their roles in religious tourism. Jewish cruises are gaining popularity in the Mediterranean and other parts of Europe. Ports of call include cities that were once, or continue to be, important centers of Jewish faith and culture. These Jewish 'heritage cruises' take place on the Rhine and Danube Rivers through Germany, Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, as well as in the Mediterranean with key stopovers in Egypt and Israel (Silverstein 2020). The second type of Jewish cruise is aimed at a more religious market—kosher cruises. While these cruises also visit important historic locales, their focus is on ensuring that those who follow Jewish dietary restrictions can also enjoy a broader range of vacation experiences knowing that all food on-board is kosher. Passover cruises are becoming increasingly popular and include organizers taking care of all the cooking and cleaning requirements affiliated with the Passover holiday (Silverstein 2020). Several other companies have recently begun offering Muslim cruises, or

'halal cruises', which are especially popular in Turkey and Malaysia. They focus on themes of interest to Muslim travelers and offer halal dining, lodging, and recreational experiences (Battour & Ismail 2016).

Cruise products are especially popular among various Christian denominations and serve two primary purposes (Ron & Timothy 2019). First, certain Mediterranean cruises are being sold as 'Christian cruises' or 'in the Footsteps of the Apostles' cruises and aim to trace the ancient sea journeys of Jesus' apostles. These sailings call at ports in Italy, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt, all of which were a part of the scriptural geography of the Old and New Testament and important locations in spreading the gospel following the death and resurrection of Jesus. The land portions of these cruises focus on sites of the Apostle Paul's missionary efforts and the conversion of ancient Mediterranean peoples to Christianity, while onboard entertainment includes many guest speakers or 'headliners' who are experts on biblical archaeology and history as well as well-known religious leaders.

The second type of Christian cruise generally has little to do with the destination and more to do with the onboard fellowship of like-minded devotees. Diverse Christian faiths program their own itineraries within existing cruise products in an effort to build a sense of community and fellowship and to strengthen faith through the stories of others and invited guest speakers. That these cruises visit ports that are not typically associated with Christian history or doctrine is irrelevant. Rather, it is the social solidarity element that is most important in this context. Such cruises are extremely popular in the Caribbean during cold northern winters as well as in China, where many groups' shore packages include 'solidarity visits' to Chinese Christian communities to show support and fellowship to their brothers and sisters who lack religious freedom in an official atheist state (Ron & Timothy 2019).

Similar to this second type of cruise product are Christian retreats and resort stays. Christian ranch-stays and camps are increasingly popular family vacation destinations. Likewise, several resorts in the Caribbean and Mexico are devoting specific areas of their properties to Christian-friendly holidays, including guest entertainers and speakers. Like some cruises, these ranches and resorts are geared toward creating a sense of *communitas* among Christian holidaymakers and providing family-friendly activities in a comfortable Christian environment without the influence of heavy partying, alcohol, and drugs (Wright 2008).

Dark tourism and religion

Dark tourism has received a great deal of academic awareness commensurate with its attention by the industry (e.g., Biran et al. 2011; Foley & Lennon 2000; Hartmann 2014; Ivanova & Light 2018; Kerr & Price 2016; Stone et al. 2018; Stone & Sharpley 2008). Dark tourism is a form of heritage tourism that focuses on aspects of human suffering, death, and other events and places of darkness. Its products and resources include cemeteries and battlefields and sites of human-induced or natural disasters, incarceration, slavery, torture and abuse, tragic accidents, terrorism, and museums of morbidity, among many others. There are many different shades of darkness, with some sites being especially gruesome (e.g., mass murder or terror attacks), while others are somewhat less morose but nonetheless sullen in their own right (e.g., historic war sites or Body Worlds exhibits) (Stone 2006; Timothy 2021a).

The parallels between dark tourism and pilgrimage have been highlighted by a small handful of scholars (e.g., Collins-Kreiner 2016; Olsen & Korstanje 2020), suggesting that people's behavior towards, and motivations for, dark tourism resemble many of the same motives and behaviors in relation to pilgrimage. Deep emotions are often involved in both types of travel experiences, and both dark tourists and pilgrims are frequently

motivated by personal identity seeking, self-awareness, and a sense of their own mortality (Ivanova & Light 2018). Korstanje and Olsen (2020) suggest a number of analogous relations between dark tourism and pilgrimage, including that both entail forms of resilience, exhibit strong heritage values, and provide a means of coming to terms with death and eschatology.

Likewise, the notion that many types of travel, including dark tourism, may be seen as a type of secular pilgrimage, or a journey to reach a desired 'center of otherness', has long been a mantra in the religious tourism and pilgrimage literature (e.g., Turner & Turner 1978). These centers may be places of national or filial pride, locations associated with celebrities or personal heroes, or sites of society's collective anguish. Such journeys and places can induce a strong sense of inner connectedness between one's own spiritual self and a larger force beyond the self. Visits at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York City or the Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, can produce a combination of emotions, including a deep sense of loss, sadness, solidarity, and somber adulation (Croom et al. 2018; Kerr & Price 2018; Sather-Wagstaff 2016).

A third perspective is that many elements of religious heritage have connotations of darkness and suffering (Cohen 2011; Esplin & Olsen 2020). Spain's recent actions to protect and promote the country's Jewish heritage has occurred as the country has begun to come to terms with the state's forced conversions of Jews to Catholicism or their expulsion from Spain in the fifteenth century (Dulska in press; Russo & Romagosa 2010). The heritages commemorated and the interpretive narratives of many Latter-day Saint historic sites also memorialize a history of mass persecution, execution, and expulsion, which nineteenth-century members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints withstood because many of their beliefs did not align with mainstream Christianity (Esplin & Olsen 2020; Olsen 2006b, 2013; Ron & Timothy 2019).

In truth, much of the world's religious history is fraught with darkness: abuse of power, persecution of peoples because of their faith, forced expulsions and migrations, wars, and other tragedies in the name of religion. There is, therefore, a clear connection between religious tourism and dark tourism, but we do not yet know the extent of these connections. There is room for additional research on the parallels between dark tourism and pilgrimage or other forms of religious tourism that go beyond only motivations and emotive experiences. Resource and product overlap, and the ways in which destinations are attempting to either connect the two or ignore them entirely, are areas we know very little about but which could enhance scholarly knowledge about the crossovers between dark tourism and pilgrimage, as well as other types of tourism and pilgrimage. Certainly, there are parallels that researchers have yet to identify.

Diaspora/roots tourism

Roots tourism and dark tourism have much in common. Many ethnic diasporas have a dark history, including slavery, starvation, and war. Roots/diaspora tourism also has much in common with religious tourism. For example, 'forced diasporas' often result from contestation or conflict between cultures, races, and faiths. The Jewish diaspora is the best known and largest forced diaspora, but the Arab diaspora, which continues to grow, is largely rooted in ongoing religiously motivated wars and conflicts. The Armenian diaspora was in part a result of religious discord between the Armenian Christians and their Ottoman overlords through different periods of time. Many diasporas and forced migrations have occurred based on religious differences or nationality with immigrants representing several religions

(e.g., Indians with a majority being Hindus, Sikhs, or Muslims). Other mass and individual migrations have taken place throughout history for many reasons, including employment opportunities, famines and starvation, escaping autocratic regimes, family solidarity, and colonial networking. Although not necessarily related to religion, diasporas of every kind create the potential for 'return travel' or 'roots tourism' (Coles & Timothy 2004).

Faith-based diasporas have spread religious adherents throughout the world. Many descendants of old and recent diasporas continue to practice the religions of their forebears. This results in many people traveling to their ancestral homelands to participate in pilgrimages, pilgrimage-like celebrations and to visit near and distant relatives (Olsen 2019). Travel by American Muslims to participate in the Hajj and Canadian Indians traveling to India to participate in Hindu or Sikh pilgrimages or religious holidays are prime manifestations of this religion-roots tourism relationship.

Among recent diasporic groups, there is a strong sense of connection to the homeland. Forced diasporic people tend to feel most disconnected and suffer most from a cultural 'identity crisis' (Coles & Timothy 2004), but even people of volunteer diasporas tend to have a common sense of identity and respect for their ancestors. This often results in 'roots tourism', 'genealogy tourism', 'personal heritage tourism', 'return travel' or 'diaspora tourism', all of which entail people traveling to visit their ancestral lands, visit close and distant relatives, undertake genealogical or family history research, and participate in activities their ancestors might have participated in (e.g. farming, gardening, hunting, attending church) (Alexander et al. 2017; Higginbotham 2012; Huang et al. 2013; Timothy 2008).

For many roots tourists, especially people of African descent whose ancestors were part of the slave trade, visits to slavery heritage sites in their own countries or in Africa can have deep and transcendent outcomes. Many African-Americans who visit slave sites in Ghana or other West African countries often report a deep sense of loss, emotional solidarity with their ancestors, and a spiritual connection with Africa and those who suffered the abuse and indignity of slavery (Timothy & Teye 2004; Wright 2020). For many African-Americans and other nationalities of African descent, such a deeply personal diasporic journey to the lands of their forebears becomes a true pilgrimage and something that either helps solidify their faith in humanity and God or results in increased bitterness (Timothy & Teye 2004).

Although other diasporas may not evoke the depth of spirit and emotion as that found within the African diaspora experience, they do indeed have a spiritual role to play. Visits to ancestral homelands 'have long been the focus of strong emotional attachments by various socio-religious groups' (Olsen 2006a: 114). In a world that is confusing, conflicted, and ungrounded, undertaking a genealogical journey can be very therapeutic; it can help heal the troubled soul (Timothy 2008). By understanding our ancestors and their lived experiences, people begin to partly understand their own spiritual needs today and how they came to be who they are (Kurzwel 1995; Mindell 2010). These emotive responses to visiting ancestral lands 'lead some genealogy travelers to...adopt the persona of "pilgrim", for they see themselves...as pilgrims on a sacred quest for spiritual enlightenment, peace, and identity confirmation' (Timothy 2008: 122).

The connections between genealogy, family history, spirituality, and travel are clear, but little empirical research has been done to take these relationships further. Understanding the spiritual connectedness between different diasporas, their ethnic homelands, the reasons for their dispersal, and their level of connectedness in their adopted land would go far in providing additional knowledge about the 'spiritual' or existential longing that many hyphenated and displaced migrant groups feel in their traditional homelands.

Religious tourism and slow tourism

Slow tourism stems from the 'slow food' movement, which began in the 1980s with the aim of protecting local foods and food cultures, growing food sustainably, encouraging healthy eating, avoiding waste, understanding food sources, supporting local culinary enterprises, and countering the rapid popularization of fast food. It also emphasizes the quality of food and dining experiences over quantity. This movement has since grown into a vast international organization, 'Slow Food', which has branch offices in many countries to help propagate its principles of healthy living and healthy environment. 'Slow Food' has several parallels with the kosher and halal movements, including an emphasis by the latter movements on pure food, whole food, and certain gustatory prohibitions (Atalan-Helicke 2015; Boyd 2016; Heiman et al. 2019).

Slow tourism encourages deeper and more meaningful travel experiences. Rather than rushing through many attractions in a day or destinations in a week, the way most mass-produced tour packages are organized today, slow tourism urges people to decelerate, enjoy the destination, become immersed in local cultures and foods, undertake healthy activities and engage more with nature (Dickinson & Lumsdon 2010; Fullagar et al. 2012). In doing this, tourists can have healthier, more restful, and more authentic holiday experiences. Most analysts argue that slow tourism is a more sustainable way of 'doing' tourism because travelers use local transportation, support local businesses (e.g., food services, farmers, and guest houses), spend more money in non-corporate establishments, and are more culturally in tune with local inhabitants (e.g., Dickinson & Lumsdon 2010; Fullagar et al. 2012; Shang, Qiao & Chen 2020).

Because of its emphasis on wellness and slow mobility, including cycling and walking, slow tourism has many parallels with traditional pilgrimage. As noted in other parts of this book, historical and traditional European pilgrimages entailed a lot of walking. After a nearly 400-year lull in some instances, the idea of walking pilgrimage trails has picked up pace again since the 1980s and is once again becoming a salient part of many people's religious travel experiences in Europe (Ashley & Deegan 2009; Olsen & Trono 2018; Ron & Timothy 2019; Timothy & Boyd 2015).

The mountain pilgrimages of Japan have existed since ancient times but are becoming more culture and wellness tourism-oriented beyond the sole domain of Shinto practitioners (Jimura 2016; Kato & Prozano 2017). The Japanese pilgrim routes are analogous to the notion of slow tourism and have in fact been adopted by the slow tourism movement, as they entail walking, immersion in nature and place-based culture, and encourage wellness through healthy eating, yoga, and thermal baths (Kato 2017). They also encourage rural development and 'back to basics' modes of travel and enjoyment. Das and Islam (2017) and Kato (2017) draw many parallels between walking tourism in general and pilgrimage because both support increased mindfulness, place authenticity, wellness and is a lower-impact form of tourism (Redick 2018). At the same time, the ideal of pilgrimage as being a slow phenomenon is culturally and geographically contingent. As Olsen and Wilkinson (2016) note, some pilgrimages in Japan encourage pilgrims to complete their pilgrimage circuits as quickly as possible, as the more times one completes a pilgrimage circuit, the more merit one receives.

Hospitality and religion

There has been a lot written about Arab or Muslim hospitality (e.g., Sobh et al. 2013; Stephenson 2014; Stephenson & Ali 2019), yet Islam is not the only religion mandated to serve others and to demonstrate hospitality and kindness towards strangers (Kirillova et al. 2014;

Martin 2014; Pohl 1999). Outside of documented historical accounts, we know little about how travelers are welcomed and their needs satisfied according to holy writ and religious traditions in other faiths. According to the Quran and Hadiths, Muslims are required to demonstrate kindness and generosity to strangers. The Bible exhorts Christians and Jews to do the same, yet these groups and others have received much less attention in the study of hospitality and tourism (e.g., Sorensen 2005).

Part of the religion-hospitality intersection is the growing phenomena of halal tourism and kosher tourism, which were alluded to earlier in the cruise discussion. Increasing numbers of worldwide destinations are beginning to cater more overtly to the Muslim and Jewish markets. Following the events of September 11, 2001, many Middle Easterners curtailed their travel to the West for fear of encountering Islamophobia. Many Muslims reoriented their vacation choices to other Muslim-majority countries, which saw massive Middle Eastern arrivals in places such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey throughout the early 2000s. Since that time, there have been many efforts in non-Muslim majority countries to entice back the lucrative Muslim market by developing halal tourism (Battour & Ismail 2016; Hall & Prayag 2020; Mohsin & Ryan 2019; Moufakkir et al. 2019). Halal tourism is far more than an issue of food, although gastronomy and food services are an important part of the halal tourism phenomenon. It also includes extra services that make Muslim travelers feel welcomed and safe. A handful of halal ranking systems have been developed in Southeast Asia, Turkey, and other places to help Muslim travelers understand how halal a particular service provider is. For example, many resorts and hotels provide a schedule of prayer times; a qiblat (Mecca directional marker); Quran and prayer rug in the room or common prayer area; gender-segregated recreational facilities (e.g., swimming pools); and alcohol-free and halal-certified restaurants that will have a higher crescent rating than a property that only has a halal menu option (Timothy & Ron 2016; Weidenfeld & Ron 2008). There are similar kashrut and glatt kosher certifications for Jewish consumers in Israel and abroad. These are growing in areas that are popular among Israeli tourists who prefer to adhere to their dietary restrictions (Moira et al. 2017; Timothy & Ron 2016).

Within the many different faiths on the planet, there are diverging views of service and hospitality that intersect with tourism in and around their communities. While there is only a small literature on this topic (e.g., Hall & Prayag 2020; Islam & Kirillova 2020; Kirillova, Gilmetdinova & Lehto 2014; Lashley 2015; Weidenfeld 2006), more additional research is needed to gain a broader perspective on variations in travel needs and hospitality services between religions, especially among some of and alcohol the lesser researched faiths.

The religious travel markets and motives

People travel for a wide range of reasons. In fact, there are probably as many motivations for undertaking a journey as there are journeys, each one having its own unique set of purposes, interests, or obligations. Although there has been a great deal of research on religious travel motives, many of which have been explained in this volume, we still know relatively little about people's motives for religious and spiritual travel beyond the normative explanations of religious obligations, desire to commune with deity, to seek blessings, and visiting a famous shrine.

Understanding the market for pilgrimage, religious tourism, and spiritual travel is critical for destinations and service providers to offer satisfying faith or spiritually transformative experiences that will touch the lives of those who visit, increase their economic footprint, cause them to return, and result in positive word of mouth. Traditionally, the pilgrimage market has been accepted as an undifferentiated cohort of travelers who are easy to please because

of their obligation to visit. Service quality was deemed somewhat irrelevant to whether or not a pilgrim would re-visit a destination or even recommend it to others; most pilgrimage destinations were populated by a 'captive audience' of worshippers who had little flexibility in their choice of destination.

Although this is still somewhat true in instances where pilgrimages are required at designated times and localities, the broader notion of religious tourism and the evolving nature of pilgrimage in many faiths means that faith travelers have an increasingly wide range of pilgrimages to choose from. With the exception of the required Hajj, most religious people can choose whether or not to go on a pilgrimage as a means of improving their spiritual selves, and much of the time they can choose the destination. Thus, the pilgrimage and religious tourism sector today within mainstream Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islam (outside the Hajj), and in most other religions, is increasingly cognizant that there are many pilgrimage destinations vying for people's religious travel plans (Heydari Chianeh et al., 2018; Ron & Timothy 2019).

Within the pilgrimage market, there are many types and motives. Markets may be understood in many ways. For example, pilgrims are distinguishable by their religious affiliation. This variable means that some people will only visit sacred sites designated holy by their own faith; adherents will avoid the sacred sites of others. Even within Christianity, members of certain churches would not likely visit places considered sacrosanct by other denominations (Ron & Timothy 2019). Likewise, many pilgrims are motivated by strict obligation. For this segment, attending a pilgrimage is a requirement of their faith and they have little choice in when they undertake pilgrimage and where they wish to go. Also, in some pilgrimage contexts, service quality has traditionally been seen as less important, but nowadays in a more competitive marketplace, it has become a higher priority for destinations (Eid 2012; Handriana et al. 2019).

As part of the growing service-mindedness in the religious tourism sector, people with disabilities are increasingly being facilitated at sacred destinations. Certain pilgrimage centers, such as Lourdes, have long catered to the special needs of the ill, the aged, and those with fragile health (Gesler 1996). More recently, however, many faith destinations are now seeking to improve people's experiences by making sacred sites, visitor centers, shrines, and places of worship more accessible to the ill or less mobile segments of society (Gassiot-Meilan et al. 2019).

Other new niches are continuing to appear in the marketplace. As standards of living continue to improve in developing countries, and with the spread of certain religions in key parts of the world, there has been a remarkable growth of religious and spiritual tourism in non-traditional markets. Christian pilgrims from many countries of Africa regularly visit Israel and the broader Holy Land by the millions. Greater numbers of Chinese travelers are seeking to experience the religious heritage of Europe, and even the underground growth of Christianity in China is causing many converts to seek pilgrimage experiences within and outside of China as a means of building their faith networks and socializing with other Christians in more open settings in the Western world.

Globalization

Globalization refers to the various processes that figuratively make the world smaller. Globalization connects people, places, businesses, and governments through trade, education, political alliances, transnational corporatization, social media, popular culture, and tourism. Tourism is both a product of globalization and a force for globalization (Timothy 2019). It

manifests some of the most impactful elements of globalization, such as human mobility and international collaboration, and embraces much of the technology that has brought the world together. As tourism continues on its upward global trajectory and as it eventually recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, religious and spiritual tourism will join the ranks of the fastest-growing travel sectors as the World Tourism Organization (2011, 2015) has predicted.

However, technology is perhaps one of the most influential forces of globalization in religious and spiritual tourism contexts (Olsen 2019). Especially popular in the past 15 years is the emergence of virtual pilgrimages, wherein the faithful who are unable to undertake a pilgrimage for whatever reason can do so virtually with mobile phone apps and online through virtual reality software or webcams. Most major religions today have apps that enable virtual experiences on pilgrim routes and tours, or performing rituals in sacred locales (McFarlan Miller 2020). Such technologies might allow non-adherents to explore and experience sacred places and events they are not permitted to attend in person (e.g., Mecca and the Hajj for non-Muslims). It also enables people to undertake an arduous pilgrimage that might be beyond their physical capabilities. Virtual technology may engender an interest in people to visit a new spiritual destination, just as it has in other tourism settings (Bogicevic et al. 2019), and help those who have lost their faith to regain it.

Other aspects of globalization, especially political globalization, have the potential to grow spiritual and religious tourism considerably. Most notably is the process of cross-border cooperation and supranationalism in which sovereign states unite for a common cause, usually economic development, military alliances and human mobility. The most progressive example of this is the European Union and its Schengen Treaty, both of which have functionally reduced most of Europe's interior borders to symbolic lines of division. The debordering of Europe through supranationalism has opened up a huge region with a vast array of religious heritages. This has stimulated increased cross-border pilgrimages (e.g., Buyskykh 2019), enabled religious tourism to thrive in certain formerly isolated regions, and is pushing small, regional shrines and sacred sites to the forefront of global tourism. This means that many folk shrines of local renown now have the potential to become destinations of more international acclaim.

The effects of globalization on religious adherence are still unknown compared to what we know about globalized economics, politics, and popular culture. This is especially true with regard to scale of religious heritage and pilgrimage shrines. While Olsen (2019) has suggested that globalization has led to the transplantation of religious and spiritual traditions due to increased mobility, the democratization of travel and increasing visitation to sacred sites, and increasing commodification of religion and spirituality, there is scope for much more research on many aspects of religious and spiritual tourism and their connections to globalization processes.

Final remarks

The chapters in this handbook in many ways have done what they were supposed to do: they answered many questions and raised many more. We have tried to be as comprehensive in covering the intersections between religion, spirituality, and tourism as possible, but there are inevitable deficiencies. These deficiencies, however, should not be viewed as weaknesses, but rather opportunities to delve even deeper into understanding the shared and individual nuances between each manifestation of faith, whether part of an organized religion or simply one's own quest for knowledge, spiritual connectedness with nature, or secular humanist pathway to a greater understanding of life. This concluding chapter highlights several areas

that need more research attention. Volumes could be written about what we do not know, but space constraints do not allow us to delve into every missing connection. These are for future volumes of work.

As noted in the introductory chapter and in many chapters throughout this handbook, religious and spiritual tourism are not synonymous. Not all religious people are spiritual, and not all spiritual people are religious, and as such the travel experiences of religious and spiritual tourists may vary considerably. We must learn more about the differences and similarities between the two, but what we do know is that both can, and frequently do, manifest as pilgrimages that may be deeply meaningful to those who participate. As Ron and Timothy (2019: 124) note,

Many outdoor enthusiasts, even those who would not describe themselves as ‘religious’, often report having ‘spiritual’ experiences in wilderness settings...Something about being immersed in nature, alone with one’s thoughts and undistracted from the hurried lifestyles of modern society, allows individuals to develop connections with an other-worldly force beyond themselves.

The varying doctrines and practices of the world’s religions—what they share in common and what differentiates them—have the potential to interact with tourism or influence how it unfolds. There are in fact thousands of individual religions, faiths, sects, and denominations, numbering from a small handful of followers to having devotees in the millions or billions. Each one of these faiths and sects has different worldviews and expresses different ways of dealing with deity, society, and the afterlife. For some, faith-based travel is not expected. For others, it is required, and yet for some, it is prohibited or strongly discouraged (Timothy & Olsen 2006). We know a lot about religious travel of all kinds in Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism but much less about the travel practices of other faith communities. Additional research is required so that we can better understand the unique practices and spiritual nuances associated with the religious or spiritual travel behavior of the multitudes of other faiths or those who seek meaning outside of institutionalized religion, which drive and inspire the people of the world.

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