



**NIGERIAN PRAXIS OF RELIGIOUS
TOURISM AND PILGRIMAGE
MOTIVATIONS IN THE
GLOBALIZING WORLD**

Ngozi N. Iheanacho

Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, University of Port Harcourt (Nigeria). *E-mail:*
drngoziiheanacho@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Travel and Pilgrimage to holy sites and destinations of outstanding religious heritage date back to the ancient time, though moderately subscribed. Many of the ancient religious thinkers and a number of such minds in the modern world contend that such journeys are purely religious, and should be perceived and treated as distinct from tourism. However, in contemporary times, global cultural awareness and interconnectivity systems loom large in the orthodox and emerging religious traditions of mankind. This trend join with the development of global tourism industry to arouse peoples' interest in sacred journeys, as it opens new direct and ancillary opportunities and horizons for sundry and implicit motives' fulfillment. Thus, Nigerians' increasing propensity for pilgrimage and religious tourism is the function of this phenomenon. At the outbound dimension it has become annual tradition and praxis for religious groups and government to budget and commit enormous resources to the project. Apart from the sojourners' believe that such "heavenly journeys" to Jerusalem, Mecca, etc. help to accelerate their migration to ultimate goal in life, the journeys also function as sources of social mobility, achievement in itself, and identity in society. Locally, the global impact on religious explosion and worship innovations have added to the sacred sites and monasteries of the orthodox churches, resulting in the promotion of inbound religious tourism and pilgrimage. Such destinations and activities attract foreign and local tourists. In all, Nigeria's praxis of religious tourism and pilgrimage bring the "purely" religious and sundry secular motives into synergy. This approach has also promoted the value and need to develop the tourism potentials of the indigenus religious traditions that adorn the country's cultural diversity.

KEYWORDS

Nigerian praxis. Religious tourism. Pilgrimage. Motivation. Globalizing world.

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism, also commonly referred to as faith or sacred tourism, is a form of tourism, where people travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage or missionary purposes. This is a prominent feature of world religions. Contrary to apparent social forces of change, such as secularization and of globalization indices sacred travel and pilgrimage to religious destinations and sites is on the boom among votaries of the dominant religions in Nigeria. Religious tourism and pilgrimage is no longer a discrete religious activity, amongst the people.

Religious tourism and pilgrimages are among the oldest forms of tourism. Thus, such travels assumed eminent position in the Middle Ages of history. Then the subsequent spread of Christianity promoted the foundation of the numerous holy sites and pilgrimage destinations across cultures where the faith flourishes (BHATIA, 2001, p. 3). The world's largest form of mass religious tourism takes place at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Certainly, human beings have always had the need to believe in something superior. Along the centuries, we have discovered several cults and beliefs related to different gods of superior forces, which humans used to adore, creating representations and buildings to have something material to venerate and to pray to. The religious heritage we have today is the legacy of ancient cultures, a result of the evolution of different myths and beliefs. Thanks to tourism. A lot of churches, cathedrals, temples, shrines, etc., have not fallen into oblivion, keeping the grandeur that they had in the past. Tourism and religion have been linked since the Genesis until these days, through the Grand Tour stage, where young and rich people traveled to learn and study different countries, motivated as well by certain aspects of the people's religion. The growth of religious tourism as a global phenomenon in spite of modern factors is underscored by the

increasing rise in religion-based travels (see JACKOWSKI; SMITH, 1992). Hitherto, scholars showed less interest in sacred travels, but in recent times

[...] scholars of the humanities and human sciences have increasingly been forced to contend with globalizing process of migration, tourism, transnational movements, and the explosion of mass media (COLEMAN, 2009, p. 394).

To posit how Nigeria fit into this global rise in sacred travel phenomenon is the focus of this essay.

2. RELIGIOUS TOURISM AND THE GLOBAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Global tourism is on steady growth, making significant and attractive socio-economic impacts to nations and cultures. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO) international tourist arrivals in 1995 was estimated at 567 million tourists across the world. It is estimated to rise up to 660 million in 2000 and to 937 million in the year 2010. The current forecast is that by the year 2020 international tourism arrivals across the world would reach 1.5 billion (WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION, 1997, p. 212; BHATIA, 2001, p. ix). The global growth of the industry is a cumulation of all its aspects, such as cultural tourism products and sites, etc. It is in the perspective of cultural tourism that religions contribute significantly to the boom in the industry.

Religion is an important component of peoples' culture. In the ideal type of culture, each culture has a religion. Ideal here doesn't mean the best, rather a model constructed to serve as a heuristic – an aid to thinking about culture. Undoubtedly, religion is an important cultural characteristic. Religion is a cultural descriptor – in fact a critical factor that defines culture. In other words, the relationship between religion and culture is very intimate that it can be likened to the relationship between the sea and the fish. The implication is that religious tourism is an aspect of cultural tourism. However, what separate the two terms is basically the motivations that drive the tourists to embark on such a journey.

Cultural tourism and religious tourism are cognate subjects especially against the fundamental background of the relationship between religion and culture. Thus, most religions require, whatever the aim is, to visit holy places (VUKONIC, 1996). Visiting sacred places help people to verify and reinforce their beliefs, seeing that the personages they believe in were real people who lived in our world in other times. Nowadays, there is a plethora of thousands of different holy places around the world which have enough attractions to develop and provoke movements among the population. Those holy places have different meanings for each group of people (cultural, religious, mystic, etc.), depending on the aim of the trip.

However, when we speak about holy places, there is no need to think only about modern practising ones, such as Cathedral and Synagogues, but also in the ancient religions and their legacies, such as Machu Pichu in Peru, or Stonehenge in England, the archdivinity shrines in Nigeria and elsewhere in West Africa, as they are also the result of ancient beliefs.

Pilgrimages to sacred places or cult activities are an important part of the global tourism industry. Being that religion is one of the most influential factors in human existence and, considering its cultural and economic impulse, many people are consumers of religious tourism products; even though there is doubt whether the majority of the tourists, visiting religious destinations, have a strong religious belief or not, as a pull factor to given sites. The prominence of religious tourism is underscored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), and World Tourism Organization's continuous interest and support in developing and maintaining such identified sites as mankind's heritage of international tourism repute (see UNESCO, 1970). It is against this backdrop that the Osun Oshogbo sacred groove and festival in Nigeria was acknowledged and developed by Unesco and WTO as international tourism heritage.

The question whether religion or religious activities are the main motivation why tourists visit sacred sites and pilgrimage destinations is still contesting for general acceptance. It is yet to be verified. However, it is clear around us that people travel to different parts of the world to visit sacred sites because of the religion in itself. There is also an observation of increasing number of non-believers, or people without a

strong religious belief who travel to religious sites. The question here is: by which motivations are they influenced to choose a religious site as their tourist destination? There is no gainsaying that there are a number of people who travel to these sacred sites, not motivated by religion but by other types of motivation such as cultural, historical, or just getting to know how a sacred site is all about, or to see how people with a strong religious belief behave in this sacred sites.

Millions of people travel every year for religious purposes. In Nigeria, over 10 million people travel each year for faith-based purposes. Although religious tourism is one of the most understudied areas in both religious studies and tourism research (see VUKONIC, 1996), yet religious tourism has contributed to the growth of tourism in the modern era (LLOYD, 1998). Religions have played key role, from their very first days, in the development of leisure over the centuries. The traditions influence how people utilize their leisure time. In the Holy Bible the idea of leisure is established and crystallized:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation (Genesis 2.1-3).

This seventh day named in the Bible was the beginning of the leisure time. This sacred establishment has evolved as a dimension of human perception of tourism. Thus, religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism. It has been in existence long before Christianity emerged in human history. For instance, Egyptians, Greeks, and Jews expressed their devotion through religious motivated trips. Travel for religious reasons existed also in Africa and Asia.

It is a common place that people identify religious tourism with the individual's quest for shrines and locales where the visitors seek to experience the sense of identity with sites of historical and cultural meaning (see MERRIAN-WEBSTER, 1999; NOLAN; NOLAN, 1992). As is the case in other types of tourism, religious tourism take two dimensions

namely: tourism as a religious duty, and tourism where the knowledge is recorded and quoted for wider dissemination. Religious tourism make it possible for people to visit unfamiliar places for first hand-experiences and account. In other words, without the existence of sacred tours, people would have remained ignorant of certain places in the world. Tourism makes its possible for people of different religious and cultural backgrounds to come to know each other. It bring people together, providing mutual understanding and peace between different peoples of the world. From the Islamic point of view, tourism is integrated in the global vision of civilized and interdependent socio-religious facts of the tourism industry and founded on the quest for respect of noble human values, ethics and preservation of the environment.

3. PILGRIMAGE AND PARADIGMS OF SACRED TOUR

Pilgrimage is a journey which is undertaken for religion and faith purposes. Such tours are considered sacred. Although externally it is to a holy site but, internally it is for spiritual purposes and internal understanding of a religion and strengthening of one's faith. This conception is underscored by Barber (1991, p. 1), as he posits that:

Pilgrimage, the journey to a distant sacred goal ... is a journey both outwards, to new, strange, dangerous places, and inwards, to spiritual improvement, whether through increased self-knowledge or through the braving of physical dangers.

Pilgrimage and sacred journeys are as old as religion. However, organized pilgrimage dates back to the middle Ages. The journeys then were difficult, long, more adventurous and dangerous. Some could take several years, and were not considered as holidays. Smith (1992) explains how the link between pilgrimage and religious tourism comes from the Latin *peregrinus* which interpretation connote foreign traveler, newcomer or stranger. The term tourist, also with Latin origins, means torn us or the one who makes a circuitous journey,

usually for pleasure, and returns to the starting point. The contemporary use of the terms –identifying the pilgrim as a religious traveler and the tourist as a vacationer, is a culturally constructed polarity that veils the traveler’s motives. Normally, ancient pilgrims used to travel in groups and spend the nights in monasteries. Nowadays this has changed for most of the tourists. This is due largely to the technological advancements in the mobility industry across the globe.

Collins-Kreiner et al. (2006), further underscores the truism that Pilgrimage is a cardinal aspect of religious traditions of the world, especially Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. For Christianity, places as Jerusalem, Rome, or Santiago de Compostela, Lourdes, etc., are important destinations for Christians. Lourdes in France is considered as one of the most important sacred sites for then pilgrims. For Islam, Mecca and Medina are important destinations for hajj pilgrimage. And in Islam pilgrimage for hajj is a cardinal requirement (pillar) for committed practice of the faith. Hence, every Muslim is obliged to go to Mecca, at least once in his life time. For Judaism, the main sacred site of the religion was the Temple of Jerusalem until it was destroyed in 70 AD. Jerusalem and the Wailing Wall, also in Jerusalem are important places of pilgrimage for the Jews and votaries of Judaism. For Buddhism, there are four different places of pilgrimage, but the most important is the birthplace of Buddha at Kapilavastu in Nepal. Thus, even Buddha himself “prescribed certain places of pilgrimage, choosing sites linked to key events in his life” (COLEMAN, 2009, p. 386). Apart from the sacred River Ganges, Hindu festivals are important sacred products of international tourist and pilgrimage attraction. For instance, it was reported that since 1989 the Kumba Mela in Allahabad – a Hindu festival held every twelve years attract over 100,000 pilgrims, each time it holds (see <<http://www.kumbhallahabad.com>>).

Missionary journey is another kind of religiously inspired travel. In Christianity, missionary journey as a religious tour dates to early period of the faith, such as the missionary journeys of Paul (as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles book of the Bible), etc. In the case of Islam there were no organized missionary activities, but there were the wandering Sufis carrying the faith through Central Asia, India and other places

(LEWIS, 2004). Such movements are in their own way forms of pilgrimage, which promoted the propagation of faith, from one place to another.

4. STRUCTURAL PRAXIS OF PILGRIMAGE AND TOURISM IN THEORETICAL FRAMES

Modern tourism is regarded as one of the newer phenomena in the world but, turning to its origins, we see that it is rooted in pilgrimage to ancient sites of sacred repute. The study of the relationship between religion, pilgrimage, and tourism has frequently focused separately on the issues of religion or tourism, with little equal, comparative, or synopsis apparent to the two subjects. This is surprising, given that religion account for a very significant number of tourism products and pilgrimage destinations since the development of the tourism industry. However, there is a divergent conception of difference between pilgrimage; and tourism in the frame of thought of religious votaries; from the pilgrims themselves and; from the perspective of the industry's theoretical frame (TIMOTHY; OLSEN, 2006). The issue of pilgrim and tourist must be considered from two polars; namely: from the perspective of the religious traditions and, from the travelers themselves. In this frame of thought, pilgrims are generally not considered tourists, or, at least, they are regarded as being different from tourists. This view suggests that pilgrims are not tourists because they travel for spiritual reasons, while tourists travel (or visit a site) for more secular reasons, such as for curiosity or pleasure. And, from the thought frame of the tourism industry, pilgrims are tourists and should be treated as such. For them this industry is relevant for the development of the cognate multiple socio-economic activities, such as hotels, restaurants, shops, hospices, or religious centers, that complement such tours.

Scholars have been grappling with the complicated relationship between pilgrimage and tourism, including the economic, political, social, psychological, and emotional aspects.

They have recognized that the ties between the two are unclear. In Eade and Sallnow (1991, p. 15) the conceptual frame is that the pilgrimage site is a “religious void, a ritual space capable of accommodating diverse meanings and practices” dependent on the pilgrim’s interest. Eade (1992) further crystallize the interaction and interconnection between pilgrims and tourists at Lourdes. The same scholarly effort to conceptualize and delineate the interaction between pilgrimage and tourism feature prominently in the work of Bowman (1991) as he crystallized the place of Jerusalem in Christendom. The same feature looms large in the work of Rinschede (1992), as he broadly discuss the diverse uses of pilgrimage sites by tourists.

For Cohen (1992) pilgrimage and tourism differ, regarding the direction of the journey undertaken. The “pilgrim” and the “pilgrim-tourist” peregrinate toward their socio-cultural centre, while the “traveler” and the “traveler-tourist” move in the opposite direction. This distinction applies particularly to journeys where the destination is a formal pilgrimage centre. However, a mixture of praxis characteristic of both pilgrimage and tourism will often mark journeys to popular pilgrimage destinations. This blurring of boundaries between pilgrimage and tourism is addressed by some sociologists of religion in relation to “tourist” visits to historic European churches and cathedrals (DAVIE, 2000, p. 10-30). Even in the so-called secular, post-Christian culture, Davie notes that tourists who visit European cathedrals and other historic churches (even if part of the so-called heritage industry) have a distinctive approach to visiting religious buildings. First, they view them as public spaces that should be free to access. Second, they tend to view visiting such spaces as different from visits to museums or heritage centres. In this context, there are evidence of an unclear search for what may be understood as a form of spiritual experience.

In current usage, the term “pilgrimage” connotes a religious journey, – the journey of a pilgrim. In its structural practice, it is journey to a shrine or a sacred place. However, its derivation from the Latin, *peregrinus* allows broader interpretations, including foreigner, wanderer, exile, and traveler, as well as newcomer and stranger. The term “tourist” also has Latin origins, namely *tornus*, one who makes a circular journey, usually for pleasure, and returns to the starting point.

Contemporary use of the terms, identifying the “pilgrim” as a religious traveler and the “tourist” as a vacationer, is a culturally constructed polarity that blurs the traveler’s motives. Since the 1990s, analysis of this relationship has focused mainly on the similarities and differences between the tourist and the pilgrim (SMITH, 1992; TIMOTHY; OLSEN, 2006). This division is misguided, giving that the religious and the secular spheres of tourism are rapidly merging, as religious tourism assumes a more prominent market niche in international tourism and the globalization phenomenon of contemporary times. The use of the concepts “sacred” and “secular” has become problematic in relation to the classic definitions of Eliade (1969), particularly in reference to sharply contrasting polarizations. The implication is that there is a fusion of both polars of religions’ product in tourism praxis.

Pilgrims and tourists are two distinct actors situated at opposite ends of Smith’s continuum of travel, which first appeared in 1992. The polarities on the pilgrimage-tourism axis are however labeled sacred, but in relation to the secular. Between them range an almost endless list of possible sacred-secular combinations, with the central area now generally termed “religious tourism.” These positions reflect the multiple and changing motivations of the traveler whose interests and activities may switch from tourism to pilgrimage, and vice versa, without the individual even being aware of the change. Jackowski and Smith (1992) use the term “knowledge-based tourism” synonymously with religious tourism. Most researchers identify “religious tourism” with the individual’s quest for shrines and locales where, in lieu of piety, visitors seek to experience the sense of identity with sites of historical and cultural meaning (NOLAN; NOLAN, 1992). While they fulfill this religious urge they involve in other activities which stretch to other secular concerns. Holloway and Valins (2002), Coleman (2009) and Coleman and Eade (2004) underscore this understanding and frame of religious tourism practice, as they add that geographies of religion can provide key insights into the secular and sacred socio-spatial processes that shape everyday life in local places around the world. Local economic processes, such as tourism or pilgrimage, are embedded within a complex of socio-spatial processes that are historically, culturally, and locally dependent. Therefore while there is a basic

motive for the pilgrim and the general tourist, it does not suggest much deviation. Hence, Coleman (2009) agree that, for the tourism sector, pilgrims are treated as simple tourists, because in their religious journeys they have the same needs as non-devoted pilgrims. Thus, they can visit typical tourist places like museums, cafes or shops, and other non religious sites of attraction and interest.

In the globalizing world, pilgrimage has become an important product for the tourism industry. Global phenomenon has increased awareness of sacred sites for tourists' patronage toward boosting knowledge of human heritage, global economy and other sundry benefits. It is important to understand that embarking on pilgrimage or visiting religious places are nonetheless not outrightly founded on spiritual motivation. For this reason, a frame of differentiation is made to distinguish two different types of religious tourism, as not everyone going on a pilgrimage has the same reason of religious predispositions for it. Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to clearly define the number of those who are devoted pilgrims and those with a desire of travelling for leisure and to admire beautiful buildings as unique art pieces, as for example, the ones visiting Cathedrals, the ancient walls of Jericho in the Old Testament history, etc.

To capture the different attractions that distinguish pilgrims and tourists Smith (1992) outlines a five motives frame; namely: the pious pilgrim, who is strongly motivated by his religious beliefs; The pilgrim motivated in big part by the faith; The pilgrim motivated by the faith but also with interest in visiting cultural sites and with another kind of motivations, not only religious motivations; The pilgrim, who is motivated by cultural reasons, with interest in getting to know the religious tradition. The secular tourist has no religious influence at all, when choosing the tourist destination. Thus, the traditional infrastructure of religious tourism is also an attraction for the non religious tourists. At the same time, due to the impact of globalization and the growing pressures of life, many non believers are taking short trips to religious establishments, for relaxation and spiritual enlightenment. Monasteries offer such tourism facility and practice, provided such tourist subject to the rules and practices of the institution. This is a common practice in Nigeria, as people of other religious

affiliations visit monasteries which are mostly owned by Catholics. In sum, pilgrimage practice in contemporary times is driven by modern tourism principles.

5. MOTIVATIONS FOR SACRED TRAVEL AND TOURISM

It is important to talk about motivations here because it is the major thing that separates religious tourism from other aspects of cultural tourism, even though they are closely linked. Moutinho (1987, p. 16) define motivation as “a state of need, a condition that exerts a push on the individual toward certain types of action that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction.” It is important to understand what the tourists desires, needs and looks for from the process of consuming a tourism experience that involves an invest of money, in order to achieve a level of satisfaction. This is the domain of motivation – a complex subject that preoccupy social psychologists, etc., who are interested in the behaviour, attitudes and thoughts of people as consumers of tourism (PAGE, 2003, p. 50).

For Pearce (2005), in any attempt to understand tourist motivation must be considered the development of a concept of motivation in tourism, to know what practical measures need to be developed to measure people’s motivation for travel, especially the existence of multi-motivation situations, with more than one factor influencing the desire to engage in tourism as is the case among Nigeria pilgrim tourists. However, tourist and pilgrims’ motives change. The motives are covert in that they embody an individual’s private needs and want.

The motivations for pilgrimage are numerous. However, in all is the common desire to travel and experience something new. In this case, the Christian practice of pilgrimage is considered as an attempt toward strengthening ones faith – reinforcing the vigour to follow the footsteps of Christ. People chose different walks, places and diverse landscapes that Jesus (or his followers) could have seen and passed. In doing this, pilgrims have the feeling that they have approached the texts of the Bible more closely. For such people, there are several reasons to go on a sacred journey, as for example, to show their

love to God, to get near something that is really sacred, to show God their gratitude, to ask for pardon or to beg for a miracle (POST; PIEPER; UDEN, 1998).

On the other hand, there is also the example of simple tourists who travel to try something new and to visit a sacred site. Their motivations would be totally different as they would look for completely diverse aspects, as visiting a place which seems interesting or has a fascinating history background, to admire something attractive, to make a holiday more exciting, to experiment, change the well-known routine of life so that something new can happen, to satisfy curiosity and also perhaps merely to keep up with a modern trend for making such trips (POST; PIEPER; UDEN, 1998). There are different approaches and points of view about the aim of a religious trip. However, it is important to see that there is a clear difference between religious and cultural tourism. The visits to merely “admire” religious monuments cannot be considered as pilgrimages, as such has more of a cultural than a religious motivation.

Religious motivation. In Christianity, the idea of pilgrimage is undoubtedly linked to the belief that the Church in itself is pilgrim as the will of people following God. The religious sense of the people find its expression in varied forms of mercy, around the sacramental life of the Church such as, among others, the pilgrimages. Swarbrooke and Homer (1999) explain how religious tourism and the motivations to do this type of tourism is unique in that it is driven by a sense of duty and obligation rather than a search for pleasure and leisure. It is against this backdrop that one understands the Nigerian Christian and Muslim believers’ commitment and committing of enormous resources into sacred travels.

Pilgrimage, for Nigerian religious believers constitute an oration experience that evokes sober reflection, especially on the gap in relationship with the supernatural, and culminating therefore into a feeling of guilt, remorse and penance act with respect to the particular religious tradition and conviction. Consequently, the Nigerian pilgrim frequently goes to the sanctuary requesting a particular grace. In synthesis, the Nigerian religious tourist accedes to the motivated destination to live a spiritual experience on approach to God that is expressed through the peregrination from its place of habitual

residence to the destination as an act of re-living aspects of the faith, through the spiritual retirement in the sanctuary chose in the destination and through the participation in some religious events, service, prayer, meditation or other religious activities (SHACKLEY, 2001). Some believers travel in order to maintain their belongingness and identity, some to satisfy the feelings of nostalgia. And for some, it is to experience the transcendent or to fulfill the teachings of their faith. This is underscored by the testimony of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca and Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem and cognate religious sites which are fundamental to Christendom.

Furthermore, for many Nigerian religious believers, especially the clergy and ministers, the desire for more knowledge and understanding their faith is an important motive. The fulfillment of this motive is noticed in the manner in which, on return from pilgrimage they carry out their sacerdotal duties, and preaching in the euphoria of renewed authority. The euphoria of vigour and the enchantment equates with the motive of the medieval period in which Christian pilgrimage was conceived to be a functional praxis for expiating sin and, to demonstrate faith and hope of holistic healing. As medieval pilgrimage evolved into modern religious tourism, the emphasis on gaining knowledge as a priority motivation for undertaking the journey increased. Interest in the exotic other and in one's own religious roots similarly increased in quantity and significance as a motivation for travel to religious sites. Today, opportunities for learning are often emphasized by organizers of and participants in religious tours (see TIMOTHY; OLSEN, 2006).

Cultural Motivation. The World Tourism Organization (1997, p. 377) defines cultural tourism as movement of persons for the motive of consuming tourism products

[...] that focuses upon the heritage and culture of a country and its people, preserved and portrayed in monuments, historic sites, traditional architecture, artifacts, events, and cultural attainments in the arts.

Although the WTO explains that pilgrimage is part of cultural tourism, different type of motivations drive it. However, not all cultural consumption by tourists are stimulated by

cultural motivations, but sometimes as a secondary objective. In this case cultural tourism and the motivations for their subscription is influenced by other factors and aim, as the secondary objective. This type of cultural tourism may be different in terms of motivation and behaviour from those who set out from home with the intention of consuming specific cultural manifestations.

The Nigerian praxis is that both the believer and the non believer accede to the places of cult and sanctuaries in order to internalize themselves of all those elements of identification of the cult, such as the architectural constructions, the rituals, the images or the events. Against this backdrop the tourists exhibit different types of behaviour. Thus, the believer at such site is motivated and driven by his religious background and conviction. The non-believer tourist goes to a specific destination attracted by the cultural elements related to the religion. For instance to visit a Church for its architecture and cultural patrimony, works of art, or just to know more about the history of the place. Many Nigerian travelers to religious sites are in this group. This is more so among protestant Christians. They are unmindful of denominational differences. Again, many of the travels usually seen as cultural tourism also involve a visit to a religious site. For example, visiting Notre Dame in Paris is always part of a cultural visit, but it involves religious tourism (RICHARDS, 2007). In Nigeria this group of tourists are mostly found among the political class and the affluent.

Pilgrimage Motivations The motivations for pilgrimage are numerous. However, one common factor that underlies all the motives is the desire to travel and experience something new. This is the reason for the delight of Nigerian pilgrims preparing for such sacred journey. For instance, the Christian chose sites that are reminiscent of the Christ-event and other heritages that reinforce their faith. This is why Jerusalem and its environ are top choice destinations. By so doing, Nigerian Christian pilgrims have the feeling that they have approached the texts of the Bible more closely. For the Nigerian pilgrim, the perceived “close proximity” to the realities of the faith is used as an opportunity to show their love to God, to get near something that is really sacred, to show God their gratitude, to ask for pardon or to beg for a miracle. Yet, in the midst of

Nigeria's sacred journey parties are the simple tourists who travel to try something new and to visit a sacred site. This group align themselves to the liberal Christian arrangements to make their motive easy. Their motivations are totally different as they look for completely diverse aspects, as visiting a place which seems interesting or has a fascinating historical background, to admire something attractive, to make a holiday more exciting, to experiment, change the well-known routine of life so that something new can happen, to satisfy curiosity and also perhaps merely to keep up with a modern trend for making such trips.

6. OUTBOUND HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE AND PRAXIS

Global trend has made Nigerian Christians see pilgrimage to holy land “journey to a shrine or other sacred place undertaken to gain supernatural help, as an act of thanksgiving or penance or for the sake of devotion” (MERRIAN-WEBSTER, 1999, p. 857), as a necessary practice of faith and spiritual growth. This is more so with the proliferation of churches and Pentecostal explosion in Nigeria. Pilgrimage to holy sites in Jerusalem and to Mecca for hajj is the major outbound sacred destinations of attraction to Christians and Muslims respectively. The important place of these sacred places to Nigerian believers of the two dominant religions led to the establishment of Christian and Muslim Pilgrims' Boards. And, annually the federal and state governments spend heavily sponsoring and subsidizing such journeys (IHEANACHO, 2012, p. 125-126). Government involvement is predicated on the motive of strengthening the faith of the dominant religions and population of the citizenry.

The practice is realized in three stages; namely preparation praxis; at site praxis; and on return praxis. The preparation stage involve application and screening of prospective pilgrims by the two religions and co-ordinated by the respective State and Federal Pilgrim Boards. Successful applicants are economically empowered by their respective state governments; travel arrangements are handled by the Federal boards for each reli-

gion. Making of uniform, counseling orientation, prayer sessions and send forth parties are other praxis at this stage.

Nigerian pilgrims on site praxis at the holy lands are: commitment to group identity, activities and solidarity which promote the spirit of ecumenism for Christians – denominational differences are de-emphasized. And for Muslims, sect differences are also jettisoned. The pilgrims also observe private moments in which they pursue their self intentions beyond the group arrangements. The pilgrims do ablution with water at the site and even bring some home for purification, deliverance and healing. They make sacrifices and offering of flowers, money, etc. Other praxis at this stage include obeisance, genuflection and, touching personal effects at strategic points and objects at the sacred site, believing that such contacts are capable of drawing spiritual currents and supernatural energy.

On return, thanksgiving services and welcome parties are organized at church and family settings, testimonies and stories are told by the pilgrims. For the Christians, JP (meaning Jerusalem pilgrim) becomes a prefix to one's name. And for the Muslims, Alhaji (for men) or Hajia (for women) becomes prefix to the pilgrim's name. The pilgrims offer gift of items brought from the holy land. The people also perceive the successful pilgrim with some degree of reverence. And for the pilgrim, he fills fulfilled and reinforced with clearer understanding and renewed spiritual vigour to practice his faith. Such conviction manifest in the confidence and boldness of the votaries, especially ministers in whose homilies and pedagogy authoritative expressions loom large.

7. INBOUND RELIGIOUS TOURISM PRODUCTS AND PRACTICE

Inbound religious tourism of a country are those religiously-based activities and heritage that attract and pull tourists to it. Persons attracted by inbound tourism products only travel from one part of the country to another. It is a local religious travel. However, to foreigners such products are out-bound for them. Such religious-based tourism products have continued to play a pivotal role in the development of tourism

in Nigeria. Many dignitaries have in recent times found Nigeria the essential balm to many of their spiritual problems, including heads of government visiting to seek solution. The growth of religious tourism in Nigeria is prominent in Christian flourish. Islam and Traditional religion through their various festivals and programmes also contribute to religious tourism industry in Nigeria. Christian traditions and praxis are at the front burner of this development. The trend is in line with the global phenomenon. In this regard we must note the input of evangelical activities in the Pentecostal fold. The many Christian crusades, seminars and festivals that are held in every nook and cranny of Nigeria have become avenues for the development of the tourism industry, especially with the crowd that normally throng the venues. Among the many mega churches in Nigeria, the Synagogue Church of All Nations (Scaoan) has contributed immensely to the religious tourism profile of Nigeria, as heads of government across Africa come to seek spiritual restoration and advice from Prophet T.B. Joshua, the leader of the church. The list of the high profile visitors include King Godwill Zwelithini of the Zulus, who came calling all the way from South Africa in 2007, with his daughter Princess Sibusile Zulu, who was suffering from partial epilepsy; in 2006, King Moloto Solomon of the Limpopo Kingdom, South Africa was also in the Synagogue to seek good tidings for his kingdom; in 1999, Frederick Chiluba, former president of Zambia visited Prophet Joshua in his church to seek solution to an undisclosed ailment; President Omar Bongo of Gabon had also been at the Synagogue for spiritual motive; Professor Pasa Lissouba, one time president of Congo Brazzaville had been at the synagogue on religious tour. Other high profile personalities, include Justice Ralph Beisner from New York; the South African Rugby player, Jacob Westhuizen; Prince Yormie Johnson, Liberia's former warlord and a senator. The president of Ghana, John Atta Mills, also came on sacred tour to the Synagogue church. President Atta Mills even had his thanksgiving service there. His accompanying vice president, John Mahama confessed at the Synagogue Lagos thanksgiving that what he saw was marvelous and testified that he has been inspired in terms of how one must consolidate the spiritual in order to achieve success in the physical.

Apart from the Synagogue church activities and products, are numerous Christian crusades, festivals and seminars that have contributed to no small way to boosting Nigeria's inbound religious tourism, and the general tourism industry development of the country. The Living Faith Chapel (aka Winners Chapel), through its annual festival, known as Shiloh brought Nigerians from home and abroad, and foreigners alike, to Otta, Ogun state, Nigeria, headquarters of the church to seek the face of God and divine embellishments for their lives. The praxis are in the form of pilgrimage. Though, statistics of participants may be a snag, but it is put at hundreds of thousands, with many high profile preachers of the Christian gospel coming from different parts of the world to add verve to the event. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), one of the leading Pentecostal churches in Nigeria has also contributed to the growth of religious tourism in Nigeria. Its monthly Holy Ghost Service and annual Holy Ghost congress are noteworthy religious tourism products. The number of people (both Nigerians, and foreigners) that throng these festivals is hundreds of thousands. House on the Rock, another Pentecostal Church, holds its annual festival called "The Experience" in Lagos, Nigeria. This inbound religious tourism product attract local and international tourists, with high profile international gospel artistes always in attendance. The Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC) also holds annual Christian festival christened "Retreat." The retreat attract Nigerian tourists from home and abroad, including foreigners who throng the site of the retreat, seeking spiritual solution to their various problems. Fr. Emmanuel Edeh's Catholic Prayer Ministry of the Holy Spirit at Elele, Port Harcourt, Nigeria attracts people from all over Africa in their thousands, for the various religious tourism products of the destination such as the monthly healing mass, benediction and pilgrimage activities and service. Rev, Fr. Ejike Mbaka's weekly adoration ministry at Enugu, attracts hundreds of thousands of people to the site. There are also innumerable Apparition sites across Nigeria, where people go for spiritual nourishment. Popular among them are the Aaokpe apparition site in Benue state, Umunya apparition site in Anambra state, etc. Many monasteries in Nigeria have also become pilgrimage centres for Christians and non-Christians. There is the Ohum Monastery, the

Umuoji Monastery and, Ozubulu Monastery. People travel to the monasteries for religious motives.

Islam also accounts for some of the festivals that have helped in no small measure in developing inbound religious tourism in Nigeria. Aside thousands of Nigerians who go on annual pilgrimage to Mecca, there are other Islamic religion-based local and national religious pilgrimages within the country. Thus, there is the *Ojude Oba*, festival held by the Ijebu Ode people of Ogun state, in the South West area of Nigeria. The festival has attained international reputation, and thousands of tourists throng the destination annually. The festival, which roots in Islam takes place on the third day of Id-El Kabir, but it is celebrated by all the natives, both Christians and Muslims. *Ojude Oba* has been celebrated for over hundred years in the history of Ijebu Ode people, Ogun State Nigeria. It commenced when the first converted Muslims thought it fit to visit their king, the Awujale to thank and felicitate with him for cooperating with them – in allowing them practice their religion. The festival takes off with prayers by the chief Imam of Ijebu Ode. The history of Durbar festival is said to date back to hundreds of years ago, when it was fashionable in the northern part of Nigeria to use horse in warfare. However, in recent times, Durbar is staged to honour visiting heads of states and very important dignitaries. Some of the popular Durbars are those of Kano and Katsina states. Today, Durbar has assumed the status of Muslim tourism product, especially in the northern parts of Nigeria.

In traditional religion, the numerous festivals held by adherents have added to make religious tourism a beautiful bride that may become a platform for explosion of the modern tourism industry in Nigeria. There are many shrines that serve as pilgrimage sites. Among them are the *Arochukwu* shrine, the *Ogbuide* shrine in Oguta Lake, Imo State, the *Amadioha* Ozuzu shrine in Etche Rivers State, etc. There is also the *Osun Oshogbo* sacred grove and shrine that is already developed and acclaimed by Unesco and WTO as international cultural tourism site of human heritage. The Argungu Fishing Festival, the Gelede festival of Ife and the New Yam festivals of the Igbo cultures, etc., are some other religious-based tourism products in Nigeria.

It is necessary to note that it is on account of these religious heritage and cultural products, that Nigeria has maintained an impressively rising profile in Unesco, and occupation of sensitive positions in the organization's culture and heritage committees, and related agencies. This reputation was lucidly expressed by the chairman of the 32nd general Conference of Unesco, held in June, 2006 (see IHEANA-CHO, 2012, p. 124-130).

8. CONCLUSIONS

Religious tourism puts people in contact with other lifestyles, other religions, other ways of seeing the world and its history. It is therefore important to ensure that it can be carried out under the best possible conditions of freedom of movement and respect for human rights, in particular for religious tourism. Ecumenism is a trend that is being increasingly observed in religious tourism. Tourism destinations are conducive to interfaith and intercultural encounters and dialogue. Tourism infrastructure and facilities, the beauty and tranquility of cultural monuments and nature sites facilitate such encounters.

As long as religion continue to be relevant to people in their search for meaning and understanding, religious tourism will continues to be one of the most booming sectors of human life and the tourism industry in particular. Even though some Nigerians undertake religious tourism for adventure and leisure motives, yet, greater number them do so on religious grounds –to nourish and strengthen their faith. In all out-bound and inbound pilgrimage and related religious travels have become significant activities in Nigeria's socio-economic systems. Finally, the Nigerian praxis reinforces the need for synergy of pilgrimage motives with the principles of modern tourism industry.

PRÁXIS NIGERIANA DO TURISMO RELIGIOSO E MOTIVAÇÕES DE PEREGRINAÇÃO EM UM MUNDO GLOBALIZADO

RESUMO

Viagens e peregrinação aos locais sagrados e destinos importantes de heranças religiosas remontam aos tempos antigos, embora moderadamente esquecidos. Muitos dos antigos pensadores religiosos e um certo número de pensadores do mundo moderno alegam que tais viagens são puramente religiosas e devem ser percebidas e tratadas como distintas do turismo. Mas, no mundo contemporâneo global, a consciência cultural e os sistemas de interconectividade culturais predominam nas ortodoxas e emergentes tradições religiosas da humanidade. Essa tendência alia-se com o desenvolvimento da indústria do turismo global para despertar o interesse das pessoas em viagens sagradas, ao abrir novas oportunidades diretas e adicionais e horizontes por motivos diversos e implícitos para realização. Assim, o aumento da propensão dos nigerianos para a peregrinação e turismo religioso é a função desse fenômeno. Na dimensão externa, tornou-se tradição anual e prática para grupos religiosos e na administração pública de enormes orçamentos comprometidos com este projeto. Apesar de os peregrinos forasteiros acreditarem que essas “jornadas celestiais” para Jerusalém, Meca etc. ajudam a acelerar sua migração para objetivo final na sua vida, as viagens também funcionam como fonte de mobilidade social, realização em si, e identidade social. Localmente, o impacto global nas inovações de culto e expansão religiosa têm acrescentado aos locais sagrados e mosteiros das igrejas ortodoxas, resultando na promoção de entrada do turismo religioso e peregrinação. Tais destinos e atividades atraem turistas estrangeiros e locais. No todo, a prática do turismo religioso nigeriano e a peregrinação trazem os motivos seculares “puramente” religiosos e diversos em sinergia. Essa abordagem também tem promovido o valor e a necessidade de desenvolver as potencialidades turísticas das tradições religiosas indígenas que adornam a diversidade cultural do país.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Práxis nigeriana. Turismo religioso. Peregrinação. Motivação. Mundo globalizado.

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