Globethics Repository



Deconstructing Tourism: Who Benefits?

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see https://www.globethics.net. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy.

Item Type	Book
Authors	D'Mello, Caesar;Longchar, Wati;Mathew, Philip
Publisher	Sceptre / Programme for Theology and Cultures in Asia
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-11-03 05:51:31
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/220306

PTCA Series No.6

DECONSTRUCTING TOURISM: WHO BENEFITS?

A Theological Reading from the Global South

The financial support of the **Karibu Foundation of Norway** and the **United Church of Canada** for this publication is gratefully acknowledged.

Edited by

Caesar D'Mello
Wati Longchar
Philip Mathew

DECONSTRUCTING TOURISM: WHO BENEFITS?
A Theological Reading from the Global South

Published by

Unity in Diversity

Programme for Theology and Cultures in Asia
C/o Chang Jung Christian University
396 Chang Jung Rd. Sec. 1
Kway Jen, Tainan 71101
Taiwan

Senate Centre for Extension and Pastoral Theological Research (SCEPTRE)
Shrachi Centre
74B, A.J.C. Bose Road
Kolkata-700 016
West Bengal
India

© PTCA/SCEPTRE, 2014

Cover Design
Debabani Basu

Cover photo credit : Rev Kim Cain

Composed & Printed by

ESPACE
74B, A.J.C. Bose Road
Kolkata 700 016

Phone : (033)65351127
e-mail: espace_design@ymail.com
website: www.espaceindia.in

Dedication

This book is dedicated
to the visionaries and pioneers
Peter Holden (Rev), Ron O'Grady (Rev),
Harvey Perkins (Rev), and Paul Gonsalves,
now no more with us, and their numerous committed
co-visionaries from around the world, including
Maureen Seneviratne, Georg Pfaefflin,
Koson Sisang, Fr Bonnie Mendes,
who first inspired, and engaged
in efforts to deconstruct
mass tourism from
the perspective
of the marginalised,
and blazed a path for churches,
communities, organisations, networks,
academics, researchers, activists and individuals,
to continue scrutinising and questioning
the nature of globalised tourism
and its inherent injustice
in yesteryear and
in our times.

Acknowledgements

This book is the fruit of the contributions from so many committed to this initiative. The Senate Centre for Extension and Pastoral Theological Research (SCEPTRE)/Senate of Serampore University and PTCA gratefully acknowledge

The crucial endorsement from the *Karibu Foundation of Norway* and the *United Church in Canada*, and their financial support to make this publication possible;

Each writer from the different regions of the world who, despite their other responsibilities, enriched the book with their generous gift of time, energy, knowledge and experience, research and analysis, insights and reflections, suggestions and ideas, and their participation in the Kolkata Consultation;

Dr Dietrich Werner, of Bread for the World/Church Development Service, Germany, for his Foreword to the book;

The staff of SCEPTRE for assisting with the various tasks and arrangements, including the logistics of the Kolkata Consultation;

Debabani Basu and ESPACE for the creative work of designing, layout, and the printing of the book;

The many friends and supporters who encouraged the efforts to produce this book as a tool of theological learning to enable the theological community to comprehend, introspect, and critique another face of injustice in our times, and call to account those responsible;

Last but not least, the Editors of this book, Caesar D'Mello, Wati Longchar and Philip Mathew.

CONTENTS

Foreword	– *Dietrich Werner*	ix
Editorial Introduction	– *Caesar D'Mello*	xiii

Part I

Mass Tourism, Development, and Marginalisation: Scenarios from the Global South

1.	Deconstructing Tourism: A Challenge of Justice for the Church – A Theological Perspective – *Caesar D'Mello*	3-32
2.	Tourist Gaze and the Subaltern Oppositional Gaze: Theological Re-imaginations – *George Zachariah*	33-52
3.	Tourism and Development: Indigenous Communities and Commodification – *Marina Ngursangzeli Behera*	53-79
4.	Sun, Sand, Rum, Reggae – The Challenge of Tourism for Church and Society in the Caribbean – *Roderick Hewitt*	80-95

5. Tourism and Climate Justice – *R C Thomas* 96-110

6. Threat to Women's Rights and Dignity : Tourism and Gender in Africa 111-125
– *Omega Bula*

7. God's Welcome is for All: A Feminist Theological Perspective on Tourism 126-152
– *Liza B. Lamis*

Part II

Mass Tourism the Global South: A Challenge for Missional Theology and Praxis

8. The Objectified people and the Objectified god of Tourism 155-175
– *M.P. Joseph*

9. Tourism and Justice : New Testament Insights 176-185
– *Rienzie Perera*

10. Tourism and Conflict: A Perspective from Kairos Palestine and Holy Land Tourism 186-206
– *Rifat Odeh Kassis*

11. Pilgrimage Tourism : A Case Study of Sabarimala: Impact on People and Nature 207-226
– *M.T.Cherian*

12. Tourism: An Ecumenical Concern - An Historical Survey of Ecumenical Responses to the Tourism Phenomenon 227-252
– *Roger Gaikwad*

13. Globalized Free Market Tourism: Questions for Theology from the Household of God 253-267
– *Huang Po Ho*

14. Engaging Students of Theology on Tourism: A Proposal for a Curriculum 268-292
– *Victor Ferrao*

15. A Theological Curriculum on Tourism for Ministerial Students 293-311
– *Wati Longchar*

Appendices: 312-323
1. Communiqué from the Kolkata consultation
2. An Ecumenical Statement on Tourism and Climate Change

Bibliography 324-333

Contributors 334-337

FOREWORD

The Tourism industry is one of the largest industries on earth, with an extensive impact on communities of the Global South. But it continues to grow. It boasts a billion tourism arrivals in a year now, and expects to reach 1.6 billion by 2010! While noting these numbers, we have to ask what is the mindset these tourists bring to their travel? To borrow a term from tourism theory, what is the *gaze* of the tourist as he or she visits places and interacts with the local people? 'Gaze' as an operative construct is an amalgam of outlook, perspective, attitude, expectations, and demands the tourists travels with. It is what predetermines, explains and conditions tourist behaviour. If tourism has been shown to have a negative impact, and the industry is geared around satisfying the tourist, then we need to analyse the 'gaze' to have a sound analysis of tourism.

The majority of people in church and society are led to believe that mass commercial tourism is a boon and a tool of liberation for the poor. The opposite is the case.

Tourism needs to be included with other prominent, well articulated justice and peace concerns within churches and theological education. The global impact of this industry makes it a significant phenomenon requiring serious theological investigation. Governments, the tourism industry and its army of supporters insist that it has potential to alleviate poverty in the Global South, and advance economic development. Whose economic development? Research points to the tourism industry itself, structured as it is in a free market setting, in many cases further contributing to Global South poverty.

Tourism places immense pressure on marginalised communities and environment. Some of the issues we need to introspect from ecumenical theological perspectives are, to name a few, diversion of land, water and forest resources; prostitution and trafficking of women and children; global

warming and climate change effects arising from air travel, cruise shipping, high energy use in tourism establishments; destruction of natural resources and biodiversity; increasing threats to cultural identity of local and indigenous people and their life sustaining resources; continuing displacement of people and loss of livelihood on account of tourism development. As a major economic activity affecting human beings in various negative ways, commercial tourism calls to be subjected to an analysis based on the prophetic values of Biblical teachings.

It is imperative that we address issues of mass commercial tourism and alternative tourism in ecumenical formation programmes of the churches. Theological education must challenge and critique the present paradigm of tourism, while advocating alternatives. The myths undergirding modern tourism should be countered by theological communities, civil society and faith based movements. The theology of justice and integrity of creation provides a framework for this.

Deconstructing Tourism: Who Benefits? – A Theological Reading from the Global South, follows several initiatives in the last few years focused on questioning tourism through the lens of theology. These include the International Consultation on the Theology of Tourism in Chennai, India, and a consultation on Church and Development: Tourism in North East India, both organised by the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT) in 2011, and an academic conference at SCEPTRE, Kolkata, in 2013. I have been aware of how this initiative was evolving during my tenure at the World Council of Churches.

I am delighted that the book has seen the light of day as a contribution to theological education. It challenges theological communities and church leaders, and offers new theological understanding on tourism. The authors have critiqued the nexus between the present profit-oriented paradigm of development, the place of tourism in it, and the survival of marginalised communities. I am sure this book will help scholars and church leaders to identify new forms of violence against indigenous people, women, children carried out by a globalised, neo-liberal tourism industry. I am also confident that this book and its insights will be of great assistance to ecumenical aid and development agencies operating in various parts of the Global South. I look forward to seeing programmes such as Bread for the World's 'Tourism Watch', for instance, benefiting from such a publication, even as they, and others who share their values, develop resources and strategies directed towards a critical understanding of mass tourism in today's world and the

promotion of sustainable, socially responsible and environmentally sound tourism.[1]

The different foci by well qualified authors in the book, and the areas suggested for exploring need to be taken seriously by theological institutions/ colleges/seminaries, be incorporated and developed further in their curriculum, and form the basis of their engagement with communities affected by mass tourism consequences in their part of the Global South. This is only to be expected linked as these institutions are with a 'Church in the Modern World' that desires to be, and should be relevant to the stresses and pains of their people. *Deconstructing Tourism: Who Benefits?* is designed and well positioned to bring about a perspectival change in the ministerial programme of the churches.

We are grateful to Caesar D'Mello, Wati Longchar, and Philip Mathew for their unstinting efforts to realise this initiative. Deep thanks also go to the two agencies that had the foresight and conviction to make it possible. I refer of course to the *Karibu Foundation of Norway*, and the *United Church in Canada*.

With great pleasure, I strongly recommend this book to the theological community and institutions, and all people who are committed to a just world.

Dietrich Werner

Senior Theological Advisor Policy, Dialogue and Theology Unit
Bread for the World/Church Development Service, Berlin, Germany
Former Executive Secretary, Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), WCC, Geneva, Switzerland

Endnote

[1] See website: http://www.tourism-watch.de/en/node/1024; also see their quarterly newsletter that provides reports and background information about tourism in developing countries.

An Editorial Introduction
The Rationale for the Book

Caesar D'Mello

Global South governments, policy makers, and development planners are constantly on the lookout for easy, less costly means of advancing 'development' in their countries. They are supported in their efforts by International Financial Institutions (IFI's), including the IMF and the World Bank, that usually engage with them by providing specialist advice for the formulation of targeted policies and plans, and in funding 'multiplier effects' projects in partnership with them. One significant 'cost effective' tool that most South economic and political decision makers, along with the IFI's, claim will lead to poverty alleviation is Tourism. Does it? This socio-economic-political reality has not generally been established within the radar of the Church and ecumenical discourse as a focus for diakonic concern, but its presence is overwhelming, its footprint extensive, and needs to be interrogated.

Tourism: an ethico-theological issue

Tourism is a massive enterprise, listed among the four largest industries in the world today. In line with the approach to development often taken by governments in the Global South, it is extensively prescribed for this part of the world. As Church, we have to ask: Is tourism the answer to the demand for 'development' in the Global South?

From the days of its takeoff some four decades ago, having been championed as a source of massive, straightforward economic returns to commercial interests and individual investors, governments and their budgets, tourism has had to answer questions on its role and impact in the local communities of the Global South, or the Third World, as it is also known. To get a sense of this, it is worth considering a few lines from a poem, '*Tourists, Transistors, Or Stones*', written by Cecil Rajendra, as far back as 1978.

> Development hits you like a flung knife
> I walk down to the village and find
> the local small holder who used to supply
> our weekly quota of eggs and vegetable
> has been bought over by a hotel developer
>
> Sulphur in my heart I return home
> open a newspaper and read
> plans are already afoot to transmogrify
> my favourite fishing village into yet another Mecca
> to tantalise the tourists.
>
> I have no bones to pick with progress
> but if croupiers and waiters and foreign investors
> take over from our farmers and fishermen
> when my son grows up what will he eat
> tourists, transistors or stones?

As the Boeing 747's and the DC10's began to disgorge loads of affluent and demanding foreign tourists in increasing numbers into communities that were unprepared for this sudden influx, churches and communities in the 70's and 80's already saw tourism becoming a considerable challenge to the local people in the Global South. By a shared experience from different parts of this population, they soon realised that the growing size, extent and impact of the tourism industry were beginning to turn into a negative factor in the life of mostly poor communities, in whose midst tourism was taking place. To put it in context, this was an era when South nations were faced with the aftermath of recently gained independence from colonial powers, and UN Decades of Development were introduced with great hope and gusto to bring 'development', 'progress', 'betterment', 'emancipation', 'poverty eradication', and 'growth, to these populations. These were the

buzz words, becoming very much part of the political, economic and social lexicon of the day. The well known 3-volume 'Asian Drama' by Swedish economists, Gunnar and Alva Myrdal, captured the tenor of the development climate and debate of that period.

In the emerging headiness of exciting economic development, as planned and implemented by technocratically minded pundits, tourism was soon siezed as the new global tool that was considered tailormade for promoting and communicating the 'values' and the goals, and helping achieve the economic outcomes of development. Its economic returns, and educative value for poor communities by virtue of its 'demonstration effect', were lauded as godsends. Sceptical churches and likeminded groups had by now also realised that this newfound panacea was firmly grounded in an economic system governed by the philosophy of the free market that regarded the primacy of growth and profits as sacrosanct, with people's welfare a subsidiary matter. Involved in a world of unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities, Church understood well that the growing phenomenon of tourism required a justice-based theological, pastoral and humanitarian response. Their concern for justice and equity was crystallised within the then newly articulated framework of the 'preferential option for the poor'.

It is not surprising, then, that tourism as it was being patterned was already receiving critical attention in the 70's. In a first serious attempt to assess the quality and consequences of tourism, the churche, community, and civil society representatives from various affected parts of Asia and elsewhere came together in Manila in 1980 to participate in the International Workshop on Third World Tourism to compare notes and reflect on the tourism experience of their people. This landmark international consultation was organised ecumenically, and was endorsed with the *financial* and other support by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the (Catholic) Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), individual churches, and ecumenical funding agencies. Already then, the participants in the Workshop noted:

> *"The one most glaring thing that surfaced from the deliberations of the Workshop was that tourism wreaked more havoc than brought benefits to recipient Third World countries.*
>
> *From an historical perspective, Third World countries have discovered time and again how their economies, cultures and social structures have been disrupted by the long-term effects of tourism."*

This Workshop in 1980 has been a key early event in the history of an organised response from churches and civil society organisations to the issues of tourism over the subsequent years.

Tourism in our times

Over the decades, since Cecil Rajendra penned those lines quoted earlier, tourism has grown and grown to become an ubiquitous feature of Global South economies and societies, part and parcel of life in the contemporary world today. While its pervasiveness is obvious, the tourism and the wider business sector, governments, multilateral agencies and interest groups, turning a blind eye to how it works on communities and following the logic of the 70s, vigorously promote it on the assumption that it is a boon for the world economy, and especially for most developing countries. It is not surprising, then, that global tourism leisure arrivals exceed one billion in a year on current figures and given rising incomes of a section of the world's population in the South and North countries, are expected to reach 1.6 billion by 2020, according to the estimates of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). A substantial proportion of these tourists come to South destinations.

Most in churches and society, too, without questioning, adopt the view on tourism propagated by the principalities and powers involved with tourism as part of a wider global economic agenda. The Church is itself found wanting when, often comfortable with the attitude regarding tourism advocated by its major beneficiaries, remains generally uninvolved with the human injustice, and ecological devastation inherent in tourism today. The Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT) Theological Consultation on Tourism, organised in March 2011 in Chennai, India, with the support of various bodies, stated:

> *The churches and theological colleges have not addressed tourism within the framework of theology, ethics, social analysis, and as an important missiological concern.*

To better formulate the response of the Church as a 'People of God' (*populus Dei*) in our world, there is a serious and continuing need to explore the reality of modern tourism theologically. Given their place in society, churches need to be, and some are calling to be, resourced to comprehend and act on the reality of tourism.

The Impact of tourism

This book delves into how tourism impinges on communities, despite the line continuously paraded that it is a blessing for developing societies. As an industry operating commercially, tourism judges itself by the yardstick of profitability. This has to be tested against the consideration of profitability for whom? Who predominantly benefits from tourism? Whose perspectives determine the economics of this industry? In a balance sheet of cause and effects, moral fairness and equity would demand that the profit making ability of the industry be weighed against its impact on affected communities in the Global South where tourism is a major player, in other words, on the disadvantaged and marginalised communities. In light of the *diakonia* call of the Gospel, it is their perspective that informs the various chapters in the book.

As the material in this book demonstrates, the experience of tourism of such communities over the last four decades has not been positive. Unfortunately, as tourism has grown by leaps and bounds, the fundamental assessment of this endeavour made at the International Workshop on Tourism in 1980 still applies today in this millennium, except that its footprint is even greater than before. All through its growth and evolution in the world, while allowing for exceptions, it has become abundantly clear that the millions of tourists crisscrossing South destinations do not come as benign angelic spirits but as human beings carrying a baggage of expectations, demands, attitudes, complexes, worldviews perhaps reflecting colonialist and racist undertones and worse, and with a spending power that, in the final analysis, often benefits a minority at the expense of the others. In large measure, this profile of tourists determines the structure of the industry. The varied repercussions resulting from all this include:

Diversion of much needed land, water and other resources away from the community to golf courses, resorts, theme parks and so on;

Displacement of people and loss of livelihood on account of tourism development;

Revenue loss from tax concessions and subsidised land by governments, sanctioned low wages, repatriated earnings and profits;

Global warming and climate change effects arising from air travel, cruise shipping, high energy use in tourism establishments, and destruction of natural resources;

Environmental and ecological damage, including loss of biodiversity, through inappropriate tourism enterprises and development;

Human rights violations;

Prostitution and trafficking of women and children;

Health hazards such as HIV and AIDS and other afflictions;

Threat to cultural identity of local and indigenous people, through their commodification and trivialisation of their life sustaining resources, especially their spirituality, cultural and traditional ways of life;

To sum up, the high energy, land and other demands of mass tourism as well as the infrastructure diverted continue to threaten local livelihoods, displace local people, endanger ecosystems and contribute to climate change, stretch water and other resources, and have a negative social impact. This tourism is unjust and harmful to life. The anthology amplifies these ramifications.

Tourism, neoliberal economics, and the free market

The nature of tourism, as described above, is not accidental. For an explanation, one has to look at the formula, discussed at length in this book, operated by an industry with its roots in profit making, well camouflaged in its effective advertising of enticing images. The concerns with tourism are more than just those with location and the physical arrangements, of compensation, of welfare, of pastoral care, though these are important. It is a deeper question of power imbalance and inequality that tourism represents, of who has the dominance and to what end is it used.

What is the ideology that drives such an industry? Given its global spread, its commercial and guiding principles that translate into impoverishment for the Global South, it has to be made sense of at the level of its fundamental roots and rationale. It is necessary to understand the economic thinking that shapes this industry's existence. The analyses offered in this book go to the foundational philosophy or ideology of tourism.

Profit is at the heart of the tourism industry operations, no matter how differently they are configured from place to place. The industry is a capital intensive industry, and profit is a return on the capital aggregated from institutional and individual investors. Simply put, investors expect a handsome return on their investment, and the bigger it is the better. There is no argument with the notion that investments should earn reasonable dividends, but tourism seeks out much more than that. The thirst for profit – in economic terminology, profit maximisation – is unquenchable, ever pushing the tourism

enterprise to exploit human and natural resources to their limit.

The ethos and structure of this profit making should be analysed within the framework of an economic model and a global economic system that sustain, nurture and legitimise them, namely a system and ideology of economics commonly known as neo-liberalism. Today, such a belief system colours and undergirds much economic and related decision making in most sectors, including by governments in the Global South. Contrary to the tenets of the Gospel, that teach the intrinsic value of a human being by virtue of being a child of God, this ideology views human beings as being subject to another superseding imperative, namely that of the economy. An insight into this is provided by the following quote from Friedrich v Hayek, one of the pioneers of neo-liberal economics:

> *A free society needs morality that is ultimately reduced to the maintenance of life – not the maintenance of all life, as it could be necessary to sacrifice individual life in order to save a greater number of lives. That is why the only rules of morality are those leading to a 'calculation of life': property and contract.* (See U Duchrow and F J Hinkelammert, 'Property for People, Not for Profit: Alternatives to the Global Tyranny of Capital', WCC, Geneva, 2004.)

Over the years economists such as Milton Friedman and others have finetuned, and have been able to popularise neoliberal economics. It posits that the market is the ideal determinant of ensuring capital profitability, and all dimensions relating to the market should be assessed in line with this principle. According to this view, a market that is subject to a regime of regulations and requirements is inefficient. It operates best when it is unfettered, that is, free of governmental interventions and policies, or at least minimally controlled by non-market factors. Acting in concert with likeminded entities, instrumentalities, and individuals is seen essential to strengthen the primacy of the market. With such a philosophy, major economic interests operate not just within countries, but also across national borders as transnational companies, strengthening and extending their control through an interlocking web of international institutions, national policies, corporate and investor policies, and individual behaviour. This economic philosophy is legitimised by international financial institutions (IFI's), including the IMF and the World Bank, who, through strategic allocations of funds, provision of high level policy and operational advice, assistance to restructuring of economies to reflect neo-liberal principles (as in the well known World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), and fiscal

consolidation initiatives), and various other means, wield enormous power and influence over governments and their institutions in developing countries. Beholden to the IFI's one way or the other, such governments willingly or reluctantly craft economic, trade and related policies as advised, charting a way for transnational and domestic interests to have a free rein in the market arena. Such an alignment is believed to usher in economic growth, narrowly defined in measurable economic terms with little weight accorded to the non-economic human element, and that eventually benefits the powerful capitalistic interests the most. An arrangement whereby transnational and domestic interests interact seamlessly in a world with few borders and encumbrances is credited with giving us the phenomenon of globalisation – 'commerce without borders' – and its supposed universal benefits.

The development models promoted in most of the South, with the blessing of the IFIs, are often guided by the precepts of the neoliberal, globalised free market ideology. With a positive gloss put on it, neoliberalism is disguised and presented as modernisation, a road to economic growth, to better life. It is believed that it would lead to these outcomes, if allowed a free run by the government, and the unhindered operation of 'market forces'. But development is proposed from the dominating perspective of those who control the levers of economic and political power, who assert that its benefits will eventually 'trickle down' to the poor. The neoliberal, free market development model is based on the understanding that poverty, the major problem of today, is a form of 'underdevelopment'. The explanation for this is sought in factors such as non-participation in the market, and 'cultural deficiencies' that need to be addressed by 'appropriate' education and skills tailored in the direction of material growth. The circuit breaker generally advised for achieving the goals of this development involves large scale investment in infrastructure as in roads and highways, dams, ports, airports, electricity generation, irrigation schemes, and so on.

Such projects are sanctioned by governments but experience shows that they extract maximum profit for the investor, with limited or questionable benefits for the local people, the supposed beneficiaries of those initiatives. This is because they are often configured with little consideration for the crucial, non-economic holistic aspects, including people's participation in decision making, community values and insights that have evolved from a long historical past, the foreseeable loss to community and culture through displacement and other consequences, the short term and long term damage to the ecology of the terrain, the lessons from years of technocratic

development that have left communities and the environment disadvantaged, and poorer. Social, cultural, resource management, belief, education, agricultural, technological, political, judicial, health, and economic systems and other learnings that constitute the vibrant histories, spirituality, cultures and traditions, and the very fabric of the so-called 'underdeveloped societies' have little input in the modelling of development projects, thereby precluding the positive role of these factors. All such considerations are deemed to be inefficient in light of the understanding of neoliberal economics. (See Joint Statement of the Indigenous Peoples' Interfaith Dialogue on Globalisation and Tourism, November 2013.)

Mass commercial tourism is a 'poster boy' for globalisation and the free market. It is obviously not classified as infrastructure for development, but bodies such as the UNWTO and the World Bank, and governments generally, endorse and promote it in the South as 'a motor for development'. The formula of such tourism is linked with powerful interests in the tourism industry benefited themselves within the framework of free market primacy, of minimal control, of maximum profitability for the investors. They argue that a tourism fashioned within the context of neoliberal economics will materially benefit South communities, and become a means of their poverty alleviation. However, contrary to such predictions, a rigorous study will show that free market-based tourism is unfriendly to the poor, and itself contributes to the impoverishment in the South.

A closer examination would reveal that beneath the well advertised glittering images this major industry projects, lies a darker side that is well hidden, as is elaborated in the chapters in this book considering tourism from various perspectives. Development models and schemes, and supposed quick fixes such as tourism, have not really solved the problems of poverty. They have amassed wealth and power for the already wealthy, but the poor often remain untouched, as they do not share in the benefits while suffering through the side effects such as displacement, loss of livelihood, degraded environment, and so on. This is hardly surprising, when one is aware that what drives unbridled profit making is greed, that is so glamourised and valorised by the market. A cultural acceptance of insatiability inherent in such greed prevents the poor from sharing in the proceeds of a more equitably structured tourism.

Given the neoliberal underpinnings of tourism, it is salutary at this juncture to consider the message of Pope Francis to the delegates of this years's World Economic Forum that met in Davos, Switzerland (January 2014). He

exhorted the meeting thus:

> *'In the context of your meeting, I wish to emphasise the importance that the various political and economic sectors have in promoting an inclusive approach which takes into consideration the dignity of every human person and the common good. I'm referring to a concern that ought to shape every political and economic decision, but which at times seems to be little more than an afterthought. Those working in these sectors have the precise responsibility towards others, particularly those who are most frail, weak and vulnerable.'*

The Pope insisted that the economy should be at the service of human beings, and not the other way around. He elaborated his message by calling for a view of economic equality that *'demands first of all a transcendent vision of the person. It also calls for decisions, mechanisms, and processes directed to a better distribution of wealth, (…) and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality.'*

Tourism a concern for all

There is the tendency to assume, as many in Church and society do, that tourism only matters to those immediately affected in tourism precincts, and that there is no need to bring those concerns into the mainstream of society. This attitude partly arises because tourism is an activity associated generally with specific areas, unlike other issues that are widely visible across society. Nevertheless, this fallacious presumption ought to be challenged and eradicated. It should be stressed that concerns with tourism cannot be left localised in the tourism destinations, and left solely to those victimised. Apart from the call of justice for all that the Church proclaims through its teachings, there is the additional consideration regarding the role of tourism as perceived in the economy and society. As pointed out earlier, even though tourism benefits are not equitably shared, the fact remains that most strategic policy makers and development planners at the national and regional levels consciously incorporate tourism as a significant feature of their economies. As a generator of foreign exchange and other revenues augmenting the national GDP, and being deemed as advantageous for the country through its economic, investment and trade potential, it is included as a productive contributor to the national configuration of priorities. It is the national and/or state budgets that commit funds to government approved or facilitated infrastructure, related expenditure, and other initiatives to strengthen tourism

and its activities, attracted by the prospect of increased income that will be applied to the whole nation and/or region. It is unjustifiable, then, for the benefits from tourism as defined and expected by the planners, to be reaped and enjoyed by the total economy and community, but the suffering and injustice of affected communities that arise from the tourism endeavour to be disregarded. In other words, the government and the totality of society, advantaged by tourism, also have responsibility for the consequences from the tourism they enable through their economic plans and other instruments. This also applies to churches and relevant institutions and ecumenical bodies who with little thought relegate tourism issues to the back burner, when they should be part of their response in the spirit of Christian justice.

A theological perspective on tourism

The size, extent, and impact of this industry make it a significant phenomenon requiring serious theological investigation. A structural analysis based on Christian social teachings and exegesis renders mass commercial tourism a very relevant focus for churches and its members. A theological and ethical challenge emerges to question and critique the present paradigm of tourism, while suggesting positive forms of tourism, including that based on community influenced principles. Responding to the Gospel, enjoining us to act for our neighbour and social justice, we have to consider the immediate and long term effects on the poor and the marginalised communities in the Global South of tourism-led approaches and strategies that exacerbate the unequal sharing of power and resources that prevails in the world. Given such an impact on the *populus dei*, the *diakonia* call impels us to seek a basis for our analysis and assessment of tourism that is not dictated by those who predominantly profit from it, and also glibly accepted by many among Church leaderships, theological institutions, and the faithful, but from the perspective of the victims of contemporary tourism development, fashioned by the free market neoliberal ideological thinking that is linked with the economic and political structures of today. The human cost of an industry so shaped is paid by the vulnerable, including women, children, indigenous peoples, those dispossessed of their land, and others marginalised. They are close to the heart of a compassionate God, and it is their reality that should inform our response.

It is justified, then, to argue that it has been remiss of theological teaching institutions, associations, and other relevant Church bodies not to have engaged with what has manifested as a major human issue, and not to have

fostered a theological exploration into it that has resulted in a serious lack of analytical and theological material. The fallacious assumptions and myths of modern tourism should be countered by theological communities, civil society and faith-based movements. There are obvious subject parameters in which these can be considered seamlessly. Churches and its theological institutions can scrutinise these, for instance, from an integrity of creation, objectification, and linked justice viewpoints, but mostly do not, either believing or being oblivious to the propaganda regarding tourism, and hence ignoring those suffering from it. Theologians, their students, and appropriate church-based activists will make an invaluable contribution to understanding another face of injustice theologically, if they researched, studied, and advanced appropriate responses to tourism's impact. Insights and the methodology of Contextual Theology can assist in developing a new faith-based comprehension of and response to its challenge. Ethics, structural and social analysis, women's studies, 'green' studies, and missiology, among others, provide sound subject areas within Theology that should be considered.

The Chennai Theological Consultation

This anthology, *Deconstructing Tourism: Who Benefits? A Theological Reading from the Global South*, is an attempt to provide material on tourism that could be used by students of ministry, other theological students, theological academics, church leaderships, and others troubled by this issue.

However, the dearth of theological material on tourism has been felt for a long time. One important step taken ecumenically to consider ways forward to respond to this lack was made possible when some agencies, including the Karibu Foundation of Norway and the United Church in Canada, supported a Theological Consultation on Tourism in Chennai, India, in March, 2011.

This Consultation, preceded by a day of exposure for the participants to tourism development and the plight of the local communities on the outskirts of Chennai, was led by the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT), and jointly organised in collaboration with the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI). It was also endorsed by the Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) unit of the WCC, and welcomed by various Church entities.

The aim of the Chennai Theological Consultation was to help develop a foundation for articulating a theological understanding of tourism and a response informed by the vital contextual factors on the ground. As Christians we are urged to explore, understand, interpret, relate, develop, and use

theology within our contemporary environment, wherein life is challenged, obstructed and even denied by those captive to the dominant ideology and systems of the day. In other words, the Chennai meeting pondered on a sharp, disturbing aspect of the intersect between mission and development, and also identified the theological silence in this regard. Infused with the spirit and ethos of the *oikoumene*, the work undertaken at the Chennai gathering constituted pioneering work on a major contemporary global phenomenon unaddressed by churches.

The Consultation urged theological schools and associations in the immediate region and beyond to address the issue of tourism by integrating it in their curriculum for theological students. It pressed for a tourism curriculum that stimulated students to engage in transformative tourism within the Global South, one that was formulated from the vantage point of the marginalised, such as subsistence and subaltern communities, indigenous people, women and children. This was portrayed as another significant contribution to the teaching of people-oriented theology in the Church and its theological institutions which need to be responsive to our times in the spirit of Gospel imperatives.

The Chennai Consultation deliberated on the development of a theological resource book as a tool of learning that would.

> provide a framework and basis for theological exploration into the structural character of tourism from justice-related community, social and ecological concerns in regional, national and globalised contexts;
>
> provide Global South theological curriculum planners with material to consider establishing tourism as a separate or linked stream within the curriculum;
>
> provide the theological student and curriculum developers with points of entry to link tourism studies with other foci including women's studies, green studies, indigenous and dalit concerns, subaltern communities, the prevailing development and economic philosophies, theory and practice, globalisation, Church teachings on social justice, peace studies, the role of pilgrimages, ethics of leisure;
>
> lead to a South-South denominational, ecumenical and interfaith exchange of learning from each other, and the pooling, sharing, and analysing of comparative narratives, in turn enriching the unique theological perspectives emerging in specific situations;
>
> provide a platform to engage theologically and practically with

churches and communities in the Global North;

lead to further specialist writings including articles, theses, anthologies, offerings by individual theologians, and other publications;

be an invaluable contribution to shaping the outlook of a Church in the World via its theological teaching and related institutions.

It was strongly felt that if the resource book was realised, it would be a seed and an investment towards making theological education more attuned to, and generating an upsurge of interest in an area of major concern for the Church and communities of the South, human beings who should be upheld within an understanding of the Gospel-based and Vatican II-inspired 'Preferential Option for the Poor'.

The Kolkata Statement

Once the present undertaking, as envisioned by the Chennai Consultation of 2011, was approved for funding by the Karibu Foundation of Norway and the United Church in Canada, time was spent in organising its implementation, including confirming the participation of the identified theologians. Despite their ongoing teaching, administrative and other leadership responsibilities, the authors dedicated the latter half of 2013 to research and develop their chapters. It was planned that they would participate in a Writers' Consultation to have their drafts peer reviewed among theologians, interacting with each other with different foci but converging on the central issue of justice for the communities of the South. This exercise took place in Kolkata in late November of 2013. The declaration that emerged from the consultation was the 'Kolkata Statement' that is included in the Appendix section of this book. Following the Kolkata Consultation, the chapters were modified in light of comments received at the meeting.

The Anthology: *'Deconstructing Tourism: Who Benefits?'*

The chapters in the book offer analyses and theological introspection from varied angles on the contemporary phenomenon of tourism. It can be said that this publication is greater than the sum of its parts. Each chapter offers a window on the operation of a globalised industry. Reflections spring from the lived reality of real human beings, as they attempt to respond to the impact of tourism on their lives. While the *punctum a quo* for each writer is the particular area or region and its particular dimensions she or he is knowledgeable about, together they illumine the workings of a model of

mass commercial tourism that is globalised, and whose basic, common contours replicate themselves in its various expressions of tourism in the Global South. In this light, the chapters are pertinent and valuable to both the particular loci that are their point of reference, and to a wider human canvas of the Global South. They warrant repeat readings to enable an indepth discernment of the actuality of mass tourism, and comprehend the extent of its reach into local communities. Each chapter is designed to engender study, discussion and further research on its content, while also allowing its application beyond its geographical focus. In other words, the material providing much food for thought is relevant to theological students, researchers, academics, writers and other readers from all regions, who using re-imagination and cross referencing can recognise in it aspects of relevance applicable and its scrutiny replicable within their own particular Global South settings.

A case in point is the chapter by Roderick Hewitt. He analyses and reflects on the reality of tourism in the Caribbean driven, as it is, by the attractions of its islands and proximity to water. Among the many facets of islands-based tourism he draws attention to, he considers the vulnerability of the people to the ravages of global warming and climate change. These considerations of the challenges to the Church and community are an obvious framework for a similarly appropriate discussion in other coastal and islands-based communities, such as the Pacific, the Maldives, Seychelles, and so on. Climate change, that is becoming a major difficulty for people of the Global South, is also the focus of R C Thomas.

The articles by Omega Bula and Liza Lamis, on gender issues in tourism, should naturally lead to discussions and questioning from a feminist point of view in most other regions beyond Zambia in Africa, and the Philippines in Asia. In a similar vein, George Zachariah dissects tourism from the perspective of subaltern communities, and offers a template to researchers and writers in other regions where subaltern communities also exist, and need to be supported. The chapters by Wati Longchar and Victor Ferrao discuss the material for curriculum planners to find a way of incorporating tourism in their curriculum within their institutions. Huang Poho and Rienzie Perera critique tourism through an analysis of the philosophy and operation of the free market ideology with which it is integrally linked. They also refer to the concerns of commodification of people and cultures which is also the subject of Marina Ngursangzeli. Rifat Kassis throws light on pilgrimage tourism from the perspective of Holy Land tourism and the Palestinian

struggle for self-determination, whereas M T Cherian provides a case study and sees the dilemmas through the prism of an Indian pilgrimage experience. An historical survey of Church response to tourism is a contribution from Roger Gaikwad, while M P Joseph and Caesar D'Mello provide an experiential and theological overview on the nature of contemporary tourism.

Put together, the chapters in the book present a living mosaic of the impact of the global tourism industry, and people's suffering across the Global South. Varying in the foci and *loci*, basically they point to the one shared philosophical substratum of a globally encompassing tourism that often conflicts with people's wellbeing. It is not surprising, then, that some overlap occurs between chapters in terms of data and reflection. But, rather than diminishing the value of the content, this serves to reinforce the understanding of the common ideological features of global tourism. It strengthens the mirror being held to the tourism industry, and the Church, as a living expression and guardian of the local community, that needs to deal with this challenge.

Finally, even though this anthology has covered much ground, by no means do we consider it to be a complete, exhaustive work, and neither was such an outcome the objective of the project. It would have served one of its major purposes if the material it contains becomes a springboard for further study, research, analysis, interrogating, writing, workshopping, replicating and learning by theological students, academics and writers in places and situations beyond those featured in it. It is the hope that this publication will be a platform to branch out in further areas. In fact, a look at Wati Longchar's chapter on theological curriculum, for instance, will illustrate the rich vein there is of the several dimensions and topics that still need to be explored to continue 'deconstructing' tourism. Furthermore, to assist this, at the end of every chapter, there are questions and suggestions for further study and examination that should be of interest to a range of audiences from theological students looking for a thesis topic to engage with to writers and academics concerned over the tourism phenomenon. It goes without saying that each chapter by itself develops the ground for a full book on its own!

****

This publication would have not been possible without the input from so many who were involved. First, we acknowledge the crucial assistance

from the Karibu Foundation of Norway and the United Church in Canada who provided the financial wherewithal to enable this project to see the light of day. We express our gratitude to the writers who gifted their time and energy to this work despite their other commitments, while also enriching it with valuable suggestions and ideas. Their participation in the Kolkata Consultation added to a serious sense of purpose. We thank Dietrich Werner for his Foreword to the book. We express our appreciation to the staff of SCEPTRE for assisting with the various tasks and physical arrangements, and ESPACE for the creative work of designing and layout, and the actual printing. Special thanks go to the co-editors of this book, Wati Longchar and Philip Mathew.

May 2014

PART - I

Mass Tourism, Development, and Marginalisation : Scenarios from the Global South

1

Deconstructing Tourism: A Challenge of Justice for the Church

A Theological Perspective

Caesar D'Mello

Justice is a deeply human aspiration and right, more so for the suffering, marginalised, and oppressed in the Global South. The cry for justice is validated in the prophetic calls repeatedly made in the Old Testament, and in prominent texts in the New Testament such as Luke 4:16-19 (the Isaiah 'Manifesto'), the 'Magnificat', the Beatitudes, and by the full weight of Gospel teachings. Denominationally and ecumenically, churches are challenged to act for justice and stand with those denied it wherever this occurs, whether it is the arena of poverty, hunger, natural disasters, war and peace, discrimination, oppression of minorities, abuse of women and children, and other situations that present themselves. The specifics and urgency of each may vary, but justice is indivisible and its demand universal, no matter what the area of engagement. One arena where injustice is a hallmark is mass commercial tourism across the Global South. This is a global area of concern that the churches have overlooked, even as countless human beings have paid the price of its economic success with their poverty and marginalisation. As in its early years, but more so in our times, tourism is hailed as a 'saviour' for the developing world and its poor. Is it?

TOURISTS, TRANSISTORS OR STONES

Cecil Rajendra[1]

Wherever you turn the story is the same
Development hits you like a flung knife
I walk down to the village and find
the local smallholder who used to supply
our weekly quota of eggs and vegetable
has been bought over by a hotel developer
He is now a waiter in the man's hotel
His daughter marks time in the adjoining escort agency.

Sulphur in my heart I return home
open a newspaper and read
plans are already afoot to transmogrify
my favourite fishing village into yet another Mecca
to tantalise the tourists.
The fishing stakes are being ripped out to make way
for a floating casino, bars, massage parlours
and all the paraphernalia of decadence.
Meanwhile, the fishermen will have to buy their fish!

Like every honest citizen
I have no bones to pick with progress
but if croupiers and waiters and foreign investors
take over from our farmers and fishermen
when my son grows up what will he eat
tourists, transistors or stones?

Even though the satirical poem first appeared as long ago as 1978, it articulates specific concerns but points to the wider issues and consequences from mass tourism. Anyone who has been to any of the myriad tourism destinations in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean, i.e, the Global South, would readily recognise the underlying truth of the 'account' by Cecil Rajendra. More than 35 years later, its insights and critique sharply resonate with the challenges faced by today's human beings and communities of the Global South. In a graphic way, they provide the context for considering Tourism as a theological concern, a concern of the churches.

Tourism: an ethico-theological issue

Another voice from the past provides for us an insight and a perceptive theological overview on the human issues encapsulated by Cecil Rajendra. The late Revd Harvey Perkins, a former Associate General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), wrote in 1985:

To talk of a theology of tourism is to seek a contextual theology in the midst of our historical involvement with the issues of Third World tourism, which will establish the human in the midst of the inhuman, the just in the midst of the unjust, the participating in the midst of dominating, the delivering in the midst of captivity. It must reveal how our faith in God opens up to the possibilities of human freedom, and points to a better human society for which we must work. It should renew our actions as Christians, changing our emphasis, our directions, and our processes[2].

This vision is contemporaneously reiterated in the theme of the recently concluded (2013) 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, Korea: *'God of life, lead us to justice and peace'*.

In this publication, tourism is scrutinised through a structural and theological analysis from the perspective of its impact felt by communities in the Global South (or the Third World as it is also known). The scenarios depicted by Cecil Rajendra are an entry point into understanding the broader human concerns of tourism.

Tourism continues to be a major phenomenon today, as it was in the past. Surprising as it may appear, *tourism is one of the four largest industries in the world*, and is a significant presence in most economies and societies, especially in the South. As an industry, it involves massive financial resources, with the economic power exercised by a few. It encompasses both the relatively small number of those affluent enough to travel, and the vast majority of human beings on whom that activity has a sizeable negative impact – the 'ground reality', the voice of the afflicted, forming the basis for theological introspection.

The Second Vatican Council's document, *'Gaudium et Spes'* (Joy and Hope), enjoins:

'All Christians share the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel…We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live'.

We need to discern in these 'aspirations, the yearnings and the often dramatic features of the world' the voice of God, 'a voice of the times'. Given its pervasiveness, and its powerful attraction and influence throughout the *oikoumene,* tourism calls to be interpreted theologically as an obvious 'sign of the times' in terms of what it indicates as a prominent dimension of contemporary existence and behaviour.

However, tourism, unlike other issues, escapes attention as a crucial justice and peace concern in theological discourse and ecumenical response. This can be ascribed to the majority of people in church and society being conditioned, and allowing themselves to be misled, into believing the notion widely propagated that tourism is a boon that liberates the poor from their poverty. The rationale for this, either stated or implied, comes from tourism being painted as a 'smokeless', costless, clean, green, and non-polluting means of poverty alleviation. Other benefits claimed without nuancing include the influx of income, foreign exchange, and employment, and the fostering of the so-called friendships between peoples[3]. Such unexamined assertions have created a blind spot in church and ecumenical thinking, and suggest a flawed understanding of how tourism operates and impinges, as will be elaborated in the rest of this chapter and the publication. Significantly, they gloss over the fundamental question of *who benefits from tourism?* While acknowledging the existence of some positive forms of tourism that bring beneficial outcomes, overall a superficial and unquestioned construct regarding mainstream tourism persists that does not correspond with the reality of community, social, environmental, and economic damage flowing from this endeavour. Such ignorance plays into the hands of the tourism industry, governments, and vested interests, who are resistant to being held accountable on the negative side of tourism.

While it may be natural to assume, as many in church and society do, that tourism and its issues only apply to those immediately affected by them, it has to be stressed that these are not limited solely to those impacted by it, and cannot be left localised in the tourism destinations. Apart from the call of justice for all that the church proclaims, there is the additional consideration regarding the role of tourism in society and the economy. As pointed out earlier, tourism is a significant feature of most economies. As a generator of foreign exchange and other income, with perceived advantages for the country through its economic, investment and trade potential, it is included as a valued part of and a contributor to the national configuration of priorities. Its income augments the national GDP, and the government approved or

facilitated infrastructure, related expenditure and other actions committed to it with expectations of returns applied to the rest of the country are financed from the national or regional budget. In other words, the government and the whole society that benefit from it has responsibility for the quality, consequences, and impact of tourism that they enable.

A structural analysis of mass commercial tourism in light of Christian social teachings and exegesis makes it a pertinent theological focus for churches in the world called to prayerfully witness, and serve. As a major economic activity affecting real human beings, and causing various forms of human suffering for so many in the Global South, tourism needs to be investigated, critiqued, and challenged on the basis of Bible teachings. For Christians no other response is adequate on the serious questions posed by an universal phenomenon in our era that inflicts injustice on the South.

At this juncture, it would be instructive to recall Cecil Rajendra's poem and the lines quoted from the Revd Harvey Perkins earlier.

Given its close nexus with the local community and the wider society in different ways, tourism suggests to the theological student, researcher, writer and leader several lines of theological exploration and approaches for questioning its prevailing model or formula implemented in the Global South. Students of theological institutions and associations, and others in the theological community will find this focus area teeming with burning issues that resonate with affected communities to research, study, write on, and advance substantive theological counter arguments to the footprint of tourism in our day.

The tourism footprint

Today, the global tourism industry is much bigger than it has ever been. It is grouped among the four largest industries in the world with oil and fuels, arms and armaments, and pharmaceuticals. Its outlays according to some calculations are estimated at around 10 % of the global GDP, while employing around 300 million, or about 10 % of the global workforce, even though most of the employment in the South is low level with low wages. With growing incomes, the number of leisure travellers is steadily on the rise, with a billion tourism arrivals in a year globally now, and trending towards 1.6 billion by 2020, according to the estimates of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)[4]. A substantial number of

these tourists are attracted to South destinations. It does not take much effort to realise the economic, social, and environmental pressure from such numbers on society, and the planet.

The nations of the world have devised ever more ingenious ways of attracting more and more tourists with catchy marketing slogans and well financed promotion strategies. However, despite its positive outcomes claimed by its advocates, the direction in which mainstream tourism has evolved in the Global South indicates that, in its own way, it plays a role in impoverishing communities. We already know that factors such as a lack of basic necessities, lack of infrastructure, lack of educational and employment opportunities, war, ethnic conflict, corruption, inequitable distribution of wealth and resources, and trade injustice, among others, result in the poverty of communities. To these, based on the ground experience, one must add mass commercial tourism as well. However, the *negatives* associated with tourism are not as obvious or striking to the average person as those of the other factors. Slick tourism advertising, the superficial assumptions regarding the 'benefits' of tourism, and the innate human desire to travel for fun and relaxation ensure that tourism is quarantined from criticism, perceived to be a positive force for communities, and not included with the other factors associated with poverty.

The true nature of tourism becomes clear when one considers the *'footprint'* of tourism, the ground reality for theological introspection. It is a footprint that is endorsed by a development ideology so widely accepted by governments in the South and promoted by the International Financial Institutions (IFI's), one that asserts that in a globalised free market the effectiveness of resources is maximised if allocated to the more 'productive' sections of the population whose higher earnings will eventually 'trickle down' to the poor. While an exhaustive survey of this footprint is not attempted here, some threads of tourism's interrelated multiple impact that map out the contours of tourism in human terms are identified as follows:

The diversion of essential people's resources: Tourism is ever hungry for land, water, electricity, and varied infrastructure. In most cases, these are generously provided or facilitated by governments for the construction and maintenance of hotels, resorts, golf courses, amusement and theme parks, state of the art airports, highways, and other contributions. In fact, most of these developments are continuously on the rise to cater to the growing numbers of tourists. Even though local communities themselves are obviously in need of these resources

that are consumed by tourism operations, this sector enjoys priority over the local people. This is in the face of what is obvious to anyone, that their poverty is in sharp contrast to the affluence enjoyed by a few, namely the tourism interests and the tourists themselves. Sensitive travellers would have observed this aspect of tourism in the countries, regions, and tourism areas they have visited.

The loss to host countries due to special benefits provided by governments: One way local communities are disadvantaged is through foreign and domestic business interests gaining financial and related advantages through tax reduction and holidays, subsidised land and other costs, import advantages, reduced wages and working conditions, tourism-friendly regulations, relaxed laws, and other concessions, packages, and business friendly arrangements. For instance, in the devastation from the Tsunami in 2004, it became clear that less lives would have been lost had mangroves been retained as a protective buffer to the massive waves. However, they had been removed earlier at the insistence of the tourism industry lobby bent on a clear access for tourists to the sea from the hotel precincts.

The social and economic consequences of displacement resulting from tourism development: Many of the locations where tourism hotels and resorts are built and planned were agricultural fields of local farmers displaced for tourism development. The demand from tourism for land and water related areas is a major factor in such displacement. This has a significantly negative effect on the livelihoods of the local people, that in turn translates into unfortunate outcomes for families and society.

The social costs through abuse, including trafficking, of women and children: Due to the informal and underground character of this 'business', and its lack of transparency, it is difficult to arrive at exact figures of those exploited. However, estimates of women and children victimised in sex tourism and slavery, both worldwide and regionally, are placed at consistently high levels. This is not surprising with the entrenched poverty of communities and victims making it a strong push factor driving sex tourism. In an activity subject to the laws of supply and demand, a service or commodity that is desired is generally arranged and organised by those with a profit motive, intermediaries such as pimps and other middlemen in the case of sex tourism.

The treatment of women as a service or commodity is in stark contrast

to the countercultural attitudes and teachings of Jesus. In the Jewish society of his day, when it was considered a misfortune to be born a woman by both males and females alike, Jesus upholds the dignity and equality of women through his actions and behaviour. The story of Jesus would be seriously incomplete without the several episodes, despite the prevailing social and cultural restrictions, involving his contact with women. They include Mary and Martha, the Samaritan woman, the Syro-Phoenician woman with her plea, the hunchbacked woman, the woman caught in the act of adultery, the woman pouring precious oil on Jesus, Mary Magdalene and others. Hence it is only natural for some theologians to regard Jesus as a feminist. He recogised women as a major group among the despised, oppressed and marginalised, and saw the liberation of women as intimately linked with the liberation of all the oppressed people of his day. Set against his example and teaching, it is an abomination that women become disposable playthings for some tourists. With usually little education, hardly any skills, and negligible employment prospects, these disadvantaged women, and children, take recourse to the only asset they have – their bodies – to earn a paltry income for their families. Children are even more helpless. Trafficked women and children have little control over their situation brought about by the ruthless 'merchants' and their agents peddling sex tourism motivated by the lure of money. Tourists who take advantage of such human beings, and those who enable this to happen, are exploiters of the poor in an unequal relationship of power and money.

The commercialisation, commodification and denigration of indigenous and local culture – the threat to cultural identity: Anyone who has been to areas such as Bali, and other similar holiday destinations around the world, would have come across instances of this. Cultural forms are commercialised, uprooted from their underlying meaning, and performed, exhibited or sold purely for profit. Local and indigenous customs, rituals, sacred shrines and places of worship, sacred music, ceremonial dress, traditions, and handiwork are marketed as products to take advantage of the presence of tourists passing through. Traditional handicrafts and art works are mass produced and packaged as objects for sale, reflecting the expectations and stereotypes held by the tourists but devoid of their cultural underpinning and heritage. Most of these products traded as merchandised objects have little use for the local community. Nevertheless, local people are desperate to have their

items, prostituted for the market, to be purchased by tourists. Musicians, dancers and other artistes perform and exhibit and sell their creativity to earn some income, at the cost of their self-respect. This is exacerbated by 'seasonality' when there is more custom during the often limited 'high' season, as opposed to other times in the year. With increased tourism, there is the also the prospect of increased illegal sales of antiques, cultural goods and national treasures. There is a larger issue that relates to the process of commodifying. This is the branding, marketing and selling of whole countries and people reduced to an advertising label or slogan matching the images and desires of tourists.

From the tourists' side, there is the well documented spectacle of tourists causing offence to the local community with inappropriate behaviour, attire, and actions but mostly condoned by hotels and tourism operators eager to keep the visitors happy and undisturbed. The tourists' obvious affluence also leads to a 'demonstration effect' whereby some of the local population, especially the younger members, aspire to be like the foreigners with their gadgets, ways of behaving, and values, with the result that the ethical bases and cultural elements that unified the society and gave it a sense of identity are being eroded and disrupted. In other words, in the exchange that tourism enables, the worst forms of culture on both sides are displayed. In this sense, tourism plays a serious role in devaluing and prostituting local culture that is a heritage evolved through countless generations. Tourism promoters have a clear obligation to promote tourism in a way that values the dignity of the visited, and not commodify destination countries and their people. Such decisions and messages cheapen the quality of tourism and dishonour the lives of many in South countries.

The myth of employment: Tourism in the South is endorsed and defended on the grounds that it brings employment to the local communities. This proposition needs to be investigated. What is the quality of employment brought about by tourism? While owners, and those involved in the North and South at the senior levels of decision making and administration in the different sectors of the tourism industry such as hotels, resorts, airlines, tourism promotion, marketing and advertising, food and beverages, and so on, do benefit well from tourism, the bulk of the employment generated otherwise in the South is mostly low status: kitchen hands, waiters and waitresses, cleaners, drivers,

lifeguards, office assistants, etc. Such workers are paid low salaries – a pittance compared to the wages of those they serve – and hence generally tend to adopt a servile attitude and a confected smile towards tourists, painfully aware that their jobs depend on satisfying them, who may reward with a tip that will supplement their income. On the part of the tourists, there may be the tendency to adopt an attitude of proprietorship and entitlement towards those who serve them, sometimes with a display of neo-colonialism and racism. In such an environment, the relationship between the local worker and the tourist is not one between equals, but rather of master-servant in a power imbalance, contrary to the very idea of the inherent dignity of the human person. Besides, in many cases, the employment is insecure due to factors including uneven tourism numbers depending on the season, unstable global economy, the economy and situation in the visited country, the domestic situation in sending countries, conflict and unrest in the world, to name a few. Such insecurity leads the lowly employed to extract whatever income and benefits they can, while the employment lasts, even if their dignity suffers in the process. With poor wages and working conditions, and periodically with no wages, a number of undesirable outcomes ensue, including the inability of the local worker to nurture and maintain healthy family relationships because of poverty. The employment so often presented as the raison d'etre of tourism is low quality, insecure, and offensive to the human dignity of the local community. Such economic dependence on foreign visitors, who through their financial power already define people's lives, is detrimental to South economies and communities.

Ecological damage and loss: The rich variety in the natural environment of the world is a drawcard for visitors – scenic beauty, wildlife parks, fauna, flora, mountain resorts, beaches, coral reefs and gardens and other attractions. These should offer an opportunity to admire and be inspired by God's creation that 'He saw was…very good' (Gen1:31). Yet the reality is that nature is being continually despoiled. One of the ways of helping this to occur is inappropriate tourism enterprises and practices. An overload of tourists results in the pollution of the environment of entire regions. Streams, rivers, seas, the very air we breathe become dangerously unclean. Tourism is associated with deforestation and soil erosion. Lands are mined, plants and shrubs, together with houses, are bulldozed to make way for the construction of

new hotels, golf courses, resorts, and more infrastructure and facilities to attract increasing numbers of tourists, and businesses to invest. Appalled at the intensity of the roadbuilding construction of a major highway in his region of North East India, that involved the felling of giant trees, removal of soil and other related actions, an indigenous church leader exclaimed, 'If the mountain disappears, where is my identity?'[5]. Tourism's aggressive agenda ends in major and often irreversible damage, thereby upsetting the ecological balance. We are confronted with a tourism that is unresponsive to calls to limit tourism numbers and destinations. Such calls are made in light of sensible considerations such as avoiding overload in the destinations, what the pattern of tourism development is, and avoiding a tourism that is environmentally unfriendly. As, under the myth of 'eco-tourism', ecologically fragile sites and eco-systems are overexposed and in time lose their attraction of being 'pristine and unspoilt' – the consequence of unbridled tourism in the first place – tourists keep on demanding and expecting other newer locations to visit. The worsening loss of biodiversity, to which tourism contributes, is a matter of real concern in view of the preservation of nature for today's and future generations, as well as the state of health of plant and animal life. Tourism development can be self-destructive, in that it destroys the very basis of its existence. At the same time, the local population is left with degraded terrain. People depend on land, air, trees, water, plants, seas and rivers for survival, but these are destroyed. When nature is ruined, it is the local people who suffer, not the itinerant tourists.

Climate Change implications: Climate change is a serious issue of our era, one of the most challenging global threats affecting especially the vulnerable, who have been calling for ecological justice. The First Part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report (September 2013) concludes that there is at least a 95% certainty that global warming and climate change are the result of human activity, and the nature of this is further amplified in the Second Part of IPCC's Fifth Assessment (March 2014). Obviously there are various kinds of human activity causing this. But included among these is tourism. It needs to be noted that the majority of the one billion tourism arrivals globally this year use global aviation. It is estimated that 5% of greenhouse gases are produced by aviation, of which an estimated 40% relates to tourism. However, aviation sources predict that the aviation

sector will grow by 4 – 5 % per year till 2026, and tourism will be an increasing segment of this growth. Cruise shipping, an activity indulged in by the very affluent, is also on the increase. Modern tourism requires a massive use of fossil fuels-based energy for lavish hotels, airconditioning for ecologically unsound buildings, expansion of airports in major cities, and the building of new ones in secondary and tertiary cities, cruise shipping, and so on. All these activities have one thing in common: they are a prime source of carbon emissions and global warming which will have serious effects on the people of the South. It is irresponsible that the Kyoto Protocol exempts tourism, arguing that it is a 'motor for development'. Any discussion of climate change and its effects without reference to tourism is incomplete and inadequate.

Health hazards: Communities exposed to tourism are also vulnerable to health hazards. Except in extreme case, countries exercise little control over who enters the country, and what sorts of illnesses and infections are brought in by tourists from all over the world. Prominent among these are diseases such as HIV and AIDS, alongside others. Drugs and narcotics are sources too of serious problems and anxieties for the local community. However, it is extremely difficult to impose health controls, beyond those required by international regulations and specific laws. With an eye to income, hotels, governments, and other interests are generally reluctant to associate tourism with these menaces, fearing loss of tourists and their business. Such situations exacerbate the tourism footprint.

Human rights violations: Tourism is sometimes a tool for concealing human rights violations from the public eye. At the same time it also provides income for governments of such places from often unsuspecting tourists who are or are kept ignorant of such abuses, or prefer to look the other way. In that sense tourism provides a facade behind which hide the damaging political exploitation of people. A sharp example of this is the case of Palestinian tourism and other related sectors dominated by Israel[6]. Due to their superior capacity to advertise, and with abundant resources, the Israeli advertising machinery has been able to persuade most churches and related groups around the world to base themselves in Israel, and not in Palestine, as they travel to the Holy Land for pilgrimages. The tourism programme organised under the auspices of the Israeli government deftly promotes the Israeli view, and almost

completely ignores the Palestinian reality. Pilgrims are taken into Palestine only during brief sections of the programme, and are thereby kept unaware of the Palestinian situation while spending insignificant amounts of money on Palestinian products and services. To enable an understanding of what is really occurring in Palestine, the Palestine Kairos document urges the world to 'come and see' ('A Moment of Truth', 2009). An allied concern generally regarding human rights is the place of human dignity in tourism, especially of the many in low status and often insecure employment in an unequal relationship with the tourism industry and the economic power of tourists.

The Tourism 'formula': While on the surface, mass commercial tourism configurations vary from place to place, at their core they share easily identifiable common features around the world constituting an informal yet universal 'formula' of tourism. Over time this has been a formula that has been crafted by interests in the North, and now increasingly adopted within the South. It is focused on the money-making opportunities available by providing ways of spending the leisure time available to people of the North, as well as the elite and the moneyed classes of the South. Every effort is made to ensure that the tourists enjoy their holiday with maximum convenience and minimal stress and strain. As generally the demands of international travel, including legal requirements (visas, etc), have become less onerous, tourists now increasingly desire to enjoy an exciting experience in distant countries and regions. To ensure that they come to a particular venue, priority is attached to their expectations regarding accommodation, location, food, compliant staff at their beck and call, and services. Furthermore, the programme planned for a group or offered to an individual tourist endeavours to base itself around the tourists' myths and fancies on 'pristine' and 'unspoilt' locations, the landscape and seascape and other attractions, exotic ethnic populations with 'interesting' rituals, customs, and clothing, and so on. The formula shapes the design and construction of hotels and resorts that are geared to tourist expectations of extracting the maximum enjoyment with minimal costs from a holiday of a few days. Staff are selected on the basis of how hospitable and serviceable they can be. The 'all inclusive' package tour is the best example of such a formula in operation. With costs, booking of accommodation, sightseeing, a predetermined menu and related matters having been organised and paid for beforehand in the sending country before travelling,

the tourists enjoy the comforts and exotic elements of the host country but spending minimal amounts of money as they do so. Package tours mostly insulate the tourists from the real situation of the host countries by offering minimal exposure to the people and their realities, and their authentic local culture.

Such tours are not a springboard for meaningful and enriching cultural exchanges, and for forming friendships. It is hardly designed to foster a deeper understanding of the people and places visited, even though this is posited as one of the benefits of tourism. Such tourism does not help to dispel stereotypes and pre-existing myths, and just become backdrops for the tourists' holiday and their photographs. Nature and the scenic sites merely exist for their gaze but have no attraction for them once they are no longer 'pristine' and become devalued. Resembling an assembly line production, package tours and other organised tour programmes are a wholesale business, with an eye to economies of scale, to the best terms, discounts, and concessions, thereby minimising costs to achieve maximum profit. The local businesses most often lose in the bartering with tourism industry establishments as they have to settle for lower payment for their goods and services. Overall, such a formula leaves the local people and community disadvantaged with overexploited sites, and a loss of dignity.

Community Based Tourism Tourism would benefit the local people if it was designed to enable visitors to understand the real situation of the host country by encouraging visitors and hosts to meet and interact in a spirit of openness, sensitivity and mutual respect, have fruitful cultural exchange for mutual enrichment, and form genuine friendships. There is of course a better kind of tourism, a counter to the formula of mass tourism, that makes possible such outcomes. It is a *Community Based Tourism.* It is fair, and also sustainable by being respectful of the environment through conserving resources and using energy carefully. Such tourism is owned, managed, and assessed by the community with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community[7]. This ensures interaction between tourists and the local people, and helps the visitor to discover local habitats and wildlife, and celebrate and respect traditional cultures, rituals and wisdom. This form of tourism creates greater economic benefits for the local communities, enhances their quality of living, and builds local capacity

as they engage in collaborative decision-making. It is a kind of tourism that well reflects Christian principles and values of sharing, of fairness and dignity, of eschewing materialism. But this is a type of tourism that the widely practised formula of the mass commercial tourism industry ignores, as its profit-making capacity is adjudged as not substantial enough for investors.

Tourism, Economic Development, and the myth of Poverty Alleviation in the Global South

Developing countries in the South and their governments are urged to exploit tourism as a means of assisting the poor. The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the tourism industry posit that tourism is 'a motor for development', that it contributes to poverty alleviation in developing countries.[8] With the belief that they will develop the nation and improve the condition of the poor, many governments promote tourism and construct appropriate infra-structure for this industry, often burdening the national economy with more debt in the process. The macro-economic data might suggest good returns for investors from tourism. But from the perspective of South communities, the question remains: to what extent do the poor benefit?

Much is made of the positives of tourism. Analysis however shows that the major beneficiaries from tourism are owners of capital, and their operators such as the managerial elite, in both the North and South. Little evidence exists to justify tourism as beneficial for vulnerable communities. While economic information is available on tourist arrivals, revenue earned and related statistics, often little or no social indicators on tourism's impact are generally kept. Even though it may appear so, tourism is not a stand-alone reality. It is multi-faceted and is organised within an amalgam of inter-linking dimensions of culture, community, politics, economics, commerce, trade, locale, biodiversity, ecology, gender issues, and other aspects. Within this framework, tourism acts on and actualises an a priori rationale rooted in a neo-liberal economic philosophy based on the primacy of growth and the market, thereby incorporating and legitimising the structural injustices inherent within such an ideology.

There is no dispute with the assertion that receipts from tourism do increase the economy at the national and local levels. Government revenue is increased through the spending by tourists on varied products and services, making possible the low wages for some in the community. However, this credit side of tourism has to be assessed against its multisided debit side,

mostly ignored in tourism promotion. Factoring in the expected easy income from tourism, national governments, often under the influence of the powerful vested interests, postpone hard, politically costly but necessary decisions on restructuring the economy by enacting genuine structural measures to reduce poverty and suffering of people, by creating and encouraging meaningful employment opportunities for the poor, and with other requisite responses. The major portion of tourism investment being mostly capital intensive, the focus is on profitable return on that investment, rather than employment for the poor and disadvantaged, who, as observed before, are the publicly stated rationale for the development and growth of tourism. Hence the employment such tourism creates is low order, transitory, and uncertain. In the long run, tourism also causes problems for the local people and their own economy. Attracted by the 'lazy' income expected from tourism, the local economy tends to become a dependent economy, rather than a self-reliant one. The local workers, especially the younger workers, assuming an easy tourism income, tend to be less inclined to engage in their traditional work and industries such as agriculture, fishing, farming, and so on, eyeing the less demanding tourism tasks. Nevertheless, the employment generated in the local community is predominantly limited to low paying, low skilled jobs[9].The few fortunate enough to be chosen for these jobs would consider themselves lucky to be employed, and might still proceed with the attitude that 'beggars cannot be choosers', preferring any employment to no employment. But for the remainder, confidence that tourists will come creates a false security leading to an abandonment of customary occupations. Productive work then suffers, and valuable skills lost to the community.

Furthermore, as the market laws of supply and demand come into play, tourists and others capable of paying higher prices inflate the costs of limited vital resources beyond the reach of the local population, impoverishing them even further. The serious level of 'leakage' is another item in the debit side of modern tourism. The major portion of the income and profits from developing countries is appropriated by overseas and domestic tourism businesses, airlines, cruise companies, hotel chains, food and drink exporters, and other interests for their dividends, and their establishment and maintenance costs[10]. Despite the claim that the poor are significant beneficiaries of tourism, only a small portion of the earnings remain for the low wages and employment of domestic workers.

Tourism is also linked with community, social, political, and even physical violence in different parts of the world today. A case in point is a situation,

similarly experienced in other South destinations, that arose in Kanyakumari in the south of India. A major business established a hotel complex facing the sea, and quarantined a section of the beach for the exclusive use by its guests. The local fishermen who for generations had used that beach for fishing-related tasks were directed not to use that beach anymore. As they did not accept these conditions, and formed an advocacy group, the hotel management employed guards to keep the fishermen and their assisting families away. The outcome was outbreak of violence between the community and the hotel owners. Such conflicts in varying forms are not unknown in numerous destinations across the South.

Tourism is a profits-driven industry that exploits what it does not own. Tourism advertising and communication efforts to lure travellers are ultimately directed to the enjoyment of people's culture and experience that it does not own, and did not produce. It thrives by marketing nature it does not own – the sun, sea, mountains, rivers, landscapes – icons from Genesis, and a legacy for all. However, with the sanction of governments, the tourism industry implements a capitalistic model that appropriates God's gifts of creation for the benefit of a few that are provided for all.

Tourism is inherently unequal as only a disproportionate few can afford to travel whereas most cannot. Those who can travel have leisure time on their hands and resources compared to the vast numbers of those in the South who are unable to travel. In other words, the activity of a minority of people has extensive negative consequences for many. What is the justification then for an industry that imposes on the local community serious economic, social, cultural, and ecological costs, but whose main benefit for them is low level, limited employment (apart from the income enjoyed by the privileged few)? The balance sheet of tourism will show that the income, and whatever benefits accrue to the local people, are a minuscule recompense for the footprint of the gigantic tourism investment. Apologists and most tourists insist that due to the injection of resources through tourism into developing economies, the South owes a debt to the North. In fact, the reverse is true as the South subsidises the tourism enterprise by ultimately bearing its immediate and lasting human and environmental costs in various ways as discussed earlier. Eventually, these costs far outweigh whatever gains are made from tourism. It is the Global North that owes a debt to the South.

It is argued by some proponents of growth economics that tourism's multi-faceted impact on the local community through its footprint is a 'small' price to pay for achieving development. However, this is a specious argument for tourism. The reality around the Global South is that, in the end, vulnerable communities bear the brunt of such 'progress' having to experience poverty, injustice and marginalisation in various forms, including economic deprivation, loss of land and livelihood, human indignity, and cultural and ecological damage, making their suffering a focus for a 'preferential option for the poor' theology.

In the following segments, the experience of tourism is scutinised from four broad perspectives. The other chapters in this anthology focus on specific tourism issues or concerns.

The Bible and Tourism

As sound theology dictates, a social and structural analysis of the ground experience and the data of tourism is the essential starting point of any attempt to consider its issues theologically. The pooled experience of local communities with the impact of tourism in its various configurations across the Global South will enable us to discern its underlying pattern, and see the variety of mass tourism forms as multiple expressions of the same *basic structural* system in operation globally, nationally, and locally.

To assist us in theologically interpreting the human consequences of a tourism model operating globally, we turn to the Bible for guidance. Of course, the Bible does not directly comment on every contemporary concern. It illustrates with events and implied teaching its values and instructions for moral living but it does not *directly* speak on every modern challenge in our times, spelling out predetermined solutions to present day developments troubling humanity.

Yet, the Bible narrative is God's spoken word. Its discourse on moral rectitude, justice, human behaviour and responsibility in society provides a mirror that we can hold up to the main actors and the rest of the people shaping society. Guided by the Spirit, we are led to the intrinsic truth of the reality of a modern phenomenon such as tourism to challenge it to question and transform itself. The Bible leads us to envision a society anchored on Kingdom values of sharing and collaboration, not just power and money.

In modern times, characterised as they are by extensive human affliction arising from various human and economic injustices, the tourism footprint is one. As we have seen, for many the story of mass commercial tourism and

its impact is one of suffering, distress and alienation in contemporary times springing from an unequal sharing of power and resources by countless people. This contemporary affliction is multi-faceted.

Who are the afflicted victims of tourism? These are communities who see resources for life diverted from the needy to the powerful. There is dispossession of land and home to interests seeking to make inordinate profits from building and maintaining hotels, resorts, amusement parks and other amenities. The few fortunate enough to be employed are in mostly low status tourism jobs, often in their own former land. Most of the dispossessed are not so fortunate, and have no option but to stay where they are without employment, or to migrate to other areas where they may find low quality employment, or, again, no employment at all. Some even end up in slums that are ubiquitous in South cities. Some women, children and men cope with poverty by offering sexual gratification to those with money. There is loss of culture and dignity, physical and social consequences from ecological destruction and climate change, human rights abuses. This is an outcome of decision-making in an industry that benefits the few at the expense of many, who however pay the price of such decisions with lives that are reduced and impoverished. This affliction takes its toll on the life of families and the community, and is the cost of tourism in human terms.

A striking thread running through the Bible narrative is of a liberating God. This is clear right at the beginning. The Exodus presents to us an intervening God whose mind and action side with suffering humanity, the afflicted.

> *Then the Lord said, 'I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. (Ex. 3:7-9)*

In other words, this is a God who does not stand on neutrality. God sees His people, the afflicted, suffering and oppressed, and hears their cry. And He will act for them.

In the Hebrew sense, the afflicted are those who are humiliated, molested, oppressed, subdued, violated, their labour exploited. The Bible throughout provides numerous instances of affliction in various forms. The 'afflicted' in Exodus are a precursor to contemporary human beings afflicted in various ways including my tourism.

In his ministry and teachings, Jesus brings good news to the poor and afflicted as promised in Luke 4: 18-19. The experience of futility and submission of the 'brokenhearted' as they encounter the powerful exploiting and subduing them is overwhelming. God hears their cry, and responds with the good news of incarnation with its liberating message and action.

Even though the historical context of the Bible is of thousands of years in the past, its implicit meanings can be applied to our times with its issues and concerns. The Bible is an account of events in the lives and communities of real people on the way to the 'promised land', and through these situations articulate teachings for human behaviour in post-Biblical, modern times too. The Bible's understanding of and the predilection for the afflicted applies to the victims of mass commercial tourism in our age, both as individuals and communities.

Today's tourism thrives on the idea of a holiday. Our world sanctions and endorses tourism as a holiday. It is a holiday, however, that carries with it a destructive imprint on people and communities. It is salutary, then, to consider and discover the right meaning and intent of 'holiday'. From a Biblical perspective, holiday is a day free from work, in the spirit of a God Who rested after His work (Gen 2:2-3). In Ex 20:8-11, God commands that the Sabbath be kept holy. It is not a time for personal gratification as tourism dictates, but a time when we rest from our daily work to foster a closer relationship with God as our Creator and with his people, and be blessed. It is not a time to get away from or forget God but rather go nearer to Him. The concept of holiday promoted in tourism is antithetical to the Biblical understanding. With the onslaught of tourism numbers, the demand for profit from investment, the redefining of the meaning of leisure, and the general materialism and consumerism that drive the world, tourism has come to be seen, permitted, and encouraged as a time characterised by pleasure and hedonism, rather than a time of opportunities to meet God. Had tourism evolved in the framework inspired by the Biblical understanding of holiday, it would have been far less destructive for the people and the planet, engendering less human affliction.

Tourism and Injustice: Engaging the Principalities and Powers

Tourism is an industry contingent on global inequalities. Its extensive footprint shows a face of injustice in contemporary times. Its character is intimately entwined with the inequitable sharing of power and resources, and the resulting destructive consequences. For such an outcome to emerge, it is

necessary to have in place a system created by powerful actors and sanctioned, openly or tacitly, by the relevant institutions of the state. What the tourism-afflicted experience is the impact of the exercise of power on their existence, rendering their lives as determined by the requirements of others. Poverty, and wealth and power are linked as two sides of the same coin – one only explained by the other. Wealth is an outcome of entrenched dominance by a few over the many, of a well connected minority unjustly appropriating to themselves the lion's share of power and resources, allowing, justifying and legitimising the exploitation of human labour, dignity, and nature as means to the end of profit making. Abusive and unjust treatment of people and the earth's resources violate the God-ordained order and purpose.

The Bible portrays Yahweh as sovereign Lord standing for justice as no other god does. (Ps. 82: 3-4)):

> *Give justice to the weak and fatherless*
> *Maintain the right of the afflicted and destitute*
> *Rescue the weak and the needy Deliver them*
> *from the hands of the wicked.*

Delivering justice to save the poor and afflicted from the unjust is the nature of God. "How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked", asks Yahweh. Oppressive power is essentially wickedness, with its inherent injustice, that brings down the frail and the needy poor (Ps. 37:14), that pursues the frail and the brokenhearted to their death (Ps. 109:16). "In arrogance, the wicked hotly pursue the poor" (Ps. 10:2). They stealthily watch for the hapless, lurking that they may seize the poor and entrap them in their net. (Ps. 10:9)

For a Biblical God, to do justice is to know and worship Him. Rejecting the call for justice challenges what God requires of humankind. "God has shown you, O people, what is good and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."(Micah 6:8)

The God who intervenes when the poor are affected will not turn a deaf ear to the cry of the victims of today's tourism industry – those made homeless, the underpaid employees, women and children selling their bodies, and all those who suffer indignity in one way or the other.

The reality of sin, however, is present in every sphere of human activity, being embodied in society's structures – economic, social, political and religious. The exploitative nature of tourism in the South countries, that is a

contemporary form of injustice, reflects structures of domination operating at various levels – global and national, and at lower levels, whereby the rich and powerful exploit the powerless, in a display of injustice that is against the will of God Who calls humankind to freedom and life in its fullness.

In modern times, we need to identify the principalities and powers who inflict their power in modern ways. Decisions on tourism are mostly in the hands of overseas or domestic tourism complexes and elites, mostly uninfluenced by the experience, insight, issues and suffering of local communities, even though tourism often takes place in their midst, thus making them feel the powerlessness. With profitability in mind, these decisions are governed by a formula that focuses on tourists rather than the wellbeing of the local community. But the implementation of such a formula in the interests of the powerful has real impact on human beings felt in the disadvantage, humiliation, and pain of the local people, the powerless, from the loss of land and livelihood, the trafficking and selling of human beings, and the denigration of culture. Tourism decisions by powerful interests promote a continual overload of visitors that in time degrades tourism sites and their ecology, leaving the local community to deal with the consequences. While a small component of the tourism income stays with the local community, the majority of it flows to those at the apex. In light of the economic model holding sway, the price for the special concessions and benefits granted by governments to the tourism industry is eventually paid by the local people from whom the needed resources are diverted, impoverishing them even further. A handful of corporations and individuals, then, generally disinterested in the local situation, through their power of decision-making control a worldwide tourism industry that carries an extensive and destructive footprint for local people and the environment. The tourism model adopted by the powerful, and legitimised by those who influence the decision-making apparatus of the state – the principalities and powers – is a consequence of an overall systemic unequal, and hence, sinful structure, built on maximum exploitation of the powerless and God's creation. How do we engage such principalities and powers? Christian response to power is presented as a combination of challenge and identification – identification with the afflicted, and challenge to the operators of power as domination. (Is. 53, 42:3-7.)

The meaning of 'have dominion' (Gen. 1:28) has evolved to become a licence for exploiting the earth's resources with the principal aim of extracting the maximum material benefit possible, with little consideration for the

consequences of such activity. For the powerful, driven by greed, such an interpretation of the 'dominion' ethic serves their ends and justify their decisions, consequentially denying full humanness and participation to the people affected. This is part of the reality of sin. We need to recover and press for the other meaning of 'dominion', namely, kingship or rulership. In a Biblical sense, anyone granted such a role is held responsible for the welfare of the people and nature. In this sense, 'dominion', expressing the sovereign reign of God (Job 25:2; Ps. 22:28), does not justify the unbridled use of power and control but points to accountability, responsibility and care. The character of tourism should be defined by responsibility for co-creation and re-creation, health and wholeness, concern, and stewardship, and not destruction, death and fragmentation, and greed.

Tourism and Objectification

The Bible, among other things, is an account of people on the move. There is the constant travel of people – for better quality of life, refuge or sanctuary, missionary purposes, conquest, trade. But the travel of tourism is different. In view of its nature, tourism needs to be seen as a contemporary form of objectification, whereby people and nature are treated as objects for one's personal use and gratification. Tourism would be a force for good if a spirit of humility, equality, sensitivity, and respectfulness for the other culture moulding the individual and community were its signal features. But tourism has evolved differently to be a movement of the relatively few rich to the lands and regions of the predominantly poor for the purpose of self-gratification. Escapism, stoked by myths, fantasy, and superficial notions of 'bliss' and 'a taste of paradise' involving the sun, sand, sea, and sex, and 'unspoilt' nature, is at its core and its widespread advertising. In an unequal world of contrasts, such make-believe messages are created and communicated to lure people eager to temporarily forget the tensions and frustrations of stressful, fast-paced, modern, industrial, urban yet economically comfortable life, while most of the South are facing the challenge of survival on a daily basis.

Objectification of the other is both a characteristic and outcome of modern tourism, based as it is on the predominant creed and criterion of personal gratification.[11]

Created in God's image, all human beings, females and males, are the subjects and not objects of creation. Any concept that portrays human beings as objects for enjoyment by commodifying them is a travesty of human

values, and humanity. But modern tourism is rationalised and driven on the basis of the myths and demands, and the financial power of the tourists. People in host countries come to be regarded as instruments and means of service and entertainment, not perceived as human beings with their own dignity and autonomy.

Sex tourism unfortunately provides a clear example of this. Rather than an expression of a loving relationship between two equal human beings created in God's image, and acting within the context of the sacredness of marriage, sex tourism consigns the other to the status of an object of pleasure for the powerful, who enjoys a superior economic position in a power imbalance. The tragedy and shame of the commodification of women's bodies are replicated in the abuse of children victimised in a world of paedophilia.

Furthermore, local people are objectified when valued as no more than servants at the beck and call of the tourist for a pittance with little work guarantee or satisfaction, but much alienation. As makers or sellers of arts and crafts, they are perceived as a means to a 'nice' holiday. Culture is recycled and presented as something to watch without its deeper moorings. People and whole nations are depicted, commodified, and marketed with simplistic labels and slogans, and not as a society with culture, history and values. Nature too is an object rather than God's creative act. To satisfy the tourists' gaze, nature is commodified as scenery and 'must see' destinations.

Assessed in such a light, mass commercial tourism with its deliberate subject-object structure is individualistic, hedonistic, and materialistic. With a predictable formula, seeking for the unexpected or the holy, searching for discovery, meaning and learning, facilitating a journey into the unbounded human experience and new understanding do not define it. The benefit for the visitor is fleeting as there is little opportunity given and no significance attached for the engagement of those who meet each other as strangers to develop true friendships. As a result, the myths and preconceived notions remain unquestioned, and prevent a sincere experience of another culture, and the reality of the hosts. Conceived as a framework of escape from one's demands in the home country, tourism's objectives are limited to instant gratification, physical relaxation, and superficial leisure. It is disparaging of the other culture, requiring it to be reshaped on its terms. It is natural, then, that visitors are assumed to gain subjecthood, meaning and fulfillment through interaction with people and nature turned into mere objects. This is obvious

when almost all tourism advertising focuses on the enjoyment of the tourist with little reference to the local people. A sense of community and belonging to the one human race cannot arise from a tourism wherein the local people are deprived of human dignity. Objectification is irreconcilable with the creation by God who sees human beings as created in His image.[12]

The objectifying nature of tourism, following from dominating and self serving structures operating nationally and internationally, offer a window into modern, exploitative tourism.

Tourism and the integrity of creation

A theological dimension to the investigation and reflection on tourism is in the context of the integrity of creation and its stewardship. It points to God's creative nature whose outpouring is described so dramatically in Genesis, with the declaration that 'God saw that it was ... very good' (Gen. 1:31).

In the scheme of God's creative plan, creation belongs to all, to be shared by all. It is entrusted to humanity to be governed responsibly, nurtured carefully, and loved gratefully. People and the rest of creation are not meant to be exploited nor destroyed. Its fruits are a repository bequethed for the benefit of all humanity. However, inequality is the order of the day. A relatively few have seized a disproportionately large share of the world's resources, relegating a vast majority, especially in the South, to poverty and subsistence level existence. Such principalities and powers, who exist at all levels of human society, determine the structure and priorities of the economy and society that is fundamentally unequal to most, in contradiction to God's intent for creation.

Tourism is a profits-driven industry that exploits what it does not own. Tourism advertising and communication efforts to lure travellers are ultimately directed to the enjoyment of people's culture and experience that it does not own, and did not produce. It thrives by marketing nature it does not own – the sun, sea, mountains, rivers, landscapes – icons from Genesis, and a legacy for all. However, with the sanction of governments, the tourism industry implements a capitalistic model that appropriates God's gifts of creation for the benefit of a few that are provided for all. While tourism has the potential to do much good, one only has to see some of its impact as it has grown: devastating overcrowding at resort areas, beaches, and sites of significance; increased pollution in seas, rivers and streams, and other areas of attraction; increased deforestation and the use of land to make room for resorts, airports, and other facilities that affect the livelihood of people as

the decrease of arable land accelerates. All of this destroys the biodiversity that is a fruit of creation. While bodies such as the UNWTO and the Convention on Biological Diversity may urge sustainable planning and management of tourism as a way to conserve biodiversity, the reality is that a heavy human presence from traditional forms of tourism, including in aviation and cruise shipping, in accommodation and operations with high use of fossil fuels-based energy, is destructive to biodiversity. In the same act of weakening biodiversity, tourism contributes to the injustice of people in the South through increasing global warming and climate change from carbon emissions, leaving them with the task of coping with its negative social, economic, cultural, and environmental effects. This is another face of the poor, those cherished by God. (Deut. 10:17-18)

The reality of sin, however, is present in every sphere of human activity, being embodied in society's structures – economic, social, political and religious. The exploitative nature of tourism in the South countries, that is a contemporary form of injustice, reflects structures of domination operating at various levels – global and national, and at lower levels, whereby the rich and powerful exploit the powerless, in a display of injustice that is against the will of God Who calls humankind to freedom and life in its fullness.

Is this the creation that God intended for His people? Obviously not.

> *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers. (Ps.24:1-2)*

In this light, a challenge seeking justice needs to be made to the tourism industry, demanding accountability for its use of the earth and all its gifts, for its fundamental character that it benefits from what it does not own, for its apportioning a major share of the gains to the investors and the affluent at the expense of the poor.

God's gifts have to be enjoyed and shared with care and responsibility. That this is not occurring as it should demonstrates that God's creation has been violated, and is in need of 'mending' due to the root cause of human greed, and captivity to Mammon articulated in the belief that the free market ideology, with decision making in the hands of the powerful committed to exploiting human and natural resources towards generating maximum profits,

is the answer. Such an outlook translates into the tourism industry serving an offering in large measure of what is described as 'sun, sand and sex' tourism, that is an affront to God's creation. The poor are at the mercy of an economic and political thinking that enables and justifies the inequitable distribution of power, resources, rights, and the gifts of nature in an unwholesome reflection on God. The *oikoumene* whose fragile social and ecological balance has been upset by irresponsible human action challenges the Church, with justice as a touchstone of its theology, to be an incarnational presence reflecting Christ's mind, love, and even ire. Christians are given the calling to provide leadership through their ideas and practice. When God's handiwork is under threat, there is the Christian obligation to speak out and act in the pursuit of life, justice and peace, for the stewardship and integrity of creation. Churches are called and entrusted to provide prophetic witness to announce God's love for all and denounce the ethic of domination.

Tourism and the theological curriculum

The suffering of the many at the hands of the gigantic tourism industry is a basis for theological introspection. Contemporary tourism marginalises vulnerable communities, constituting a human concern, and hence a theological one. Theological institutions can lead by putting together a well designed course and syllabus from a justice and pastoral perspective for their ministerial students.

Given its close nexus with the local community and the wider society in different ways, tourism suggests to the theological student, researcher, writer and leader several lines of theological exploration and approaches for questioning its prevailing model or formula implemented in the Global South. Students of theological institutions and associations, and others in the theological community will find this focus area teeming with burning issues that resonate with affected communities to research, study, write on, and advance substantive theological counter arguments to the footprint of tourism in our day. Insights and the methodology of Contextual Theology should be employed to assist in developing new faith-based responses to a significant modern day phenomenon. Ethics, structural and social analysis, women's studies, 'green' studies, contextual theology and missiology, among others, provide sound and accessible parameters for this work.

These efforts will help formulate for the church and wider society an alternative tourism that is responsible, ethical, pro-poor, and just, a tourism that will not marginalise God's people. To quote the Rev. Harvery Perkins

again, '*to talk of a theology of tourism is to seek a contextual theology in the midst of our… involvement with… Third World tourism, which will establish the human in the midst of the inhuman, the just in the midst of the unjust, the participating in the midst of dominating, the delivering in the midst of captivity*'.

Conclusion

Churches and theological colleges have generally not addressed tourism in a serious way, despite its substantial impact on communities of the South. Mass tourism is rooted in profit making, and flourishes by objectifying people, culture and the environment, thus denying their integrity and wholeness. The high energy, land and other demands of mass tourism as well as the infrastructure provided are threatening local livelihoods, displacing local people, having a negative social impact, and endangering ecosystems and biodiversity. Tourism also raises challenges regarding global warming and climate change, health issues, and trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children. Being controlled by a few, it is inherently unjust, denying dignity and respect especially to the poor and the marginalised. It brings destruction to God's creation. The present paradigm of tourism is indefensible, and needs to be replaced by a more just one.

The chain of exploitation and injustice resulting from contemporary tourism makes a mockery of the Bible and its testimonies, devalues human persons and communities, and thereby challenges the will of God who calls humankind to freedom and life in all its fullness. This makes tourism an ethical, theological and missiological concern. The God who intervenes when the poor are affected will not turn a deaf ear to the victims of today's tourism industry – the vulnerable and marginalised. The suffering endured by communities should beckon us to resolute commitment and involvement in the work of liberating. In this we are inspired by the example of Jesus who by his words and life showed where he stood in a world of injustice.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing within the framework of contextual theology:

1. Analyse and deconstruct the unjust tourism structure and practices prevailing that conflict with the values of the Kingdom in specific parts of the South relevant to the researcher.
2. In light of the Kingdom values of justice and compassion, carry out a structural analysis of tourism from the perspective and experience of any of the affected groups, such as the subaltern and subsistence communities, indigenous people, women and children, the displaced, and others on the margin.
3. Study the potential of tourism as 'pilgrimage as alternative tourism' to stimulate an ethical engagement for mutuality, solidarity, and a real discovery of human community.
4. Deconstruct the content of media messages and tourism advertising, and consider ways of holding to account those responsible for it.
5. With examples and your experience of specific parts of the South, analyse how true it is that tourism genuinely alleviates the poverty of the community.
6. Within the context of integrity of creation and stewardship, study the link between tourism and climate justice.
7. Do a case study of the displacement of local people for tourism, the after effects of this, and the role of the Church. Base it on an immersion/ exposure experience in any of the touristic areas you are familiar with.
8. Study tourism's nexus with globalisation and a neo-liberal form of capitalism, as demonstrated in particular countries or regions.
9. Develop ways of educating, sensitising and empowering the Church to advocate just tourism and lead the faithful accordingly.
10. Investigate how mass tourism, its use of leisure as an economic selling point, and its profits can be analysed under a 'structure of sin'?
11. Look at responding to tourism issues in an inter-faith context in specific situations.
12. Question how beneficial is the model of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) used by the tourism industry to create a benign image of itself?
13. Investigate the reality and hype behind the claims often made, that 'eco-tourism assists biological diversity', within the framework of stewardship of creation.

Endnotes

[1] Verses quoted from `Tourists, Transistors or Stones' by Cecil Rajendra resproduced in '*Transforming Re-Forming Tourism'*, Caesar D'Mello, Editor, ECOT, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2007.

[2] Perkins, Harvey. Theological Reflection on Tourism, Biblical Reflection on New Consciousness and a New Structure for Third World Tourism. ECTWT (ECOT), Thailand, 1985.

[3] Sachs, Jeffrey. Keynote Speech, UNWTO Global Forum, March 6 – 7, 2011. Andorra la Vella, Andorra.

[4] UNWTO. *Tourism 2020 Vision*. 2001, Madrid.

[5] Shillong Declaration on Development and Tourism: Statement of Consultation sponsored by the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism, Churches of North East India, and the National Council of Churches in India, March 29 – 31, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

[6] Kassis, Rami. *Introduction,* '*Combating Dispossession*'. Alternative Tourism Group, Palestine, 2008

[7] ECOT, '*Sustainable Tourism and CBT*'. Contours Vol 21, No 2, July 2011.

[8] Cabrini, Luigi. *'Tourism, Climate Change and the Millennium Development Goals'*, in 'Disaster Prevention in Tourism: Perspectives on Climate Justice'. Caesar D'Mello, Jonathan McKeown, and Sabine Minninger, Eds., ECOT, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2009.

[9] O'Grady, Ron. *'The Threat of Tourism: Challenge to the Church'*, pp 63-64. Risk Book, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2006.

[10] IFC, World Bank, MIGA. *Tourism and Global Development*. 2000.

[11] ECOT/NCCI. Chennai Statement on the Theology of Tourism. March 19 – 21, Chennai, India

[12] *Ibid.*

Tourist Gaze and the Subaltern Oppositional Gaze: Theological Re-imaginations

George Zachariah

This article is an attempt to examine how commercial tourism, through its dominant gaze, commodifies subaltern communities and their lifeworld for plunder and profit. "Subaltern" refers to communities who are made powerless because of their subordination due to caste, ethnicity, gender, class, colonial attitudes and other constructs that continues to exist in various forms around the world marginalising many. Taking examples from the Global South, the article exposes the violence on subaltern communities and the earth perpetrated by commercial tourism, and invites us to recognise and engage with the subaltern oppositional gaze in order to redeem our world. Informed by the subaltern oppositional gaze, the article initiates a counter theological imagination proposing Alternative Tourism. The invitation by Alternative Tourism Group to "Come and see" is a call to rethink our looking practices and to enhance our humanity by coming out of the imperial gaze by being in solidarity with the movements of life in our times.

When the tourists flew in, our island people
metamorphosed into a grotesque carnival
A two-week sideshow

When the tourists flew in, our men put aside
their fishing nets to become waiters
Our women became whores

When the tourists flew in, what culture we had
flew out of the window

We traded our customs for sunglasses and pop
We turned sacred ceremonies into ten-cent peep shows

When the tourists flew in, we could no longer
go down to our beaches
The hotel manager said; "Natives defile the sea-shore"

When the tourists flew in, the hunger and the squalor
were preserved as a passing pageant
For clicking cameras, a chic eye-sore!

When the tourists flew in, we were asked
to be 'side-walk ambassadors'
To stay smiling and polite
to always guide the 'lost' visitor…
Hell, if we could only tell them
Where we really want them to go![1]

Commercial tourism is the invasion of the logic and ethics of market into our communities and our lifeworld. As Cecil Rajendra articulates beautifully in the poem, commercial tourism commodifies human beings, nature, and cultures, to maximise wealth. It also dehumanises the tourists by converting their vacation, pilgrimage and leisure into unjust and destructive activities that are dangerous to the future of life on earth. It is the tourist gaze that discursively determines and socially constructs the reality as exotic objects and commodities for enjoyment and consumption. "People gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education."[2] The tourist gaze reduces subaltern communities and their cultures into lifeless commodities and artifacts for pleasure and profit, desecrating subaltern sacred commons and thereby erasing their agency and dignity. The term "subaltern" here refers to communities who are made powerless because of their subordination due to caste, ethnicity, gender, class and the like. The prevailing order has pushed them to the peripheries, disabling their speechability and agency. Subaltern response to tourist gaze is not mere lamentations of victimisation; rather they are engaged in alternative looking practices – oppositional gaze – through which they contest the tourist gaze and affirm their dignity, agency, and subjectivity. This article is an attempt to understand the subaltern critique of commercial tourism and subaltern practices of an oppositional gaze to construct theological and ethical reflections on commercial tourism to inform our ethical praxis in the context of the tourist gaze in our communities.

Tourist Gaze: Narratives from the Margins

Almost ten years ago, the day after Christmas day, the coastal communities in South and South East Asia cried aloud when giant waves in the form of Tsunami invaded their shores. Death literally hunted down the households in the coastline resulting in the untimely death of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. Millions were displaced from their livelihood. The scars of the Tsunami are yet to be healed. The dominant narratives explained the Tsunami as a natural calamity, and blamed overpopulation as the reason for the magnitude of the disaster. The groaning that refuses to fade down is in fact a counter narrative: A counter narrative that exposes the structural sin and injustice that cause eco-crisis and genocide.

The coastal regions of the countries affected by the 2004 Tsunami have been undergoing tremendous changes in recent years. In the era of globalisation, as there is no salvation outside the market, it is imperative to enter the bandwagon of progress and development by linking local economies with transnational capital. Globalisation has invaded the coastal regions of these countries in the form of commercial tourism. Tourist resorts and hotels conquered the coast line destroying the tropical mangrove forests, one of the world's most important ecosystems. Mangrove swamps have been nature's protection for the coastal regions from the large waves. They also serve as the habitat for three-fourths of the commercial fish species that spend part of their lifecycle in the mangrove swamps.

The coastal regions, the habitats of the traditional fisher people, have been converted into tourist resorts to attract tourists and thereby foreign exchange. Many of the tourist resorts that mushroomed in the coastal areas came into being by uprooting hundreds of villages of the fisher people, who used to live in a harmonious relationship with the ocean. Thousands of hectares of mangrove forests and other bushes were cleared to make the resorts beautiful for the tourists. Traditional communities have been displaced from their land and livelihood to welcome the transnational corporations to take over and abuse their land, water, and environment. The groaning from the tsunami-affected communities exposes this correlation between ecological disaster and globalisation. This narrative is based on the very fact that the tsunami could not destroy coastal villages covered with mangroves. In other words, the tsunami was more than a natural calamity. It was the consequence of the commodification and plunder of the ecosystem for profit.

The grand plan to redeem the war-torn Sri Lanka predated the tsunami by two years. The priests of this redemptive mission to perform the entry of Sri Lanka into the world economy were USAID, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The experts identified tourism as the panacea for Sri Lanka's accumulated ills. "Under the plan, Sri Lanka's jungles…would be opened up to adventure eco-tourists…Its religions…would be retrofitted to nourish the spiritual needs of Western visitors – Buddhists monks could run meditation centres, Hindu women could perform colourful dances at hotels, Ayurvedic medical clinics could soothe aches and pains."[3] Sri Lanka thus became the high-end tourist destination by combining luxury, wilderness, adventure, pilgrimage, and ecological tranquility into a single package. But in order to facilitate this redemptive plan, the government had to prepare the way: The government changed the prevailing legal barriers to private land ownership. It also changed the labour laws according to the interests of the investors. The government further initiated modernisation of the infrastructure – highways, airports, water and electricity. Global financial institutions were generous enough through their loans to help the government to prepare the way of redemption. Finally that dawn has come when "the poorest among them were being asked to give up the little plots of land and property they had – a vegetable garden, a simple house, a boat – so that a Marriott or a Hilton could build a golf course and villagers could pursue careers as street hawkers in Colombo."[4]

We see the same tension between the dominant gaze and the oppositional gaze in the life and ministry of Jesus, and the gospels contain vivid descriptions of how Jesus, through his oppositional gaze, confronted the dominant gaze. The oppositional gaze of Jesus was a gaze of compassionate justice, which not only challenged the prevailing order and its gaze, but also liberated people from the bondage of a dominant gaze, and enabled their agency and selfhood to restore their lost humanity.

This is the time when the giant waves visited the small island. For the then President Chandrika Kumaratunga, the tsunami was a kind of "religious epiphany," which helped her to see the "free-market light." "We are a country blessed with so many natural resources, and we have not made use of them fully… so nature itself must have thought 'enough is enough' and whacked us from all sides and taught us a lesson to be together." Tsunami was a divine punishment for failing to sell off Sri Lanka's beaches and forests!

Standing at the ravaged beaches of Sri Lanka, Naomi Klein observed: "And yet, underneath the rubble and the carnage was what the tourism industry had been angling for all along – a pristine beach, scrubbed clean of all the messy signs of people working, a vacation Eden. It was the same up and down the coast: once the rubble was cleaned away, what was left was…Paradise."[5]

According to Herman Kumara of the National Fisheries Solidarity Movement in Sri Lanka, it was "a second tsunami of corporate globalization and militarization, potentially even more devastating than the first. We see this as a plan of action amidst the tsunami crisis to hand over the sea and the coast to foreign corporations and tourism, with military assistance from the US marines."[6] As Naomi Klein observes, "The two economic poles of globalization, the ones that seem to live in different centuries, not countries, were suddenly put in direct conflict over the same pieces of coastline, one demanding the right to work, the other demanding the right to play. Backed up by the guns of local police and private security, it was militarised gentrification, class war on the beach."[7] Disasters are not only caused by corporate interests but they also provide the corporations new opportunities to continue their pillage in the name of humanitarian interventions and reconstruction. Naomi Klein calls this phenomenon "the disaster capitalism."

The post-tsunami redemption package was christened as reconstruction, and the community felt it as "victimising the victims, and exploiting the exploited." So the victims were angry and they protested against the salvific mission of reconstruction. Narrating a protest march that she witnessed in Arugam Bay, Naomi Klein writes: "As they marched past the hotels, a young man in a white T-shirt with a red megaphone led the demonstrators in a call-and-response. 'We don't want, we don't want…' he called out, and the crowd shouted back, 'Tourist hotels!' Then he shouted, 'Whites…' and they cried, 'Get out!' Another young man, skin toughened by the sun and the ocean, took over megaphone duties and yelled, 'We do want, we do want…' and the answers came flying: 'Our land back!' 'Our homes back!' 'A fishing port!' 'Our aid money!' 'Famine, famine!' he shouted, and the crowd replied, 'Fisher people are facing famine!'"[8]

Problematising the Tourist Gaze

In common parlance, tourism is generally understood as a private leisure-time activity that enhances human flourishing and cultural interaction. However, the narratives from Sri Lanka invite us to rethink this common

perception to understand the politics of our visual perception and visual experiences. Through the tourist gaze "the native becomes the spectacle." Michael Foucualt has long back dismantled the claim that our looking practices are pure and innocent. The tourist gaze is not merely the portrayal of an existing reality out there; rather it is an epistemological activity where meaning is constructed both visually and discursively. As Urry and Larsen rightly observe, a critical study of tourism hence invites us to analyse the "processes by which the gaze is constructed and reinforced, and consider who authorises it, what its consequences are for the places which are its objects and how it interrelates with other social practices."[9] Said differently, through the gaze, subaltern communities and their lifeworld lose their subjectivity. For Jean Paul Sartre the gaze objectifies us and robs us of our freedom as a subject "insofar as I am the object of values which come to qualify me without my being able to act on this qualification or even to know it, I am enslaved."[10]

As Page Law rightly observes, "the tourist gaze in ethnic tourism produces the tourist and the other as differently raced, classed, gendered, and sexualised subjects through representations informed by Orientalist discourses… In ethnic tourism, enjoyment is derived specifically from the consumption of the "untouched, pristine, authentic" other. The Other becomes a commodity to be consumed for enjoyment through the tourist gaze, which is constructed through the difference between the "ordinary/everyday and the extraordinary" as well as the self and the other."[11] The gaze is the ideal and efficient medium for reinforcing the domination of the dominant. Jennifer Reinhart articulates this power dynamics of gaze in a compelling way: "Power becomes manifest in a disembodied gaze and spread over the minutest aspects of life, perpetuating itself not through external force but through internal penetration. Order is established not through steel bars but through the submission of everyone to an omnipresent and impenetrable gaze; we are seen yet cannot see."[12]

In the history of tourism, it is Thomas Cook who transformed tourism into an industry of mass consumption by introducing tourist-friendly systems such as ticketing, guiding, conducted tours, etc., to convert an otherwise expensive, risky, and unpredictable holidaying into a systematically organised product for the masses. What we find in the Cook model is the McDonaldisation of tourism, the Fordist attempt to perceive consumption as a homogenised and standardised activity. "McDonaldisation suggests that tourists crave for experiences and services that are predictable, standardised, risk-free and calculable – just like the Big Mac no matter

where it is served."[13] However, in the post-Ford era, we see a shift in the character of consumption. It rejects the notion that the primary motivation for consumption is materialistic. "Rather, satisfaction stems from anticipation, from imaginative pleasure-seeking ... People seek to experience in reality the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imagination."[14] Commercial tourism thus became an "experience economy" where the service providers are transformed into "stagers of sensation," which we find in Disney theme parks. "Disneyisation is a strategy through which businesses seek to increase the value of good and services by transforming them into differentiated experiences magically making the ordinary extraordinary." The gaze is an important category in the experience economy.

Through the tourist gaze, subaltern communities and their cultures, landscapes, and historical artifacts are discursively constructed as the other, and stripped of their subjectivity and reduced to exotic commodities for the consumption of the tourist. For example, sex-tourism reduces bodies as objects of tourist gaze. Tourism departments of several countries promote sex-tourism through their advertisements, exhibiting female bodies on their brochures for tourist gaze. This is how the Jamaican Tourist Board introduces the Caribbean Island of Negril: "Rugged cliffs give way to pure white beaches, making a luscious mixture of seductiveness and innocence. The sun is so warm it's almost sinful. As it melts into tranquil Caribbean sea, tempting sunsets appear as girls with cinnamon-colored skin walk the beach wearing bikinis the size of butterflies. This is your Eden. Welcome to the Negril."[15]

When subalterns work under the tourist gaze in performing service, they are expected to engage in bodily performances to please, seduce, and entertain the tourist gaze. They engage in their work faithfully without reacting to the abuse from customers and managers, subjecting themselves as inferior to the guests. They are nothing but "smiling bodies"– docile and disciplined – destined to provide satisfaction and pleasure to the gazing guests. The norm of an ideal tourist host, constructed by tourist gaze, identifies bodies that need to be excluded from the gaze of the tourists as they fail to seduce and entertain the tourist gaze. They are the "stigmatised bodies"– overweight, too old, deformed – and they will not find a front-stage job in the tourist industry. The tourist gaze is similar to a "zoological gaze" where the animals in the zoo are tamed and trained to perform theatrically for the tourist gaze.

Landscape is yet another construct of the tourist gaze. "Landscape is what the viewer has selected from the land, edited and modified in accordance with certain conventional ideas about what constitutes good view…Landscape is about how humans take control and possession of, and derive pleasure from nature...It de-materialises place."[16] The stigmatised bodies and their daily engagement with their land are excluded from the frame of the tourist gaze.

"Indigenous people do not own their own tourism and culture… We are an Indigenous Zoo and I take extreme offence to that." We hear this outburst coming from a member of the Hawaiin indigenous community echoed from other subaltern communities all over the world. Johar, the manifesto of the Jharkhand Organisation for Human Rights (India) articulates beautifully the anguish and anger of the subaltern communities against the dominant gaze. "Johar for us in Jharkhand is more than just a word in our language. Johar is a spirit, an attitude, a feeling and an expression of welcome, of gratitude, of praise, of togetherness, a salutation. It is the word we first use when we meet one another for the first time. We said Johar to you, but our song and dance, our language and folklore have become just pages in books of libraries where your anthropologists can debate over. Thus you have distorted our history. You have misinterpreted our culture, and made it a commodity to be marketed at your universities and seminars. We said Johar to you."[17]

"Exotic" tourism and ecotourism are the best examples of the tourist gaze where the indigenous communities, their landscape and cultures are packaged into marketable commodities for the tourist gaze. Through that process the subaltern communities are discursively constructed as exotic. The Incredible India campaign of the Ministry of Tourism brochure presents North East India as the "Paradise Unexplored." In the brochure, tribal villages are depicted as "mystical, paradise-like, intriguing places that provide the viewer a glimpse of mystery, a taste of an alien culture."[18]

Ecotourism, emerging from a bio-centric and misanthropic understanding of ecological consciousness, advocates conservation, and as a result, large numbers of indigenous people are uprooted and displaced from their ancestral lands to facilitate ecotourism. The process of conservation is carried out through creating Protected Areas, National Parks and Sanctuaries, protected from the subaltern communities, the "ecological ethnicities," who have been living in communion with forest and its flora and fauna from time immemorial. According to official statistics, India has 650 protected areas and 2 million conservation refugees, the victims of conservationism and eco-tourism.

Cultural tourism or heritage tourism is yet another form of the tourist gaze disguised as creative, educational, and cultural experience. Commoditisation of subaltern culture is the biggest casualty in cultural tourism. Cultural practices of traditional communities which are intrinsic to their spirituality, ethics, and identity are converted and packaged into products for the tourist gaze and consumption. The tourist gaze converts traditional motifs into artifacts and souvenirs, and traditional dresses and accessories into costumes.

India's "tryst with destiny" on the midnight of August 14, 1947 was not just the inauguration of an independent nation, but also the beginning of a new form of colonisation. The development gaze perceived commons such as land, forests and waters as untapped resources to be plundered for "common good" and "national interest."The subaltern communities in India are the offerings sacrificed for the construction of mega dams, heavy industries, and expressways – the modern day temples of India. These avatars of progress and development in India are built on the colonised land and the colonised bodies of the subalterns. Tourism in India today initiates pilgrimages to these "holy shrines." Mega dams have become holiday destinations as "tourism is developed on the watery graves of people's homes and lands. What were once thriving villages and hamlets, where people had lived for centuries and contributed to the regeneration of forests and its biodiversity are now reduced to endless lakes. The pleasure-seeking tourist is often oblivious to the tragedy that rests beneath and to what may have transpired before a dam was built; before a community was displaced."[19] The Gujarat government's plan to erect a 182 meters tall statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, christened as Statue of Unity, in Kevadia near the Sardar Sarovar Dam is the best example for this.

Commercial tourism has become a corporate venture thanks to the Corporate Gaze and subsequent invasion of the lifeworld of the subaltern communities in the name of growth, progress, and eco-tourism. The corporate tourist industry is not only insensitive towards the impact of the industry on the subaltern communities and their lifeworld, but also is reluctant to respect the rights of the communities and to be responsible for the negative impacts of the tourist industry on these communities. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a strategic package emerged from the logic of neo-liberal capitalism to provide a human face to corporations with an attempt to redeem and absolve the sins of the corporations. The World Business Council on Sustainable Development defines CSR as the "commitment of business to

Commercial tourism commodifies human beings, nature, and cultures, to maximise wealth. It also dehumanises the tourists by converting their vacation, pilgrimage and leisure into unjust and destructive activities that are dangerous to the future of life on earth. It is the tourist gaze that discursively determines and socially constructs the reality as exotic objects and commodities for enjoyment and consumption.

contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life."[20]

Corporations are created to accumulate wealth through corporate gaze and commodification of "cheap lives" and the landscapes of the subalterns. CSR is an ethics-coated strategy to address and solve the legitimation crisis of the corporations. The destructive impacts of corporate greed on subaltern communities and their commons raise serious questions about the legitimacy of corporations. CSR with its commitment to intervene in the lives of the communities with humanitarian aid is cleverly used by the corporations to regain their lost legitimacy. In the tourism sector, the corporate hospitality industry is actively involved in CSR initiatives. After displacing hundreds of fishing communities from their traditional abodes and occupation, through CSR the industry offers the victims of their gaze employment opportunity, food supplies, and scholarships for school children. One of the corporate hotels on the outskirts of Chennai has employed young people from the local community to protect the hotel from the peoples' movement against displacement! Said differently, CSR is used to divide the subalterns to protect corporate interests.

Corporate Accountability, according to Friends of the Earth, affirms "the ability of those affected by a corporation to control that corporation's operations."[21] Unlike CSR, Corporate Accountability proposes a shift in power. It is focused on impacts and regulations, and it makes corporations accountable to the communities affected by the corporate gaze. Corporate Accountability is possible only with strict governmental regulations which are closely monitored by the subaltern communities. Differently said, Corporate Accountability becomes effective only through the oppositional gaze of the subaltern communities that expose and contest the corporate tourist gaze.

Subaltern Oppositional Gaze: Affirming Agency and Subjectivity

The theory of the gaze as an instrument of domination has contributed immensely to develop critical consciousness about the subtle ways through which the hegemony of the dominant is perpetuated and reinforced in our times. It has also inspired communities and scholars from the margins to develop alternative theoretical models to contest the silencing and disciplining gaze from the centre. In the field of film studies, bell hooks contrasted the theory of male gaze with her theory of the "oppositional gaze" informed by the resistance and affirmation of agency of black women spectators. For hooks, "there are moments of rupture in film where….many female black spectators have actively refused to identify with the film, choosing to laugh or criticize the white representations of blackness that they saw rather than be defined by them."[22] She further states that "the ability to manipulate one's gaze in the face of structures of domination opens up the possibility of agency."[23]

"Oppositional gaze," is therefore an epistemological category for bell hooks. When the oppositional gaze is absent in the perception of the subalterns, they do not see reality differently due to the colonisation of their perception by the dominant ways of seeing and knowing. So an active collective resistance to dominant ways of knowing is a pre-requisite for a subaltern oppositional gaze. To put it in bell hooks' words, with an oppositional gaze "we do more than resist. We create *alternative texts* that are not solely reactions. As critical spectators, (we) participate in a broad range of looking relations, contest, resist, revision, interrogate, and invent on multiple levels."[24] The affirmation of lived experience as the primary source of knowledge is essentially a revolt against the dominant epistemology deduced through the gaze. It proclaims the embodiment of knowing in the everyday lived experiences of the communities. For Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz the epistemological function of experience is to indicate that "the struggles of the poor and the oppressed taking place in the underside of history constitutes the place, the moment—the horizon—of grassroots people's knowledge of reality. There is a triple dimension to knowing reality: becoming aware/ getting to know reality, taking responsibility for reality, and transforming reality."[25]

So lived experience becomes epistemological when subaltern communities transform this experience into an oppositional knowledge through the oppositional gaze. It involves a critical understanding of the dominant gaze and the reality of subordination, and a vision and the political

strategy to replace that reality with just and participatory social relations. It is the "coming to voice" and "coming to power" of the subalterns. Said differently, it is seeing from the vantage point of the subalterns that has the potential to create oppositional knowledge.

Subaltern Oppositional Gaze: Theological Re-imaginations

Contextual theological re-imaginations demand from us the courage and commitment to transgress the dominant ways of doing theology. The marginalised are no more a category that provides the professional theologians the missing data – their experience of marginalisation; rather they are epistemic communities that create oppositional knowledge. It is the seeing from their vantage point that has the potential to create transformative knowledge and politics. Subaltern oppositional gaze questions the claim of normativity of the dominant gaze, and affirms the agency of their oppositional gaze to interpret their particular reality and to transform it radically. We see this conflict between the dominant gaze and the oppositional gaze in the Bible as well. However, the subaltern oppositional gaze narrated in the Bible testifies the Divine gaze as oppositional.

The first two books of the Bible contain graphic descriptions of the violence perpetuated on the enslaved people and communities by the dominant gaze. The colonial gaze of the rulers of Egypt constructed the "tribes of Yahweh" as lesser human beings, and on their colonised bodies, the imperial regime built the cities of Egypt. The male gaze of Abraham legitimised the sexual abuse of Hagar, the slave girl, and the subsequent disinheritance of Hagar and Ishmael. The groaning of the enslaved people reverberated in Egypt and in the wilderness were not groaning of despair and resignation; rather they were lamentations of protest against the dominant gaze. In the lamentations of the subalterns they discovered the Divine gaze as an oppositional gaze. God reveals Godself as the one who sees the misery of the slaves (Exodus 3:7). Transgressing the Jewish tradition, Hagar named God, "*El Roi*; the God who sees me" (Genesis 16: 13). We see here the theological re-imaginations, emerging from the oppositional gaze of the subalterns, which testify God's seeing too as oppositional gaze: An oppositional gaze which not only shares the pain and pathos of the wretched of the earth, but liberates them from the shackles of oppression and exclusion.

We see the same tension between the dominant gaze and the oppositional gaze in the life and ministry of Jesus, and the gospels contain vivid descriptions of how Jesus, through his oppositional gaze, confronted the dominant gaze.

The oppositional gaze of Jesus was a gaze of compassionate justice, which not only challenged the prevailing order and its gaze, but also liberated people from the bondage of the dominant gaze, and enabled their agency and selfhood to restore their lost humanity. For Pope Francis, Jesus' gaze provides us dignity. "It is a look that always lifts us up, and never leaves you in your place, never lets us down, never humiliates. It invites you to get up – a look that brings you to grow, to move forward, that encourages you, because [the One who looks upon you] loves you. This gives the courage to follow Him. Tax collectors and sinners felt that Jesus had looked on them and that gaze of Jesus upon them – I believe – was like a breath on embers, and they felt that there was fire in the belly, again, and that Jesus made them lifted up, gave them back their dignity. The gaze of Jesus always makes us worthy, gives us dignity."[26]

The Markan narrative of Jesus healing the man with a withered hand in the synagogue explains the contrast between the dominant gaze and the oppositional gaze. "Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They *watched* him to *see* whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He *looked around at them with anger*; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him." (Mark 3: 1-6)[27] The pharisaic gaze is a gaze that defends, and perpetuates a religiosity that legitimises the status quo. Whereas the oppositional gaze of Jesus is a gaze filled with moral anger that brings about healing and restoration through violating the norms and morality of the prevailing order. Said differently, in our times, we see the Divine gaze in the subaltern oppositional gaze to overthrow the prevailing order for the healing of all.

Another Tourism is Possible: Alternatives Emerging from Subaltern Oppositional Gaze

The subaltern oppositional gaze emerging from the marginalised communities around the world raise profound questions on the claims of corporate commercial tourism as the sole agent for human flourishing and cultural interaction. Exposing the tourist gaze and its inherent colonial, racist, casteist,

and patriarchal ethos, subaltern communities courageously proclaim that another tourism is possible. Let us look at three subaltern attempts to re-imagine tourism informed by subaltern oppositional gaze.

River Narmada is considered as the lifeline of Central India as it flourishes and nourishes life in diverse ways in three central and western Indian states. It is considered as one of the holiest rivers in Hinduism. The Narmada *Parikarma* is a sacred ritual practiced from ancient times in which pilgrims circumambulate the river barefoot. Traditionally, the *parikarma* takes three years, three months and three days to complete. The pilgrims on *parikarma* are required to follow certain ascetic practices which include going barefoot, not cutting any hair, collecting food grains through alms, eating only once a day, bathing in the Narmada once a day, abstaining from sexual activity, and refraining from speaking lies, malice and hostility. The *parikarma* enables the pilgrims to perceive the universe in its physical as well as mystical form. When development became a fetish in India, mega projects such as dams have been perceived and consecrated as the new temples and shrines. Thus Narmada was dammed through the construction of several thousands of mega, big, and small dams. Damming of Narmada is considered as "India's greatest planned environmental disaster."Narmada Bachao Andolan, the historic social movement of the communities in the Narmada Valley, in its campaign against the violence of development in the valley, has creatively been using traditional pilgrimages such as Narmada Parikarma to create awareness against the destruction of the river and the community of life in the valley by enabling the community to realize the sacredness of the river as it nurtures, supports, and protects life in the valley. In 2008, Friends of the River Narmada, under the leadership of Arundhati Roy organised a Rally for the Valley, which provided a rich experience to a wider community of people from all over the world to visit the valley, and to join the struggles of the subaltern communities. What we find here is an alternative tourism where people engage in pilgrimage and tourism which not only help them in flourishing their humanity, but also provide them a unique opportunity to immerse in the struggles of the subaltern communities to save life.[28]

Chengara is a beautiful mountain strip in the southern plantation belt of Kerala. Today Chengara is the site of a new politics and spirituality as tens of thousands of landless dalits and adivasis occupy the plantation land there. In spite of land reform, the majority of the dalits and adivasis in Kerala are

still landless. Communities who have been living in communion with the land from time immemorial, practising prudential care of the earth, are alienated from land and agriculture. Some of them possess ¾ cent, 2 cents and 4 cents in colonies situated on the sides of the streets and streams. There are about 12,500 dalit colonies and 4,083 adivasi colonies in the state, where they are destined to live without basic amenities, violating their human and civil rights to lead a dignified life. There are even instances of landless people burying their dear ones in pits made in their very huts.

It is in this context that a subaltern movement initiated the Chengara struggle to reclaim the land for the landless, demanding permanent ownership of agricultural land through transfer of ownership from corporate monopolies. Around 5,000 families and 29,000 people joined the struggle from all over the state, and occupied about 2,000 acres of land, currently under the possession of Harrison Malayalam Limited. The movement has developed a commune in the occupied land. The land struggle exposes the casteist nature of not only the social relations in India, but also the dominant environmental movements. According to statistics, 85% of the landless in Kerala are dalits and adivasis, and their deprivation in terms of social, economic, and political capital and their landlessness are interconnected. It is in this context that Chengara becomes prophetic as it rejects the dominant casteist environmentalism, and initiates a new politics of combining the struggles to eradicate caste system with the struggles for ecological justice.

Chengara is a counter narrative to the dominant political culture of our times. Communities uprooted by the colonisation of their lifeworld are creating a new politics which is not dictated by any meta-narratives. In their struggle for land, they expose the correlation between caste, race, patriarchy, poverty, and neo-liberal economic policies. Chengara has developed an earth-centred commune with its own social practices, spirituality, and political praxis. We find in their spirituality, expressed through their rituals and songs, a rejection of the ungods who perpetuate the dispossession and marginalisation of the dalits and the adivasis. The rejection of the ungods leads to the search for new meanings and expressions of the divine in their midst. The spiritual practices of the community herald the dawn of alternative social and ecological relations. They have developed a commune in the occupied land and transformed it into a commune that experiments and practises an alternative worldview and community living. They have converted the rubber estate into an organic farm practising prudent care of the earth and the

community of creation. Chengara is situated in a region which is known for its pilgrim centers like Sabarimala, Aranmula, Maramon, and Manjanikkara. Chengara can be the site of an alternative tourism and pilgrimage, which will help us to experience a deep-rooted spirituality emerging from the historical struggles of the subalterns to abolish casteism and to create life affirming inclusive communities.

Alternative Tourism Group (ATG) is a Palestinian NGO established in 1995 to initiate alternative justice tourism "which holds as its central goals the creation of economic opportunities for the local community, positive cultural exchange between host and guest through one-on-one interaction, the protection of the environment and political/historical education."[29] ATG, through Justice Tourism, instills in us the audacity to believe that alternative tourism is possible. The basic ethos and vision of this alternative tourism is found in the words of Father Elias Chacour: "You Westerners have been coming to the Holy Land for centuries to visit the shrines, the dead stones. But you do not see the living stones – the human beings who live and struggle before your eyes. I say 'wake up!' What matters are the living stones!"[30]

This statement is a bold critique of the tourist gaze, and it comes out of the disturbing reality that the majority of the tourists to the Holy Land goes there and returns without a genuine attempt to understand the life of the Palestinian communities under Israeli occupation. "Only by living what Palestinians experience all the time can a visitor recognize the injustices that are their daily bread."[31] Justice tourism, therefore, is an organic experience of deeper fellowship of communities through hospitality where our diverse and distinct horizons meet together to celebrate the beauty of human solidarity. Just and alternative tourism re-imagines tourism as a holistic experience of mutual flourishing, where both the guests and the hosts reject the neo-liberal exploitative trajectory of tourism and develop tourism and pilgrimage that protect the environment, improve the economic needs of the host communities, bring about justice and peace in the host communities, and enhance the humanity of both the

"Exotic" tourism and ecotourism are the best examples of the tourist gaze where the indigenous communities, their landscape and cultures are packaged into marketable commodities for the tourist gaze. Through that process the subaltern communities are discursively constructed as exotic.

hosts and the guests. It is a deeper spiritual experience which nourishes the guests through their organic engagement with the host communities – their cultures, environment, spiritualities, and history without the motive of exploitation and commodification. Justice tourism is committed to widen understanding, mutual learning, economic flourishing, environmental protection, and hospitality.

The Code of Conduct for travellers to the Holy Land developed by Palestinian organisations is an attempt to promote justice tourism: "Respect and learn about the local culture. Observe local customs. Interact and spend time with local people. Be aware that your cultural values may differ from theirs. Other values are not wrong or inferior; just different. Make sure that you encounter and engage with the local communities who are struggling for the respect of their dignity. Support the host communities in a responsible way, without encouraging them to change their customs in order to adopt yours. Co-operate with locals in conserving precious natural resources. Buy local products. Contribute to ensuring that tourism has a beneficial outcome for the local community. Use local transportation, guides, accommodation, restaurants and markets to benefit the local economy. Take time to live and experience the daily life of the local people."[32]

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land has become a regular program for several of the urban churches, including in India. Christian leaders have been lobbying with government officials for providing subsidies for their pilgrimage to the Holy Lands to "enable poor Christians to strengthen their faith and knowledge about Jesus Christ to live a better spiritual and moral life."[33] The Tamil Nadu government has already set apart 20 million rupees ($335,000) to provide subsidy for Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land for the next two years. At the same time, there are critical introspections on the theology and politics of our "Christian" pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Church of South India (CSI) has already made the bold decision not to renew the contract with EL AL, the official airlines of Israel to publish their advertisement in *CSI Life*, the official magazine of the CSI. Viji Varghese Eapen, the former director of the Department of Ecumenical Relations and Ecological Concerns of CSI observes that, "Unfortunately we seem to foster some kind of geo-polity, forgetting the fact that, every rupee that we contribute towards the so called 'holy tours' goes to the 'unholy war' by Israel against the Palestinians."[34] For the people of Palestine, "who consider it to be an ongoing *nakba* (catastrophe) for the past 64 years, tourism that legitimizes the occupation of their land is the last thing they want."[35]

Alternative Justice Tourism is a call to repentance. In our dominant models of pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, we tend to "come to the Holy Land as spectators, touring holy sites as they would be museums, not caring or realising that for Palestinian Christians these are living places of worship. Reflecting the pious practices of the Pharisees, we search for a personal blessing, seeking to renew an egocentric, individualistic faith. What we choose to see and do only reinforces our prejudices, preconceived notions, and limited understanding of a complex situation." Instead, we need to initiate alternative and justice pilgrimages, challenging the stereotypes and untruths about the communities. "The genuine Christian pilgrim seeks the living Christ in the now, in solidarity with the oppressed, the poor and the imprisoned."[36]

Conclusion

The Palestinian Christians articulate the theological basis of justice tourism in a persuasive manner: "God intervenes in human history whenever life is threatened, abused, and destroyed—for the slain Abel, Uriah, Naboth, the slaves in Egypt, the poor and the widows. God revives the dry bones that 'come to life, stand on their feet and become a great army.' The reign of God is present wherever life is set free, the blind see, the lame walk and the good news of liberation is announced. God sends the prophets to liberate people from oppression and speak words of judgment. God is on an eternal pilgrimage into our here and now for the sake of justice and love. God's incarnation in Christ is God's way of entering into the moral struggles of the world and showing us how to live a truly human life. Jesus identifies himself with all those unjustly treated in order to expose injustice."[37]

Pilgrimage and tourism for us today is to become incarnate in the here and now, entering into the struggles of the world as moral presence of transformation. "Come and see" is the invitation emerging from these sites of subaltern resistance and celebration, where communities at the margins contest the objectifying and thingifying gaze of the dominant and initiate alternative looking practices, affirming their dignity, selfhood, and agency. "Come and see" is a call to rethink our looking practices and to flourish our humanity by coming out of the imperial gaze by being in solidarity with the movements of life in our times.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1. Develop a case study on the tourist gaze based on your own tourist experience, narrating and analysing how dominant ways of seeing contribute to the process of commodification.
2. What are the theological foundations to propose a subaltern oppositional gaze as counter hegemonic praxis that can create a redeemed earth?
3. Critique commercial tourism and its tourist gaze biblically?
4. Elaborate on the role of Church in the campaign, "Another Tourism is Possible?"

Endnotes

1 Cecil Rajendra, *Bones and Feathers*, Singapore: Heinemann, 1978
2 John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, London: Sage, 2011, 2
3 Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, (New York: Picador, 2007), 495.
4 Ibid., 498.
5 Ibid., 490.
6 Quoted in George Zachariah, *Alternatives Unincorporated: Earth Ethics from the Grassroots*, (London: Equinox Press, 2011), 34.
7 Naomi Klein, Op cit., 508.
8 Naomi Klein, Op cit., 492.
9 *The Tourist Gaze*, Op cit., 2.
10 Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1956, 110.
11 http://prospectjournal.org/2012/04/20/ethnic-tourism-the-spectacle-of-the-other/
12 http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/gaze.htm
13 Ibid, 54
14 Ibid., 51. For a detailed analysis of the character of consumption, see Campbell C, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.
15 *The Tourist Gaze*, Op cit., 68.
16 *The Tourist Gaze*, Op Cit., 110
17 http://www.equitabletourism.org/stage/files/fileDocuments377_uid10.pdf
18 http://www.equitabletourism.org/stage/files/fileDocuments377_uid10.pdf
19 http://www.equitabletourism.org/stage/files/fileDocuments975_uid11.pdf
20 http://www.equitabletourism.org/files/fileDocuments1427_uid20.pdf
21 Ibid
22 http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/gaze.htm
23 bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, New York: South End Press, 1992, 121.
24 bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in *Feminist Postcolonial*

Theory: A Reader, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, London, New York: Routledge, 2003, 218. Emphasis added.

[25] Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, "*Lo Cotidiano*: A Key Element of *Mujerista* Theology," *Journal of Hispanic/Latina Theology*, 10:1, 2002: 13.

[26] http://ncronline.org/blogs/francis-chronicles/francis-gaze-jesus-gives-us-dignity

[27] New Revised Standard Version, Emphasis added

[28] For a detailed study of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, see Ivy Singh, *Voices from Narmada: Doing Ecofeminst Theology*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2009, and George Zachariah, *Alternatives Unincorporated: Earth Ethics from the Grassroots*, London: Equinox Press, 2011

[29] Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, "Living Stones and Dead Children: Palestine and the Politics of Tourism," in *Contours* Vol. 20, No. 2 June-July 2010, 6

[30] Ibid., 5.

[31] Quoted in Philip Mathew, "Holy Land Pilgrims Urged to Show Concern for Palestinians," in *Contours* Vol. 20, No. 2 June-July 2010, 9

[32] *Come and See: A Journey for Peace with Justice: Guidelines for Christians Contemplating a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, 17-18.

[33] http://www.sezariworld.com/component/content/article/48-india/1508-dispose-of-pleas-on-christian-pilgrimage-subsidy-apex-court-tells-ap-hc

[34] Quoted in Samuel Abraham, "A Helping Hand," in *Frontline*, August 24, 2012, 63 .

[35] Ibid., 60.

[36] *come and See*, Op cit., 11.

[37] *Come and See*, Op cit., 12.

3

Tourism Development: Indigenous Communities and Commodification

Marina Ngursangzeli Behera

The discussion in this material will resonate with indigenous communities in other parts of the world. The northeast region of India (NEI), comprising Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Sikkim, has been considered by most Indians a fringe part of the country. However, the Look East Policy (LEP) of the Indian Government has opened up the region for economic development, seeing it as a gateway to the southeast Asian countries, and supported through a dedicated Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER). Tourism has been identified as a key feature of development here with culture and ethnic diversity, special events, handicrafts, unspoiled beauty, wildlife, biodiversity hotspots, river cruises, tea, and Buddhist attractions as the main tourism products. What are the motives behind the Indian government's sudden interest in the region? Who benefits? Whose development is being discussed and given priority? This article also seeks to scrutinise the presenting issues in light of the values of the Kingdom of God, linked with considerations of liberation, peace, social and economic exploitation, and justice. Broadly speaking, the nature of what is evolving in Northeast India would ring familiar to concerned people in other regions of indigenous significance, and hence this chapter offers an insight and a springboard for a comparable analysis in other parts of the Global South.

Introduction

Northeast India is a region poorly connected to the Indian mainland by a small corridor, and is surrounded by Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and China. The traditional tribes in the northeast are historically linked as they are largely of Tibeto-Burman/Mongoloid stock, and are closer to Southeast Asia than to South Asia. Their region is ethnically, linguistically and culturally distinct from the other states of India. Interestingly, 99 per cent of the northeast's boundaries are international and only one percent is domestic. The eight states comprising the northeast are populated by nearly 40 million inhabitants who among themselves vary in language, race, tribe, religion, and regional heritage. Therefore, most often, the clubbing of all these states under the tag of 'Northeast' has tended to have a homogenising effect with its own set of implications for policy formulation and implementation, not to mention local aversion to such a construct.

For a long time, the NEI region has been ignored both politically and economically. Today, there is serious interest being shown in the region, receiving more attention than ever. A Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) was established in 2001 to specifically oversee socio-economic development there. The potential of the NEI region is now recognised and acknowledged by the Indian Government and the neighbouring countries that border this region.

In the new millennium, as in the previous one, the tourism industry has become a major component of economic globalisation. Tourism, considered as the largest industry in the service sector, continues to seek out the last 'Shangri-las' in the once most isolated places, such as Northeast India being opened up for outsiders. The indigenous ways of earning their livelihood have been replaced with those that cater to the needs and demands of the tourist market. Himanshi Dhawan in her article "Northeast emerges as the new hotspot for tourists" in *The Times of India* wrote:

> The number of tourists, both domestic and international, heading for the northeast has gone up dramatically in the past year....
>
> Till recently, these states, beautiful and unexplored as they were, rated low on tourist options … But effective initiatives by local governments, travel companies and airlines have changed all that.[1]

This paper deals with the phenomenon of tourism development in the NEI region and the commodification of indigenous culture, linking it with the overall developmental programmes that have been proposed and initiated

by the Central (Federal) government, and its partners like the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC). This will trigger several questions such as: what are the motives behind the sudden interest of the Central government and other neighbouring Asian countries in the region? Who benefits from such development programmes? From whose perspectives, and to serve whose purposes have the plans and initiatives for development been made? Whose development is being discussed and given priority? What will be the costs that the people of the NEI region have to pay for all these development programmes/projects initiated by the Central government and its partners from neighbouring countries? It will not be possible to deal with all these questions in a comprehensive manner within the scope of this paper, though it is hoped that these questions will provide the backdrop for further exploration in the Global South, including India. The main question that this paper will be focusing on is: what are the impacts all these development programmes/projects will have, specifically in relation to tourism development and people's cultures? One also needs to ask and reflect on what and who is being marketed and being sold in today's globalised market.

We will use the term "culture" to talk about the distinctive way of life, traditions, beliefs and practices of the various indigenous people of the NEI regions. By "commodification" we mean the whole process by which all these elements are imaged and sold into saleable products with tangible and intangible qualities.

Programmes/projects for the development of Northeast India

The ADB in 2005 announced a face-lift project for five capital towns of NEI[2] under the Northeastern Region Urban Development Plan, scheduled to be completed within the next six years.[3] The ADB promoted SASEC focusing on enabling regional cooperation in six sectors: energy and power, transportation, tourism, environment, trade and investment and private sector participation. This initiative involves four countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. In India, it covers 13 states of which seven are Northeast Indian states. The Tourism Working Group was formed in 2001 and comprises the National Tourism Ministries/Boards of the four countries and ADB officers. Importantly, Sri Lanka joined the Tourism Working Group in November 2005 although it is not technically part of SASEC. The SASEC Tourism Development Plan (TDP)[4] released in 2004 identified the NEI region as a 'Key Area' in the SASEC TDP due to its 'unrealized potential

as an ecotourism product' and international borders with Nepal, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Burma. Identifying culture and ethnic diversity, special events, handicrafts, unspoiled beauty, wildlife, biodiversity hotspots, river cruises, tea tourism and Buddhist attractions as the key tourism products of the region, a single unified ecotourism policy for the entire NEI region has also been advocated.[5]

ADB and the World Bank (WB) provide the basis and a framework for a set of development priorities designed to integrate India's northeastern region into a "pattern of economic development that largely benefits a narrow band of corporate, economic and political interests.''[6] The NEI region is of strategic importance for the country as there is no other grouping from outside of the region, which has a shared cultural and ethnic affinity with Thailand, the largest foreign direct investor in India from among all countries in Southeast Asia. This helps create a link between India and Thailand who plan for the Free Trade Agreement.

The Look East Policy (LEP)[7] and closer interactions with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have accrued huge economic benefits for India. The India-ASEAN trade has grown by 23 per cent in the last ten years, and in 2012-2013, the total trade between India and ASEAN was worth $80 billion. It is expected that with the signing of the Agreement on Free Trade Area, the total bilateral trade would increase to $100 billion by 2015 and $200 billion by 2020. The NEI region which is the gateway to the Southeast Asian countries has not really benefited from the opportunities opened up through the LEP.[8] Development of transportation and communications such as road, rail and air links in the northeast are considered a strategic means to overcome this problem and also as a means to help the NEI region integrate with the rest of the country. High visibility projects that could be implemented in a short period in the fields of health, culture, tourism, capacity building, and food processing have also been considered as desirable. Countries such as Singapore, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan would be welcomed in the northeast for capacity

What are the motives behind the sudden interest of the Central government and other neighbouring Asian countries in the region? Who benefits from such development programmes? From whose perspectives, and to serve whose purposes have the plans and initiatives for development been made? Whose development is being discussed and given priority?

building in areas such as, agriculture, tourism, hotel development, and bamboo technology.[9]

Among the many other suggestions made were that an Indo-ASEAN Cultural Centre and an Indo-ASEAN Trade Centre could be set up in the northeastern region in order to bring about closer ethnic as well as cultural links; cultural troupes from the northeast sent to ASEAN countries to showcase the ethnic and cultural ties between Northeast India and Southeast Asia; Nehru centres should be set up in Bangkok and Mandalay; travelling exhibitions sent from the northeast to a textile museum that has been set up in Simrep; the establishment of centres that would focus on Myanmar and Southeast Asian Studies in the Indian universities with courses in language, international relations, tourism and other studies on the region; an Indo-ASEAN Sports Centre in Imphal; various Buddhist monasteries in Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura should be promoted to attract Buddhist tourists from the ASEAN countries; and the promotion of tea tourism. [10]

With consolidated environmental monitoring reports for Mizoram (Aizawl), Meghalaya (Shillong), Nagaland (Kohima), Sikkim (Gangtok), and Tripura (Agartala) of the above, one will get the impression that the whole project/programme is geared towards creating more employment for the local people and also generate an increase in the local revenue. For example one can find clauses such as to "employ at least 50% of the labour force or to the maximum extent, local persons within the 2 km immediate area if manpower is available;"[11] and "to secure construction materials from local markets."[12] Claims are also being made that when there are any grievances, affected people's concerns and complaints will be promptly addressed "using an understandable and transparent process that is gender responsive, culturally appropriate, and readily accessible to all the affected people at no cost and without retribution."[13]

However, if one critically and realistically studies the impact of the model of development that had been implemented in the NEI, it is very clear that it does not benefit the local people at all. What proponents of the tourist industry promise is but a myth. The only type of employment open for the local people is at the bottom rung of the job ladder. The local people are to be employed as porters, cooks, cleaners, gardeners, drivers, security guards, entertainers and so on. They are to be paid minimum wages. Even these menial jobs often lack any formal contracts and are subject to the tourist season. In response to arguments such as commodification having multifarious advantages i.e. creating a designated identity and promoting

tourism on one hand, and on the other creating employment resources for the regional community with economic and cultural benefit,[14] we can say that the only designated identity that tourism and the sort of employment that tourism creates for the local people results in them being identified and constructed as those who should serve and cater to the needs and pleasures of the tourists, their masters, who they are expected to please.

Under the myth of sustainable tourism, the environment, natural resources, the ecosystem, the regional ecology serving as the backdrop to commercialised tourism are being continuously exploited. NEI branded by the Tourism industry as "Paradise Unexplored" is slowly turning into a place where the biodiversity of the region is threatened, where pollution is on the increase, where agricultural land and sacred spaces are being appropriated for the tourism industry and where there is a diminishing of natural resources such as potable water and energy resources. The exploitative, developmental model of tourism does not serve the indigenous people of the NEI at all, but only leads to them and their land being exploited. The question asked by a participant at a consultation held in Shillong on "Churches' Response to Development and Tourism, 2011", "When the mountain disappears, what will be our identity?"[15] is something that is worth pondering.

Tourism development in the Northeast India region

Tourism, apart from being understood as a solution to underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty eradication, and social discrimination, is considered an important catalyst in modern times to develop connectivity, fostering a global and regional socio-political environment for peaceful co-existence of the cultures and societies. Many advocates of the industry consider tourism as one of the biggest "peace industries," a means to strike equilibrium of the global peace process through development.[16]

> Tourism as a separate subject does not find a place in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India even though a number of its components are either in the Union List or in the State List or in the Concurrent List. Under the new Policy, Tourism will be placed in the Concurrent List as such a step will provide a Constitutional recognition to the tourism sector and help in channelising development of tourism in a systematic manner by enabling the Central Government to bring in legislation governing the activities of various service providers in the tourism sector.[17]

India's Tourism Policy (2002) has accorded great importance for tourism product development and diversification to increase the numbers of domestic

and international tourists. The NEI region is a major focus under various schemes of the Central Ministry of Tourism. It encourages and funds the states in this region for the development of infrastructure in the identified destinations and circuits.[18]

The Vision 2020 document released by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh[19] in 2008 for the northeastern region clearly focuses on developing services such as tourism that will help to accelerate development with a clear recognition of the considerable potential for expanding tourism.[20] It even goes as far as to say that "tourism [is] a prime and over-arching activity for NER States."[21] The long term vision apart from developing connectivity and communication was to evolve a blueprint for a common market and a common administrative and economic unit for the region by both the Central and State Government as a priority.[22] There is an emphasis on the importance of looking at the region as a whole, offering tourism that cuts across state boundaries and the need for the region to 're-brand itself' along these lines; indeed it goes as far as to say that the slogan 'Paradise Unexplored' with regard to the northeast inspires "instant recall" in the mind of an alert traveller.[23]

In 2008, the NEC (North Eastern Council) formed the North Eastern States Tourism Forum (NEST) with representation from the various states to coordinate intra-state and inter-state tourism plans, such as the consolidation of circuits and marketing.

Emphasis had been made on the improvements of tourism-related infrastructure and the relaxation of the permit system in the region by all the NEI states, and several initiatives have been taken by the different state governments in their respective states. The Assam Development Report recommended providing fiscal incentives to private entrepreneurs for the marketing of potential tourist places. The Sikkim State Development Report recommends opening up the Nathu La pass to boost tourism in the region.[24]

The link between culture and the economy, with the tourist industry as the middleman, can be seen in Vision 2020 for India where "culture" was clearly identified as the core competency of the NEI region with the implication that cultural resources become strategic tools for the economic growth and development of the country. This has resulted in a development of tourism in the region, wherein the marketing of the people and their culture as commodities becomes the main strategy for creating employment and economic revitalisation.

The tourists, fascinated with the 'primitive', the indigenous way of life which they consider as exotic, are lured by the tourist industry which acts as the middleman and promises them the experience that they long for. At the same time the indigenous people, who have been marginalised and excluded, are seduced by the tourist industry because of the promise of financial gain as well as recognition and reconciliation with the "Others"– the dominant group of people.

A report in the Times of India on 27 September 2013 titled "World Tourism Day observed in Nagaland"[25] clearly positions the model of development for the NEI region that the Central Government had drawn up directly relating to tourism development in the region. It is ironical that even the projects to meet the need of pure drinking water in the region are connected with the need and demand of the tourism market. It is logical that one wonders whether all the development proposed for the NEI region by the Central Government is being done because of genuine concerns for the people of the region.

In the classifications of activities according to the level of environmental impact, under those activities classified as having low or negligible impact on the environment, 'village tourism' finds its place alongside aloe vera plantation, pineapple cultivation, puffed rice preparation, bee keeping, fodder development, sheep and goat rearing, backyard piggery, backyard poultry and handicrafts.[26] Ironically if one glances even at the given guidelines for village tourism, it is quite obvious that it can have adverse effects if not developed and done in a careful and controlled manner.[27]

The Promotion of the NEI region as a destination to Leave Travel Concession (LTC) travellers is not much welcomed by the indigenous people. The protest and appeal letter against the proposal that was sent to the Minister of DoNER highlighted the many adverse implications for the indigenous people of the region.[28]

Tourism development and the commodification of cultures of the indigenous people of NEI region

The process of economic development had been slow in the NEI region for many reasons. Traditional systems of self-governance and social customs of livelihood had remained virtually untouched during the British rule. The creation of the rail network for a commercial purpose linking the areas where tea is grown was the only major economic activity taken up during the period.[29] Special attention has been given to the economic development

of the region from the Eighth Plan onward. In October 1996 the Central Government announced "New Initiatives for the North Eastern Region" and proposed a number of measures to develop the northeast. Emphasis was given to connectivity as the key area for development of NEI, and stated how transport infrastructure will have a special thrust. Interestingly, tourism was positioned as one of the critical parameters of this region's growth. The document also pointed out how the LEP is important for breaking these areas out of isolation, and to gradually develop into an economic identity and move on a higher growth path.[30]

The WB and ADB claiming to be committed to reducing poverty have promoted their tourism promotion strategies as "pro poor" tourism that can utilise assets that the poor often have access to – natural resources and cultural assets.[31] This clearly refers to the commodification of culture and the natural resources.

With "nature" and "culture" as today's catchwords, more travellers have set out in search of exotic cultural experiences that South countries have to offer. India intends to be a major player in this market by strengthening the existing tourist spots and developing new ones. The northeastern region which had so far been politically ignored in the past suddenly becomes very prominent in the Central Government's plan.

The development model for the NEI region with a clear identification of tourism development as the priority is clearly reflected in the vision 2020 for India. The development of core competencies in areas in which the region has apparent comparative advantage was alluded to as a means to deal with the impact of globalisation viz., economic or trade or market forces.[32] In the case of NEI region, their "culture" was clearly defined as their core competency.[33] This has a direct link to the commodification of the cultures of the indigenous people of the NEI region which is being packaged and promoted not just within the country but across international borders.

McLaren Deborah Ramer's observation that the globalisation of tourism and its development threatens indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights, their cosmovision, technologies, religions, sacred sites, social structures and relationships, wildlife, ecosystems, economies and basic rights to informed understanding, reducing indigenous peoples to another consumer product that is quickly becoming exhaustible, is very true of the indigenous people of the NEI region.[34] The way of their lives, rituals and habits, which have intrinsic values for the people, become devalued when transformed into objects for sale or when they are constructed for the tourists.

Commodification is on the one hand the assignment of economic value to something which had not previously been considered in economic terms, and on the other hand, the transformation of the market for an unique feature, branded as a market product. Commodification leads to a modification of relationships, formerly untainted by commerce, into commercial relationships in everyday use.[35]

In the commodification of indigenous cultures, the three parties which are involved – the middleman (the tourist industry in this instance), the tourist, and the indigenous people – participate actively and have their own spheres of power. The tourist industry as the middleman controls the greatest power by initiating processes of commodification that may lead to the exploitation of local communities and their members. Because it is in control of local economic resources, it is in a position to manipulate indigenous cultural symbols for commercial gain, even altering indigenous culture to be marketed and sold by staged authenticity. The tourists participate actively in the social construction of authenticities as they pass judgement on the attractiveness of tourist centres and destinations, and on the indigenous people.

It is a well-known fact that the commodification of cultures has led to the destruction of ancient and sacred cultural ties of the people to their land. The promotion of the sacred groves in the region as tourist attractions is a good example. Through an age old practice, certain areas of land near the villages are protected by local communities through customary taboos and sanctions with cultural and ecological implications. They are a part of the cultural heritage of the indigenous people. Sacred groves also contain several medicinal plants used in ayurveda, tribal and folk medicine.[36] Among the many types of sacred groves, there are those in Meghalaya which have been considered traditionally sacred, and therefore ideally not even a fallen twig could be removed from within where a whole variety of religious beliefs and practices exist. Apart from the sacred groves functioning as the medium through which the indigenous people express their relationship with the divine and nature, it also has a very important socio-cultural and political function. It provides cultural space to the community as a common property, and also in the assertion of group identity and solidarity.

The varied religious festivals of the indigenous through which their spirituality is closely linked to their diverse traditions and cultures are now being commodified and marketed through tourism. The meanings and significance it once had for the people is now lost as they are being replicated as a performance to cater to the expectation of the tourist who had paid for

such an experience. This leads us to the issue of the genuineness of what is being sold and marketed on one hand, and on the other the authenticity of what the buyers (the tourists) get or receive. What was once considered sacred and which embodies the essence of the communal wellbeing and identity is now packaged as a product to be sold to those who are willing and have the capacity to pay.

In Nagaland, we can take the example of the Hornbill Festival organised by the State Tourism and Art & Culture Department, showcasing a mixture of cultural displays under the one roof introduced for the first time in 2000. All the tribes of Nagaland take part in this festival. The festival is named after the Indian Hornbill, a large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in the folklore of the Nagas. But one needs to analyse whether the Hornbill Festival, the brainchild of the Government of Nagaland to create an inter-tribal cultural exchange amidst the people of the state, really portrays an authentic indigenous Naga culture. We have here the three players in the commodification of culture: the tourist who gets a variety of cultural dances, cuisines, arts and artefacts under one roof and gets to interact with almost all the tribes in Nagaland as well as those from outside the state. Then we have the local people themselves, who perhaps are vying with different tribes to showcase their own cultural elements and products as the best in the state. Thirdly we have the tourism industry, under the patronage of the State Tourism and Art & Culture Department, who acts as the middleman to create the market where one party sells and the other party pays for it. One needs to ask whether there was such a festival as the Hornbill Festival in the history of Nagaland, or whether it has just been created to meet the market demand for such a festival, wherein the buyer can get all the specimens of goods that are being sold under one roof. Of course there is no denying that each party hopes to gain something from the other.

Cultural dances and artefacts become little more than commodities for tourists, often bought very cheap

Commodification dehumanises people, causes alienation within the people when their way of life, their practices, dress and religious rites and rituals are being refashioned or transformed to attract tourists, and are therefore robbed of the meanings they had for the indigenous people in their daily lives. One needs to understand that culture is more than cuisine, dances, certain arts and artefacts; it is a way of life, systems, and philosophies.

and sold by middlemen, and even mass produced in factories overseas.[37] This leads to the creation of a few entrepreneurs playing a decisive role in the economic and political sphere. This often leads to the marginalisation of the local artisans and cultural performers. The decision making process involving the production and circulation of cultural commodities is not through the indigenous people.

Tourism also influences the politics of the identity of the indigenous people of the region. To meet the demand for traditional and authentic cultural objects and cultural performances, the people of the region are going through a continuous process of self-discovery. However, there is the need to critically examine the impact of the newly created public space of competition and selling of the diverse indigenous groups' culture and what they represent. The indigenous culture is being demeaned to mere cultural performances and mass produced handicrafts with the purpose of amusing and entertaining the tourists rather than for the fulfilment of societal needs. Tourism development has resulted in the threat to cultural identity of the indigenous people of the NEI region.

One wonders whether the indigenous people of the NEI region who had for so many years withstood the impacts of colonisation or other incoming groups and cultures to the region, and had managed to preserve their ethnicity, culture, language, traditions and social institutions, would withstand the demand of the globalised tourism market.

Tribal villages have become showcases for visiting tourists. For example, you have the Khonoma Village in Nagaland. A village of 500 houses, a settlement furnished with a grant from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture in New Delhi, and supported by the Nagaland State Government, which is bent on turning the village into a showcase eco-tourism model. The village is awash with plans and dreams that revolve around the mantra, repeated by the younger members of the community, of "when the tourists come." This illustrates the pragmatic approach of the village youth towards the potential that tourism may hold for them. It is a perspective shared by the Village Council, which chooses to see tourist revenues as one among the several streams of communal income and certainly not the most important, despite the beliefs of distant planners in New Delhi and opportunistic bureaucrats in Kohima.[38]

Through culinary tourism, traditional and indigenous cuisines, an important ingredient of a society's cultural heritage and a valuable identity marker, have also been marketed through the promotion of food consumption

culture among foreign and domestic tourists leading to a boost to ethnic and rural tourism. The promotion of tea tourism may have led to the growth of the economy to a certain level. However one needs to look at other aspects as well. An article that had been posted in the internet is quite telling. It states:

> A non-Naga friend of mine simply put it this way, 'Nagas eat anything that moves.'….
>
> At the heritage village one can try out all sorts of food; pork, beef and chicken are common and more popular food items along with the famed rice beer served in bamboo. But one can easily find uncommon food, like dried squirrel soup, freshly cooked frog, fried silk worm larvae and many weird things you wouldn't have heard off, let alone put in your mouth. Nagas are discovering weird things to eat; many of these new discoveries are tested out by foreigners and local tourists. It is not necessarily true that Nagas have eaten all of them, but to boost tourism the Nagas are now ready to serve anything that moves; anything weird. [39]

This brings us back to the concept of inauthenticity connected with commodification of culture, and as to how one is being stereotyped as being different from the rest with both its positive and negative aspects.

In the Post Conference Familiarization Tour itineraries for International Delegates of the International Tourism Mart (January 18-20, 2013) at Guwahati with the theme "India's Northeast – An Unexplored Paradise", apart from the varied natural scenery, the traditional and religious and cultural elements, and the very way of life of the indigenous people, what really stood out was a Tibetan Refugee Camp in Arunachal Pradesh which had been packaged and marketed in the tourism market. There cannot be any denial that people along with their society are being now commodified and branded as a product in the markets of tourism.[40]

Commodification dehumanises people, causes alienation within the people when their way of life, their practices, dress and religious rites and rituals are being refashioned or transformed to attract tourists, and are therefore robbed of the meanings they had for the indigenous people in their daily lives. One needs to understand that culture is more than cuisine, dances, certain arts and artefacts; it is a way of life, systems, and philosophies. The pertinent question in relation to the commodification of culture is the authenticity of what is being offered, packaged, marketed, sold and bought. The commodification of culture and cultural practices into a means or resources to generate economic growth causes alienation within the people.

We have to keep in mind that it is not only the tourist who watches the 'other', but also the local people who are watching and observing the 'other', and easily adapting themselves to meet the needs of the buyers or the market.

Theological perspectives

The concept of *Imago Dei*: To the elements that tourism had been well known to offer – "sun, sand and sex '' – is now being added "society" as a whole, encompassing people and their culture. So far tourism which had thrived on by marketing nature – the sun, sea, mountains, rivers, landscapes – has added people. Thus, you now have the indigenous people of NEI regions being imaged, marketed and sold in the tourism market. This is an affront to God's creation and is truly opposed to the overarching principle of the Bible that that all men and women are equally created in God's image (*Imago Dei*). Indigenous people as part of God's people and creation should be seen as being made in the divine image which accords equal worth and dignity to them, and be treated with fairness in the globalised market of tourism. The tourism market had culturally constructed the indigenous people and their culture as something exotic, different as compared to the others, to the targeted buyers, those with the purchasing power.

Development projects and programmes for the NEI region have ignored the rights and sovereignty of the indigenous community. They have not been offered any real participation in the planning, management, and ownership of the tourism market, but are rather seen as potential commodities to be marketed. The brand entity "Paradise unexplored" designed for NEI is marketed in the international market.

Focusing too much on the potential economic growth that tourism development might bring would be a mistake. Conventional indicators of economic performance like per capita income and per capita GDP income have been considered inadequate for the measurement of social as well as individual economic attainments and wellbeing.[41]

A very pertinent question that needs to be asked is – for whom is it being marketed as a paradise? The indigenous people and their culture – their very way of life – are the ones that are being marketed in contradiction to the whole concept of all humanity being equally created in God's image. We need to draw lessons and inspiration from the indigenous understanding and concept of recognising each other as equally human, and not any less than the other in creation. This is not to romanticise or deny that there are

social gaps among the people based on economic and social structure. But the spirit of the indigenous communitarian way of life, wherein each looks out for the other and works towards the good of the community as a whole, and not for individual or private gain or wellbeing, even at times sacrificing oneself for the good of all, with one's individual identity subsumed into the identity of a community, can serve as a basis of developing a theology of a collective struggle against being commodified as products that had been imaged and branded to be sold in the tourism market.

The Kingdom of God (KOG) values: Jesus came announcing the KOG to a people who were living in anticipation of radical events. In the teachings of Jesus, the KOG embraces all the longings and anguished cries of the people of Israel and invites people to respond in radical obedience. For Jesus the coming Kingdom is the transforming rule of a compassionate God. In the Old Testament the hope for the Kingdom has two main historical sources. One is the experience of liberation, the Exodus as the central event, and the other is the experience of powerlessness, of despair. The indigenous people of the NEI region can find parallels in the experiences of the Israelites. They have experienced liberation through the knowledge of the Gospel with its transforming powers. They are now in a situation where their very being – their identity as a people, a unique people among God's children – is being threatened under the onslaught of tourism development. They are imaged and packaged as a museum of living people – their very culture, their everyday way of life showcased for entertainment and amusement of the tourists, who pay for it.

God's final purpose of establishing His peace – Shalom – is encompassed in the concept of the KOG. It is the full implementation of God's justice, the establishment of right relations with one another, with God and with nature. Tourism development and the commodification of the cultures of the indigenous people of NEI region is totally in contradiction to the establishment of Shalom. It has also resulted in the commodification of social relations. Tourism can serve as an important instrument to bring people together to learn about one another with respect for each other's culture. This could help in the promotion of exchanges and understanding among different people, resulting in mutual respect and tolerance and equal relationship among the indigenous communities and tourists. Sadly though, tourism development in the NEI region has resulted in the indigenous people and their culture being branded to provide the buyers with an image of what the products or package is.

Jesus' acts of healing and exorcism which were powerful manifestations of the KOG challenging the power of evil should serve as a motivation for us if we wish to participate in God's mission. The evils and the oppressive components of tourism development, and the commodification of the indigenous communities, should be unmasked and challenged with the purpose and hope of bringing about healing for the people and casting out the evils that prevent them from living in freedom and liberation as envisioned in the KOG.

The KOG was also realised through God's power which was active and working through Jesus for the benefit of the vulnerable, the poor, the suffering and the oppressed. We need to uphold this value of the KOG as we stand alongside the indigenous people of the NEI region, and relate with them as Jesus had related to the most vulnerable sections of society as children of God, equally created in the image of God as all other people.

In today's context, the exploitative model of development through tourism is actively functioning in NEI, causing havoc in the lives of the indigenous people, creating an imbalance in the socio-religious and economic spheres. With the transition of the indigenous tribal community in NEI from the traditional economy based on agriculture towards the market economy, one needs to ask the question whether the values of the KOG are being upheld in relation to national policy of positioning the NEI region as an asset for economic growth only in terms of the people and the cultures being sold in the global market. Is not the offer of the experience of a "paradise" by tourism industry in the NEI in contradiction to the KOG when the people of the land are being constructed and imaged and sold in the globalised market?

> The Church in the region needs to open its eyes and take seriously the emphasis of the development of tourism, with its implications on the people and their culture… The Church needs to seriously consider and ask who will benefit, and at what and whose cost will the opening up of the region be? …Will the opening up of the region be as a museum for tourists showcasing indigenous and exotic people with their 'primitive' cultures? The Church needs to take steps to educate its members and prepare the people for the inevitable impact of the development of tourism.

Peace and justice

Action on behalf of justice and

participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as important aspects of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words, of the Church‘s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation. If you want peace you could say work for justice. The model of tourism development resulting in the commodification of the cultures of the indigenous people of NEI region is clearly an injustice.

Working for justice is an integral part of the Church’s missionary work, equal in importance to witnessing to and proclaiming the gospel, and to establishing Christian communities of shared faith, friendship and worship. Like the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, and like Jesus‘ ministry in the New Testament, the Church‘s mission is about cooperating with God in the call of all people always and everywhere, to justice and peace of all creation.

The Church should understand its mission in terms of human development, the practice and establishment of justice, and the struggle for liberation. The KOG and social justice should not be separated. In order for the preaching and work of the Church towards justice to have any credibility, it should first be practised within it and should be clearly visible for others to see. The Church in order to fulfil her prophetic mission should be actively involved in unmasking and confronting the evils of the model of tourism development and the consequent commodification of the indigenous people of NEI, and continue fighting the principalities and powers that oppress the vulnerable communities.

The Church’s mission of justice is intrinsically linked to its mission of cultivating and preserving peace among all the people in the world. It is the Church’s responsibility to help the people discern the truth about the model of tourism development, to help them make a conscious choice and help develop policies that reverse the commodification of their cultures. Pro-activeness for the transformation of their own lives should be promoted among the people.

The Church needs to take into serious consideration the issue of justice and peace in relation to the tourism industry. How can there be justice and peace when the people’s identity as being equally created in the image of God is not being respected, and is ignored, when the indigenous communities are being considered as mere means of profit, as branded products that are being marketed? The Church needs to challenge the tourism industry that has nothing of its own, but appropriates the very image of the indigenous people and their culture to be sold. Is this not an affront to the humanness of

the indigenous people – to be objectified and imaged as branded products to be sold? Is this not an issue of justice? How can there be peace when the humanness of the indigenous people is being violated and ignored, and when the tourism industry considers and treats them as its possessions and decides on how to construct, image and sell them for the pleasures of those who can afford to pay?

Responsible stewardship

Steward is a biblical term that refers to a manager who is responsible for the goods and property of another. A steward is not therefore an owner, but one whose responsibility is to treat the owner's property with care and respect. *Stewardship* is a term that refers to the responsibility of a steward to manage wisely. *Stewardship* has come to be used in the Christian community in a broader sense for our responsibility to manage wisely the goods and property that are in our possession. The assumption is that we do not really possess or own anything, but the whole world, including human kind, belongs to God. Therefore, we are not owners but stewards of all that falls under our responsibility – income, assets, property, goods, time, talents, and our very selves.

For the indigenous people of NEI who belong traditionally to agrarian societies, land is central to their life and existence as a community. Land is the source of life and is also sacred. The land provides them with space, food and much of the basic resources to meet their everyday needs. The land and their identity are intertwined in terms of their identity as a community, their social system, culture, values and economic wellbeing. Traditionally land was never considered as a private or individual property; it belonged to a higher supreme being or power who created the whole cosmos, under whose care and protection human beings were allowed to partake of the resources or the produce of the land only in conjunction with the understanding that it was a taboo to abuse the land and the natural resources by going beyond a limit that met their daily needs. The people only understood themselves as stewards and caretakers of the land and its natural resources. It was through the land that they interpreted what life meant, and learnt about the divine and the ecological order and their interconnectedness with the rest of creation.

Today, tourism promoted by the neo-liberal globalised market economy has ruthlessly and aggressively appropriated the land of the indigenous people, constructing it and imaging it as something to be sold as experiences of

pleasure in the globalised market. It has torn away and alienated the people from their land resulting in the loss of identity and the loss of space where they had communion with the divine and the whole cosmos. In opposition to the exploitative model of development that has been implemented through the tourism industry, there is the need to recapture the indigenous cosmology and develop an alternative model or framework that is more cosmic centred, and rooted in the integration and inter-relatedness of all human beings with the land and the rest of God's creations.

There is the need to re-discover the purpose of our lives within the context of God's larger purposes for the world and to exercise our stewardship in a more embracing and holistic manner. We are not only to be stewards of resources that generate sustainability but also in ways that sustain life for the poor and vulnerable. In biblical terms, we are to act out God's compassion to those who are being oppressed by the unfair market economy.

There is an urgent need to confront the arrogant and paternalistic role of the privileged few exercising control over the world and "the poor" to serve their own interests. We need to understand that the task of stewardship entails a sacred trust to perceive and serve and relate with others through the compassionate eyes of the God who empowers the weak and makes common cause with the most vulnerable.

Through tourism, people, their land and their cultures have been reduced to commodities that serve financial markets. We need to attend to the poor and vulnerable, the ones most affected by this globalised market.

We need to become responsible stewards in our personal behaviour, particularly in relation to that which is directly in our care. All of us have been endowed with gifts of cultures, beliefs and ways of living out our everyday lives. We are stewards of our God-given qualities which we need to safeguard, and not offer for sale for the sake of economic gain.

Conclusion

It is important to look beyond the propaganda for national integration and the model of development that has been proposed for the NEI region by the Indian Central government with its partners. One needs to understand the implication all these have for the people of the region, and whether it really fits in with what is being promised. The very way in which the NEI region has been addressed is quite a recent phenomenon – "India's North East". It

is very political and can be subjected to debates and discussion. Who is the rightful owner of the land in the northeastern region, and who has the right to its management can be a very provoking question.

The diversion of essential people's resources such as land, water, electricity and other infrastructure to entertain tourists and support hotels, resorts, golf courses, amusement parks and so on must not be overlooked or ignored. The social costs through the abuse of women and children, and their trafficking are very real. Added to these is the cost to indigenous communities through health hazards, arising from tourist activity involving HIV and AIDS, drugs and narcotics, among others. In short the dangers of human rights violations that occur in the name of tourism have been proved in other parts of the world, and are horrific dangers that the people of NEI must be made aware of.

With the economic liberalisation and India's LEP since the early 1990s, one aspect of development saw Foreign Investment and International Financial Institutions being granted an increased access to the region. However, this has adverse implications for the unique structures, traditions and resources in states of the NEI. Hence it is important to deal with this sort of development with caution.

Well planned and executed tourism can contribute to increased tolerance and respect for diversity of all sorts – biological, cultural, religious and political. Well-planned ethical tourism development can provide incentives to support indigenous people's traditional customs and values, protect and respect sacred sites, and enhance the legitimacy of traditional knowledge.

While meeting the needs of the market is certainly an important goal from a commercial point of view, the dilemma also is about how tourism can help preserve traditions in the authentic forms – when festivals and cultural celebrations and handicrafts are put on a show in most constructed settings, they undermine the symbolism and cultural meaning.

There is an urgent need for the Government of India, the state governments of the NEI states, and the people themselves to hold further discussions and debates about a tourism policy that has the potential to change societies in the NEI regions, more to the benefit of the policy makers than for the people of the region.

The opening of up of NEI will definitely lead to an influx of negative influences in the community. Among the youth it could create alienation and loss of cultural identity, loss of authenticity and historical accuracy in

interpretation. It could also lead to more conflicts among the local people between those who benefit and those who do not benefit from tourism, and a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots – those who have access to profit and those who do not. The local people who had been lured into promoting tourism with the promise of more jobs and employment are only usually given the lowly ranked and menial jobs leading to further conflicts and resentment.

Equally important, the Church in NEI cannot remain aloof but must play a leading and constructive role in looking after the welfare of the people as well as remaining true to its prophetic calling. It is a role that the Church must consider urgently.

The Church in the NEI region needs to open its eyes and take seriously the emphasis of the development of tourism, with its implications on the people and their culture. It needs to critically study as to why there is a sudden interest in opening up the NEI region in the name of development, which previously was a restricted area. The Church needs to seriously consider and ask who will benefit, and at what and whose cost will the opening up of the NEI region be? Does it mean that the once restricted region and the isolated people are suddenly contrived as goods and resources that can be sold in the global market – similar to opening up NEI as a museum for tourists showcasing indigenous and exotic people with their 'primitive' cultures? The Church needs to take steps to educate its members and prepare the people for the inevitable impact of the development of tourism. The Church will need to find resources within it to address the implications of tourism in the region, while rooted in its faith of a God who is for justice and peace and the integration of all creation. If monitored carefully, the tourism industry can be used positively to build community pride and enhance the sense of the community and enhance social cohesion in the region. It can also be used as an opportunity to broaden the indigenous people's horizons and worldview, and to promote better understanding across intercultural and international borders. It can also help in encouraging the revival or maintenance of traditional arts and crafts. It can also be used to legitimise and sustain the unique identity of the indigenous people of NEI region, and help position themselves better as active players within the global market.

The Church can also help in educating the people and enable them to seize opportunities to construct their own identities as well as re-address and subvert entrenched stereotypes through their choice of self-

representation. As Annemi Conradie rightly argues, "the strategic commodification of culture may offer marginalized communities an avenue for challenging stereotypical images of themselves by remaking and actively promoting the signifiers of their own contemporary cultural identities".[42]

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1. *A critical analysis of the development and tourism model and policy implemented will indicate how under the pretext of raising the living standards of the indigenous in your region, the community and its people are being objectified as commodities to ensure profits for the tourism industry. What should your church learn from this?*
2. *How can the church assist in equipping indigenous communities to assess the positives, if any, and the negatives, arising from the process of cultural transition resulting from the onslaught of tourism, and respond appropriately and adequately? Should culture be static, or in other words, what elements need to stay?*
3. *Consider from the perspective of integrity of creation the impact of tourism on the land and the environment of the indigenous people. What implications does such an impact have for the indigenous people in your* region.

Endnotes

1 Himanshi Dhawan, TNN | Aug 11, 2013, 04.11AM IST, New Delhi: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Northeast-emerges-as-the-new-hotspot-for-tourists/articleshow/21753318.cms

2 Namely, Agartala, Aizawl, Gangtok, Kohima, and Shillong.

3 *Documentation Update: April 2005-March 2006* (Bangalore: Equations, 2006), p.120. The project proposed the development of urban facilities including water supply, sewerage and sanitation, solid and bio-medical waste management, traffic and transportation, electrification in tour areas, flood control and slum ingradation and heritage conservation.

4 *A Briefing Paper on the ADB's SASEC Tourism Development Plan and its Potential Impacts on India's NE*, (Bangalore: Equations, 2006), p.1.: http://

www.equitabletourism.org/files/fileDocuments350_uid10.pdf The TDP has been designed on the basis of the GMS(Greater Mekong Sub-region) Tourism Model which the ADB believes is a success but communities within the GMS have declared it a failure. This TDP will serve as the overall framework for the development of tourism in the entire SASEC sub-region and guide investment, infrastructure development and policy-making on tourism. The TDP focuses on the development of tourism-related infrastructure (roads, air connectivity, facilitating travel by lowering border restrictions), human resource development (through training and resource- building), branding and joint marketing and product development along two themes – ecotourism and the Buddhist circuit. For details see ibid.

[5] There is a heavy thrust on infrastructure development for tourism promotion. Some of the ideas for improved connectivity are converting Bagdogra (Siliguri, West Bengal) into an international airport and hub for SASEC, opening cross-border land routes and roads within the NE, water and inland transport to facilitate cruise tourism and adventure water sports, using the Asian Highway project to promote SASEC tourism and easing of border restrictions like Restricted Area Permits (RAP) and Inner Line Permits (ILP).

[6] Quoting Caesar D'Mello, the then Director of ECOT, "Churches urged to critique development and tourism policies", Asia Pacific Ecumenical News, 6 October 2013; http://www.apenews.org/newsread.asp?nid=335

[7] India's LEP launched in 1992 with the objective of fostering closer ties with Southeast Asian nations is one of the most important cornerstones of India's foreign policy. Apart from the obvious economic benefits, India also wants to send an unequivocal message to China of its aim to become a key regional power which will be achieved by forging closer ties with countries in Southeast Asia to counter China's increasing dominance in the region. To this end, strong advances have been made toward establishing closer ties with Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam.

[8] Pushpita Sen's report on the "Roundtable on Northeast's Role in India's Look East Policy", a half day programme that took place on September 18, 2013 organised by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), with the purpose of inviting specific projects from the north-eastern states apers.Roundtable_on_Northeast_ role_in_India_Look_East_Policy

[9] Suggestions have also been made that in order to create economic interests for Myanmar in India and encourage it to act against the northeast insurgent groups and keep the road networks secure, people in the northeast could be induced to take up land on lease for cultivation for various crops in Myanmar and set up food processing units in Myanmar. For more details see ibid.

[10] See Ibid.

[11] Environmental Monitoring Report, Loan Number: 2528/2834 IND, Reporting Period: (July-December 2012) INDIA: North Eastern Region Capital Cities Development Investment Program Project City: Gangtok, Sikkim State , p.13 out of 17, Ibid. 69 of 120; Annual Environmental Monitoring Report North Eastern region on Capital Cities Development Investment Programme (NERCCDIP) ADB Loan No. 2528-IND & 2834-IND, Agartala, Tripura, Prepared by State Investment Programme management and Implementation Unit (SIPMIU), Agartala, Government of Tripura Urban Development Department, February 2013, p. 27 of 31, in *Environmental Monitoring Report: Semi Annual Report, December 2012 on North Eastern Region Capital Cities Development Investment Program (NERCCDIP) Prepared by State Investment Programme Management &Implementation Unit (SIPMIU)of Tripura, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland, and Meghalaya for the Government of India and the Asian Development Bank*, p.116: http://www.adb.org/projects/documents/nerudp-mizoram-meghalaya-nagaland-sikkim-tripura-emr-2012

[12] Ibid.

[13] For eg., see NERCCDIP: ADB Loan -2528 & 2834, Annual Environmental Monitoring Report for Agartala city (Jan to Dec 2012), p.17 of 31, in Ibid, 106.

[14] This argument is found in Nikhil K. Sachan, S.K. Ghosh, Anupam K. Sachan, Sandeep K. Singh, "Livelihood Empowerment through Ecological Rationalization and Commodification in Natural Area Destinations", *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities* (ISSN: 2276 – 6928) Vol.2 (6) pp. 368-374 November, 2012, 372. Available online http://www.ajsih.org, @2012 American Journal of Social Issues & Humanities.

[15] Consultation on 'Churches' Response to Development and Tourism' jointly organised by the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) with National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), Presbyterian Churches in India (PCI) and Martin Luther Christian University (MLCU), a Northeast India regional consultation from 29th – 31st March 2011 at PCI, Assembly Hall in Shillong, Meghalaya, India.

[16] IITTM-ICC Report, Travel and Tourism Industry in India: Looking East, Report 2011 (Organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India), p. 3.

[17] Draft national Tourism Policy of India,p.5: https:www.googl ech?gws_rd=cr&ei=eXxVUu33POb U4wScnoCIBw#q=draft+national+ tourism +policy+of+india

[18] New emerging areas such as Rural Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Eco-Tourism and Wellness Tourism have been given priority under this scheme in the NEI region. The earmarked amount was about 10% of the Ministry's total allocation, though the actual release for the region has been much higher during the 11th Plan. The Central budget provisioning for NEI region has also gone up in the recent years.

Total outlay for the region stood at Rs. 88 crores (USD 14.7 million) and Rs. 93 crores (USD 15.5 million) respectively for product/ infrastructure development in identified destinations and circuits during 2010-11 and 2011-12, representing around 16% of central allocation under this head. See ibid., p.20.

[19] Describing himself as the "adopted son of the North-East region" (he is a Rajya Sabha/Upper House member from Assam), Manmohan Singh said Vision 2020 will pave the way for the region's future development. Quoted by Anil Anand, "Manmohan unveils vision 2020 for North East": http://www.dnaindia.com/india/1175232/report-manmohan-unveils-vision-2020-for-north-east

[20] For more details see *North Eastern Vision of 2020*, prepared by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and North Eastern Council, p. 3, 18, 28.

[21] Tribal lifestyle, heritage, tea garden, golf, monasteries at the one end and eco-tourism, adventure and wild life on the other are considered as to what NEI can offer. Ibid., p. 127, 128.

[22] Ibid., p. 119.

[23] Ibid., p. 129, 131.

[24] Ibid., p. 133.

[25] Emphasis was made on preserving water for the lean period and to help tourism to flourish as an industry in the state. The Department of Tourism, Government of Nagaland and the Nagaland Tourism Association (NTA) came together in organising the main function at the Tourism Directorate Kohima under the theme 'Tourism & Water: Protecting our common future'. Speaking on the occasion, head of the tourism department, P. Angami called upon the stakeholders of tourism activities in the state to come together in ensuring sustainable access to water resources in their own small ways. NTA president V Vincent Belho stressed the need to preserve water so that tourism can flourish in the state. He said tourism is an industry but efforts should be made towards promoting and making the state a tourist hot spot. He also called upon tour operators to help in improving the economy of the people of the state down to the village levels and also asked them to ensure environmental sustainability. See "World Tourism Day observed in Nagaland", PTI | Sep 27, 2013, 03.51 PM IST: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/World-Tourism-Day-observed-in-Nagaland/articleshow/23160456.cms

[26] See Annexure-3 in Project: Environmental Assessment of North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) Page No.:61 in Document: 201008, Date: May, 2011, Annex Revision: R2, Environment and Ecology Department Consulting Engineering Service (India) Pvt. Ltd.

[27] See Annexure-4 (B) in Ibid, Page No.: 82.

[28] See "The Proposal of Promoting the Northeast as Destination to Leave Travel Concession (LTC) Travelers": http://www.equitabletourism.org/campaign.php?AID=338

[29] *Planning Commission Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12)*, vol.1, Inclusive Growth, Chapter 7: North Eastern Region, p.167.

[30] For more details see *Planning Commission Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12)*, vol.1, Inclusive Growth, Chapter 7: North Eastern Region, p.168- 175. Quoted by Shalmali Guttal, "Investing in Pleasures" (p1-8), in *IFIs and Tourism: Perspectives and Debates: A dossier on the Investments of International Financial Institutions in the tourism sector based on the Asian Experience* (Equations: Bangalore, 2008), 13.

[31] Quoted by Shalmali Guttal, "Investing in Pleasures" (p1-8), in *IFIs and Tourism: Perspectives and Debates: A dossier on the Investments of International Financial Institutions in the tourism sector based on the Asian Experience* (Equations: Bangalore, 2008), 13.

[32] A.P.J. Abdul Kalam & Y.S. Rajan, India 2020: *A Vision for the New Millennium* (1998) (New Delhi: penguin Books, 2002), 12.

[33] See ibid., p. 155.

[34] McLaren Deborah Ramer, "The History of Indigenous Peoples and Tourism", *Cultural Survival*, Quarterly Issue: 23.2 (Summer 1999) Protecting Indigenous Culture and Land through Eco-tourism: http://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csq/article/the-history-indigenous-peoples-and-tourism

[35] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commodification

[36] Studies of sacred groves in Manipur have revealed that therapeutic application of 127 plants species have been discovered in its sacred groves which are protected by the local people based on the grounds of indigenous culture and religions. The people inhabiting the areas near the sacred groves explain how the knowledge about the medicinal plants learnt from medicine men known as *Maibas* is being passed down from one generation to the other. See Ashalata Devi Khumbongmayum, M L Khan and R S Tripathi, Ethnomedicinal plants in the sacred groves of Manipur", in Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge, Vol. 4(1), January 2005, pp. 21-32, p.21: http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/8490/1/IJTK%204%281%29%2021-32.pdf

[37] Tourism Concern Action for Ethical Tourism, Campaigns> Understanding the issue>indigenous People: http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk/indigenous-people-tourism.html

[38] *Who Really Benefits from Tourism? Documentation Updates: January to September 2004* (Equations: Bangalore, N.Y), p.57.

[39] Jim's India Tour, "Hornbill Festival: One of the Fastest Growing Festivals in India": http://www.mapsofindia.com/india-tour/nagaland/hornbil l-festival-one-of-the-fastest-growing-festival-in-india/

[40] There were delegates from countries such as Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brueni, Cambodia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos , Malaysia, Myanmar, Phillipines, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,

Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam. For details see "Incredible India: India's North East Paradise Unexplored": http://www.incredibleindia.org/trade-nav/latest-news/1678-international-tourism-mart-guwahati-2013#sthash.A9FeqMNz.dpuf

41 *Human Development Report of North East States*, December 2011 , Government of India, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, New Delhi, p.7.

42 Annemi Conradie, "Remaking culture for sale: The strategic commodification, construction and performance of 'traditional' cultural identity in South African cultural villages", 1. http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/conradieipaper.pdf

4

Sun, Sand, Rum, Reggae!
The Challenge of Tourism for Church and Society in the Caribbean

Roderick Hewitt

This chapter gives attention to the challenges that a multi-faceted and complex tourism product with underlying competing interests poses for church and society in the Caribbean. It argues that centuries of colonial rule has bequeathed to the region a syncretistic mixture of different cultures that has made the people open to external influences. It is these peoples, and the environment in which they live, that have laid the cultural foundation for the modern mass tourism product and industry. However, the resulting contemporary dependence on tourism by Caribbean economies is consistent with the colonial past as a product designed to serve the interests of Northern economies. A neo-liberal form of economic enslavement has emerged that was built around four infamous "S's": sun, sea, sand and sex. The people's natural resources were sold off to foreign capitalist investors. The tourism product has led to disruptive behaviours associated with loose hedonistic sex, wasteful consumption, and disrespect for the locals who serve the tourists. This has called into question issues of human dignity that invite a missional response from the churches. The argument that is used to validate the tourist industry is based on the claim that it makes a significant financial contribution to the economy through employment. However, many questions remain about whose real interests does the economics of tourism serve, and what the real benefits are from generating foreign exchange growth. The chapter ends by raising concerns about the climactic and environmental

cost of the tourism product in relation to the future viability of the region to sustain this important economic resource. This discussion will be of interest to communities in other coastal areas in the Global South.

Introduction

Any mention of the word 'Caribbean' conjures up images of Islands bathed in sunshine, deep blue sea with tropical marine life, white sandy beaches, pulsating sounds of reggae and calypso, and diverse peoples of different ethnicities living in a mosaic of competing and complementing cultures. The Caribbean encompasses the area that includes the Caribbean sea, all of the islands and coastlines that extend from 'Northern coastlands' of South America, the Eastern coastlands of Central America, the Gulf of Mexico and those coastal areas of South-Eastern USA. For the purpose of this chapter, I will limit my use of the term 'Caribbean' to refer to Anglo-phone Islands in general, and Jamaica specifically being the third largest island behind Cuba (Spanish speaking) and Hispaniola comprising (Haiti French speaking) and the Dominican Republic (Spanish speaking).The most obvious reality about the Caribbean region is its topographical contrast characterised by diversity of mountains and valleys and coastal plains kissed by majestic hills.

The peoples that inhabit the Caribbean lands constitute those who are considered indigenous, and those who are heirs of those who came through migration or were intentionally enslaved by European colonial powers. The region is therefore a melting pot of cultures from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. Therefore the region embodies a microcosm and mosaic expression of the world's population that is exemplified in the words of the Jamaican motto: "Out of many, One People".

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines tourism as: "…a social, cultural and economic phenomenon, which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes".[1]

The implicit identity of being a tourist suggests that the person exercised choice in his or her journey from one place to the other. However, any understanding and experience of tourism in the Caribbean will confirm that the product is a multi-faceted and complex reality that brings together competing interests with different agendas, but united in the use of their capital to meeting the needs of people on the move.

Pre-Mass Tourism

This chapter gives attention to the challenges that the tourist industry poses for the church and society in the Caribbean. It begins by outlining the setting that contributed to the emergence of the tourist industry in the Anglo-phone Caribbean. This region has embraced the arrival of different peoples since 1492 – Europeans followed by African and Asians. Their journeys were accompanied with different religious expressions. The Euro-centric brand of Christianity dominated the religio-cultural setting with an overlay of other religious expressions from Africa and Asia. Implicit in the identity of Caribbean peoples is the syncretistic mixing of different cultures that has made the people open to external influences. These peoples made the region home because of socio-economic, political and security forces outside of their control. The centuries of colonial rule ensured that socio-economic development of the Caribbean lands was built on primarily serving European interests. The lands exist to meet their economic and entertainment needs. Most of the Islands were intentionally organised around mono-culture such as tobacco, sugar and bananas that kept the people poor and dependent on external food resources from the North.[2] This era saw agriculture being the main component of the economy. Tourism in the classical sense was negligible, but through sea transportation, the Caribbean attracted groups of people that laid the cultural foundation for the modern mass tourism product.

The Colonial Foundation of Tourism

In the days of Colonialism and Slavery, Caribbean people were seen as commodities to be traded. The tourist industry that sprung up also viewed the local people as commodities that were not fully human. These natives were deemed to have animal instincts and therefore did not qualify for fully human respect. Even in their fully developed adult life, they were treated as "children" on whose behalf decisions were to be made.The economy of the Caribbean has been historically designed to meet colonial priorities.

Colonialism and institutionalised Christianity went hand in hand in visioning the construction of society. In the early phase, the church served as chaplain to the European population, and later through missionary efforts embraced evangelism "to" the Africans who were enslaved, and later Asians who were classified as indentured servants (another form of enslavement). So like the political directorate that built a stratified society that gave whites most of the social and economic privileges, the Church, too, in spite of its claims of 'doing mission in Christ's way', exhibited the racism that existed

in the wider society. The status of a person's human worth and dignity in society was decided primarily by their economic status and the racial profile.

This means that churches and all other religious communities within the Caribbean should become actively involved in shaping the principles that govern tourism management within the region. Powerful economic determinants have functioned as the dominant factor in determining the management of tourism assets. Therefore, it is necessary for the church through its partnership with theological institutions of higher learning to equip people in local communities with the skills to critique the deceptive options being offered by the neo-liberal economic order that powers the greed within the tourism industry.

Even though the European population was in the minority and peoples of African descent were in the majority, their political and economic control of all the key assets in the nations communicated an entrenched perception that people who were not Europeans existed to serve their interests. Therefore, even after political colonialism ended, the socio-economic and political privileges that peoples of European descent enjoyed persisted in the new dispensation of independence. Tourism became the neo-colonial instrument to retain Northern control of the developing societies. The development of key infrastructures such as hospitals, roads, communication bridges, transportation and schools that were intentionally not prioritised during the colonial era became priority when the tourism industry decided that they were needed to service the industry.

It will be argued later that the contemporary dependence on tourism is also designed to keep Caribbean economies as an appendage of Northern economies. However, it must also be acknowledged that the tourism industry was not forced upon the nations like Jamaica. The local people were also receptive to the industry because, as islanders, many of them became migrants to Cuba, Panama, USA, Canada and England in search of employment. This ethnically diverse population developed a cosmopolitan outlook to life because they learned to live with and engage with other cultures.

Early post-independence expression of Tourism

The closing years of classical colonialism in the 1950's experienced growing

nationalism that called into question the colonial model of development. The era saw the early signs of the emergence of market driven mass tourism with prime coastal lands being acquired for the building of hotels to accommodate wealthy Americans and Europeans (Potter R.P; Barker. D; Conway D; Clarke Thomas, 2004:407).

The toxic socio-economic forces from the fallout from World War Two on Britain meant that Caribbean colonies were no longer economically sustainable. Political independence (a divestment of political responsibility) therefore became an urgent task to off-load what was then considered a burden on the British economy. The post WW2 rise of the USA economy in dominating the global economy meant that the economic sphere of influence shifted from Europe to the USA, and Caribbean Islands in particular followed suit and came under the USA sphere of influence. The social-influenced economy bequeathed by Colonialism was replaced by the American-determined capitalist economic paradigm where profits superseded all other factors in building society. The technological changes in transportation from the primacy of sea travel to air travel meant increased movement of people. In addition to the increased numbers of cruise ship travellers, came intercontinental air travellers from Europe and Asia.

Sun, Sea, Sand and Sex

The changing impact of tourism on Caribbean lands became most evident in the Jamaica context after it gained political independence from Britain in 1962. The underdevelopment bequeathed after centuries of colonialism ensured that alternative economic development became a necessity. The Post WW2 economic revival in Europe and the USA meant that a new economic colonisation of the Caribbean was introduced through the introduction of mass market-driven tourism. The Islands had little choice but to embrace this model of development, because tourism became the only viable asset to keep the economy afloat but at a heavy price. A neo-liberal form of economic enslavement emerged, built around four infamous "S's": sun, sea, sand and sex. Key national assets of the coastlines and smaller islands were sold off to the highest bidders who were usually foreign capitalists. Local citizens lost the rights to vast beaches as they became the exclusive rights of use for paying tourists, and vast areas of prime assets were transferred into the portfolio of Tourism magnates from USA and Europe. Local citizens were engaged primarily as non-technical/professional labourers, and strategic roles were reserved for foreign 'so-called experts'.

Since 1962 Jamaica has maintained its identity as a stable democratic institution. It has epitomised the experience of many Anglo-phone Caribbean economies that became dependent on mass tourism with increasing consequential social and environmental risks affecting the fragile eco-system. The carefree lifestyles that characterised the era was most evident in the values and mores of the tourists who unleashed on traditional and conservative island societies disruptive behaviours associated with loose hedonistic sex, wasteful consumptions and disrespect for the locals who serve them.

The Church and the Tourist industry

If the period of colonialism in the Caribbean saw Euro-centric Churches dominating the religious scene, then the post-independence era saw a paradigm shift with conservative Pentecostal Churches from the USA dominating the religious environment. Mass tourism also included a religious sector with many missionaries from diverse USA Pentecostal ecclesial movements reconverting what they classified as nominal Christians into "born again" believers. Evangelists from the North taking with them their "cargo cultic faith" used the mass appeal model of "crusade" to convert local people to their conservative brand of an American- biased expression of Christianity.

This brand of religious tourism had a disruptive political streak because it became aligned with the USA anti-communist and pro-capitalist economic agenda. The hidden agenda was a re-colonisation of the local people to embrace a political, religious and economic worldview that aligned them to the USA worldview. Instead of relying on their indigenous resources to facilitate their development, the model that was promoted invited the people to look externally for their spiritual, educational and economic development.This model of Christianity de-valued the identity, vocation and witness of local people. It rewarded those who spoke the coloniser's language well, dressed according to the expectations, embraced white values and standards set by an Euro-America worldview.

From this early stage of development in the tourism market, the primary concern of the church was on the moral fallout from the industry. The free lifestyle of tourists associated with their loose dress code, marijuana smoking, sexual freedom, hedonism, and casino gambling influenced the churches to lobby the government to put measures in place to protect local citizens from imported vices. They viewed the social cost of the industry outweighing the benefits.

The church's relationship with the tourist industry was paradoxical from the beginning. It embraced the benefits but critiqued the negatives. Its clergy embraced the economic benefits that came from conducting weddings of tourists and receiving their financial contributions to charitable causes, but weighed in heavily on the vices that led local people to embrace values that were not in their best interests.

An ecotheological response to the injustices of mass tourism

The contemporary challenges of mass tourism and its impact on environment have influenced discussions within theological institutions and the Church, calling for a pro-active eco-theological understanding of the church's ministry and mission. Although Ecotheology has historically been part of Christian tradition, it has emerged as an urgent area of academic discourse because of the current global crisis caused by the effects of human induced climate change on the environment. The church's theological orientation embraces the sovereignty of God and the dignity of all creation, human and the environment. This brand of eco-Christianity advocated by Prof. Ernst Conradie[3] of the University of the Western Cape calls for a shift in understanding to embrace all of creation to be stewarded with care. Conradie offers a stark perspective:

Christian ecotheology may be regarded as an attempt to retrieve the ecological wisdom embedded in the Christian tradition as a response to ecological destruction and environmental injustices. However, it is also prompted by the widespread suspicion that the root causes of the crisis are related to the impact of Christianity (as pointed out by Lynn White and other early critics). That Christianity is deeply implied in the roots of ecological destruction is based on the intuitive recognition that there is a close correlation between countries where Christianity was well established during the industrial revolution and historical carbon emissions. This correlation is still evident in the association between neo-liberal capitalism and its closest religious analogues, namely rightwing evangelicalism (found e.g. in wealthy nations) and the theological legitimation of the prosperity gospel (found e.g. in contexts with upward social mobility)[4].

Reshaping the principles that govern tourism management

This ecotheological reorientation involves a shift from an anthropocentric predominance of creation to a new balance that takes into account all other forms of life. It offers the church and its partner theological institutions an opportunity to orientate their missional agenda to embrace a more life-giving

approach towards mass tourism. This means that churches and all other religious communities within the Caribbean should become actively involved in shaping the principles that govern tourism management within the region. Powerful economic determinants have functioned as the dominant factor in determining the management of tourism assets. Therefore, it is necessary for the church through its partnership with theological institutions of higher learning to equip people in local communities with the skills to critique the deceptive options being offered by the neo-liberal economic order that powers the greed within the tourism industry.

Challenging the guiding principles of tourism management

If the guiding principles for tourism management are structured around meeting the pleasure needs of people at the expense of the environment, then the ecotheological identity and vocation of the church's mission necessitates putting up resistance as an act of its faith commitment. If the church and theological institutions are to engage seriously with the challenges that mass tourism presents to Caribbean nations, then an ecological reformation becomes a necessity in the missional formation and praxis of their leaders and members. The contemporary period, in particular, has promoted through mass tourism the primacy of making people happy as its cultural goal, and this has become an obsession. Obsession can only be altered by an intentional policy of weaning the addict from its source of addiction, and to replace it with an alternative life affirming lifestyle.

The Church as a missional agent of culture and heritage

Another important area that calls into question the role of the church and the educational institutions that facilitates leadership formation is to be found in the need to serve as active representatives of culture and heritage in the Tourism sector. Many of the churches linked to the 19th and 20th century missionary era are a repository of an immeasurable and irreplaceable culture and heritage of a past era. The architecture of their buildings, graveyards and archival records constitute important underdeveloped resources that have not received serious attention from tourism promotion authorities. Sadly, the church has been caught up with promoting an inner ecclesial model of ministry and mission that it, too, does not appreciate nor recognise the missional, cultural and economic potential of their underdeveloped tourism resources that lie dormant and unable to realise their full potential.

Resisting imperial domination of local culture

African retention is very strong within many Caribbean societies. However, the close proximity of the region with its young 'pot pourri[5] or pelau culture'[6] to the dominant neighbouring culture of the United States of America (USA) means that Caribbean culture and tradition come under constant assault with an explicit objective of ensuring it is politically and economically impotent. Communities that bear the record of people who have struggled for freedom against imperial powers are incapable of preserving and protecting themselves, and easily surrender to the infectious political and economic power of tourism money that remove them from their historic sites and enchanting seacoast to build hotels and other forms of entertainment. In many Caribbean nations, the voice of the Church constitutes the only respected institution that may influence decisions of government and the business sector to build on historic sites. With strong pressure on government to provide jobs for the unemployed, historic sites are at times sacrificed in the name of so-called economic progress.

Promoting of sustainable tourism development

Another key area that calls into question the churches' perspective within Caribbean societies is their involvement in the promotion of sustainable tourism development. Caribbean churches are important institutions within local communities. Long before Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) became popular in raising public awareness and lobbying for environmental and other justice issues, the Church functioned as the alternative voice that held political and economic powers accountable. In the contemporary era, the Church's influence in society has generally shifted from the centre to the margins. Therefore, new methods of solidarity and partnership with victims of uncontrolled political and economic interests that promote mass tourism must be engineered in order to address and promote sustainable tourism development. Networking with other organisations with common interest becomes a missional imperative, because the deceptive powers of global economic institutions that are powered by greed will easily employ strategies of divide and rule to weaken opposition forces that work for sustainable tourism development.

The nexus between the global economic disorder and mass tourism

In the1970's Jamaicans became disenchanted with the laissez-faire economic policies that benefitted the wealthy and made the poor poorer.

They responded by removing the pro-USA government and elected a democratic socialist government to ensure economic justice for the majority poor. However, this reassessment and realignment of the economy earned the wrath of the USA, and its disapproval was felt through acts of destabilisation of the economy to bring about political change that supported its interests. The 1973 spike in oil prices resulted in a downturn in the global economy that had devastating negative consequences for the Jamaican economy that eventually led to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) applying its brand of economic recovery that resulted in sacrificing the social welfare programmes for the poor, and transferring those benefits to the wealthy class with the false hope that they would invest more in the country to lift it out of recession and debt.

Mass Tourism based upon the Mediterranean "all inclusive" brand took hold in Jamaica, and eventually the Caribbean, through the Sandals and Super Clubs brands. Tourists were invited to pay a one-off cost, and the hotel took on the responsibility to provide the accommodation, a variety of meals, sports and entertainment on the property without any further additional cost. Tourists came in their thousands but in the early stages of development the tourists had little or no engagement with other people outside of the gates of the hotel. This was a "gated community" that lived in first world conditions in a third world environment. The economic benefit of this brand had minimal positive impact on the wellbeing of local people.

The church's relationship with the tourist industry was paradoxical from the beginning. It embraced the benefits but critiqued the negatives. Its clergy embraced the economic benefits that came from conducting weddings of tourists and receiving their financial contributions to charitable causes, but weighed in heavily on the vices that led local people to embrace values that were not in their best interests.

Whose interest does the economics of tourism serve?

The overwhelming argument that is used to validate giving the tourism industry a privileged space within the nation through significant tax incentives is that the industry makes a significant financial contribution to the economy through employment. However, many questions are being raised about whose real interests does the economics of tourism serve? The high

dependence on foreign capital to develop the tourism product means that the outflow of capital is also very high, especially when one takes into account that Northern capitalists are the effective owners of the major hotel chains. They decided that products are sourced locally and those that must be procured externally. The early post-independence brand of mass tourism saw a decline or extinction of certain kinds of local industries because they could not compete with cheaper foreign imports.

The jury is still out on weighing the benefit gained from generating foreign exchange growth in the island economies. There is no consensus on the system of measurement that is used to assess the benefits. However, Louis Perez commenting on the Caribbean context, in his research asserts that: "For each dollar spent in the Commonwealth Caribbean, 77% returns in some form to the metropole."[7] This statistic suggests that the industry has lots of porous areas that allows foreign exchange movements to take place without following due process. Therefore, the economy cannot be adequately assessed to determine how much is being lost through unaccountable use of financial resources.

Rum, Reggae, Rastafari, Runners and Relax

The tourism product in the Caribbean is diverse with attractions that vary from human created attractions to Natural scenery, Animal and plant life, Climate, Historical sites, Sports and Culture. Being a large island (4,243 square miles) and with a population of 2.7million in 2012, its diverse economy includes mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism that has become the second most important contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after Bauxite mining. The tourism industry has the capacity to bring in foreign exchange and provide high levels of employment for partly skilled or unskilled workers. Most of the tourist products are offered on the North Coast of the Island where many hotel rooms have been built. Therefore the impact of tourism does not necessarily reach all areas of the country.

There is growing recognition that the most important resources that Jamaica processes that add an unique brand to the Tourism product can be described in five "R's", namely: Rum, Reggae, Rastafarai, Runners and Relax. The rum serves as a reminder of the dominant role that sugar played in the Jamaican economy. The rum serves as 'the spirit' that permeates every facet of Jamaican cultural life. Reggae symbolises the role that music plays in defining the Jamaican identity. A new tourist market has developed around music such as "Rebel Salute", "Sun Splash" and "Jamaica Jazz and

Blues" that attract special tourist visitors. Rastafari emerged from its unwelcomed beginning in the 1930's as an Afro-centric religious movement to restore the human dignity of the black race and foster repatriation to Africa. Its critique of the oppressive life denying socio-political, religious and economic systems that are termed "Babylon" serves as a framework for an embedded spirit of resistance against all life denying forces. The post-independence years have seen Jamaica consistently established in its identity as a global power in sprint races, and currently possesses the athlete who is the fastest sprinter in the world: Usain Bolt. Finally the lifestyles of the Jamaican people have communicated an attitude of Relaxation…not being in a hurry…taking it easy, and is best summed up in the slogan: "Jamaica…No Problem". These five cultural assets are providing fresh energy for the unique tourist product offered by the island.

Contemporary Challenges

Serious questions are being posed concerning the sustainability of the model of tourism that is currently serving the Caribbean. The global focus on Climate Change acknowledges the vulnerability of Caribbean lands to the warming of sea temperatures.[8] The fragile nature of tourism-dependent economies requires stability in the key contributors to the tourism product. Increasing

> Therefore even after political colonialism ended, the socio-economic and political privileges that peoples of European descent enjoyed persisted in the new dispensation of independence. Tourism became the neo-colonial instrument to retain Northern control of the developing societies. The development of key infrastructures such as hospitals, roads, communication bridges, transportation and schools that were intentionally not prioritised during the colonial era became priority when the tourism industry decided that they were needed to service the industry.

occurrences of hurricanes in the regions result in negative impact on infrastructure that supports the industry. Although positive environmental features are very important to maintaining the attractiveness of the tourism product in the Caribbean, the political will and financial resources needed to maintain the features are often not available. Islands like the Cayman Islands with a land mass that is less than 2 metres above sea level are most vulnerable to rising sea temperatures. However, even if it invests in marine preventative

measures to slow down the impact, the ultimate solutions lies within the control of the major global economies that are guilty of environmental impacts of climate change. With little natural resources to sustain its economy, Cayman has turned to establishing itself as a global financial centre and tax haven for the world's richest people. In addition, it has marketed itself as a haven for cruise ships. However any visit to the islands will clearly reveal that there are social impacts that result from high volume of cruise tourists that can overwhelm a small geographical area where local people live and work.[9] Indeed, in the early 2000s specialist tourism emerged that cater for select groups. Gay tourism found a niche market, and a cruise ship with hundreds of gay tourists made attempts to land at the port but received a negative welcome from the religious community that complained to the government that the presence of so many people, with alternative lifestyles that were not approved by them, were not welcome. However, the religious sentiments were overruled by political factors because the Island was still subject to a British veto on foreign affairs and European Commission standards of Human rights, and economic factors, because Gay cruise tourism constituted a high value financial contributor to the local economy.

Implications of Climate Change from Tourism Demand

There is growing concern over the impact of climate change on the Tourism product in the Caribbean. The increasing loss of Carol reefs due to bleaching will affect the development of Ecotourism, and eventually the reduction in marine diversity may lead to a decline in what the region is able to offer tourists while degrading it.

Impact of mitigation policy on tourist mobility

Increased tourism demand has resulted in the need for increased flights to the region and ships to their ports. However, the demise of national airlines, such as Air Jamaica, to serve as a strategic transporter of tourists and goods to meet the national economic objectives, has resulted in the country being dependent on foreign airlines and even providing them with subsidies to maintain airlift into the country. Travel from UK/Europe to Jamaica and many other Caribbean islands is monopolised by European Airlines. They have kept travel cost at a level that can be afforded mostly by Europeans and not by Caribbean citizens.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that tourism in the Caribbean has resulted in certain

benefits to the different nations such as employment, and investments in infrastructural developments. According to Neil Sealey (1981:52), the consequences of tourism can be assessed under its economic gains and losses, social change and problems, and environmental damage and protection. He argued that the high capital requirement of the industry has resulted in foreign investors being the key players and stakeholders. Therefore a lot of the money that is spent in the country goes straight out as profits or to purchase foreign products needed by the industry. The challenge for countries like Jamaica is how to ensure that most of the money spent by tourists is maintained in the country (1981:55).

The social changes bequeathed by the tourist industry have resulted in some negative problems that must be addressed. Tourists usually travel with their culture, and since most of them come from the USA, the strategic proximity of Caribbean islands to the USA ensures that its culture weighs a heavy influence on the islands in language, music and entertainment, food (fast food industry such as KFC, McDonalds, Wendy etc). This has resulted in cultural identity loss, especially among the young people as they debase themselves mimicking foreigners and exhibiting anti-social behaviour.

The sad reality is that in those areas where one expects to see the local people earning much from the sale of their produce to the tourist, close examination of the beautiful craft work or T shirt with the label Jamaica is usually "made in China". Therefore, the brand of the island is highjacked and exploited by other nations for their benefit.

Finally the small island nations do not have the resources to patrol the waters that are used by Cruise shipping. This can result in waste being illegally dumped with no one being held accountable. In addition there are other issues of beach front squeeze that arise from over-building of hotels on small plots by the sea.

The role of the Church in all of this is to be an uncompromising voice for human dignity and respect for all creation, in holding accountable all agents in the tourist industry, because they are powerful to the extent that they can corrupt state power to achieve their economic objectives. This missional and ethical responsibility of the Church is best summarised as a life serving function for which:

> "…care as a category is to be included in a realignment of the Social Market Economy with the categories of sustainability, justice, solidarity and common good. It has to be incorporated in regulatory

considerations in outlining a value system of suborder and in specific embodiments at the various levels of action.[10]

Areas and topics that arise from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1. The article has called into question certain brands of religious tourism, that have had a disruptive political impact, being aligned with the USA worldview that promotes a capitalist economic agenda. How does this concern play out in your context/region? How can it be appropriately addressed by the churches?
2 Do the costs of tourism, including social, moral, environmental, and community impact, outweigh the benefits of tourism presented by the tourism industry in your region? What is the overall balance sheet on tourism in your region, especially if it is coastal, seen from the perspective of justice and quality of life?
3. Identify the ways the economics of tourism expresses itself in your region, among your people. Whose interests do you think does the economics of tourism serve? How is the church to act out its missional calling in such a situation?
4. How can you apply the insights from the discussion on the Caribbean church and context to yours?

Endnotes

1 http://media.unwto.org/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary
2 Walter Rodney explains the process well through his excellent text " How Europe underdeveloped Africa"
3 Prof Ernst Conradie was the Keynote Speaker at the Walter Guttenberg Lecture hosted by the School of Religion Philosophy and Classics, University of Kwa Zulu Natal on April 18, 2013
4 Ernst Conradie, 2013. *Contemporary Challenges to Christian Ecotheology: Some Reflections on the State of the Debate after Five Decades* (Unpublished article) UKZN
5 This is a Caribbean concept that speaks of using the leftover food of the week's menu to make a common meal. All of the ingredients are cooked in one pot and can become a kind of soup to feed the whole family.

[6] The concept serves to symbolise the coming together of different cultures from Europe, Africa and Asia that laid the foundation of Caribbean culture. What emerged from the union of cultures was something very different from their individual identities. See Hewitt. R. 2012. Church and Culture, Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg.

[7] O'Grady R, 1981. *Third World Stopover, The Risk Series*, WCC Publications: Geneva. Quoting Winter 1973-74, "Tourism and the Caribbean", Science and Society, Vol XXXV11, p.475

[8] http://journals.cambridge.org/action/display Abstract; jsessionid = 7C0929 E2748881F3A50AA9836461B294.journals? fromPage=online & aid=314302 (accessed 10/1/14)

[9] Thomas J. Murray, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Proceedings of the 14th Biennial Coastal Zone Conference New Orleans, Louisiana July 17 to 21, 2005, "The Impact of Cruisehip Tourism on Local Economies" Panel CZ05

[10] Remodelling the Social Market Economy from an ethical standpoint, Background Study Material, 2011. Regional Church Office of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia

5

Tourism and Climate Justice:
Theological Reflections

R C Thomas

Climate Change is the defining issue of our era, as Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary General, has said. Every report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirms this with exhaustive data and analyses. Rising seas, melting glaciers, extended droughts, destructive floods, drying rivers, more intense storms, more frequent cyclones and hurricanes, threatened and destroyed wildlife and biodiversity, and other consequences, have become routine news. These developments carry a special poignancy for the Global South, in that they have already impacted on the communities therein, and will continue to do so in the future. The suffering of countless human beings makes global warming and climate change a theological concern.

Of course, a number of factors lead to global warming. One of these is tourism with its extensive dependence on fossil fuels energy that powers aviation and shipping, airports and accommodation, airconditioning and refrigeration, and varied utilities requiring such energy. Tourism is also detrimental to the earth's ecology, to nature. Even as the Kyoto Protocol exempts tourism from mandatory requirements on carbon emissions on the grounds of being 'a motor for development', the tourism industry should be challenged to accept its clear links with climate change and its effects. South Churches, in collaboration with other voices, have a special role in achieving such an outcome, both because of their communities being vulnerable to the ravages of climate change, and the call to justice for God's people they proclaim. This article elaborates on the issues, and some theological linkages, from the perspective of the Global South.

Introduction

Human propensity towards mobility remains a unique phenomenon in the universe by which human beings can transcend limitations of time, space and height. Though the celestial bodies, microbes, plants, and animals move continually, their inbuilt navigation system serves the purpose of movement without harming the created order. But for every externally triggered human mobility, so much pressure and force have to be exerted that nature is bound to absorb them. Every induced human travel using petrol/diesel vehicles results in some sort of fossil burning which emits carbon dioxide (CO_2), harming the order of the creation.

Diaspora stations, hotels, motels, resorts, airports, leisure complexes, fun cities, and cosmopolitan cities constitute contemporary points of interconnectivity transforming reality, and giving a new impetus to social research related to tourism. Tourism itself has branched off into various types of tourisms[1] , and the cumulative damage done by them to help induce *climate change*[2] forms the crux of this article.

The main thrusts of this article are:

It attempts to define the word 'climate' in light of devastating environmental changes;

The nexus between air travel and tourism is brought out to show the increase of CO_2 in the atmosphere leading to many ecological crises;

The theological reflection finds some root causes of our erroneous vision of nature itself, and pleads for a new calibration;

Lastly, a few general proposals and suggestions are indicated for society in general, and Church and theological students, in particular.

Neologisms on climate

The rise of a plethora of neologisms related to climate is a post-1982 phenomenon as a result of the growing concern over an impending ecocide triggered by human manipulations on nature. Since then, "climate" has been variously seen as *'climate change'*,[3] *'climate sin'*, *'climate injustice'*, *'climate justice'*, *'climate security'*, *'climate war'*, *'climate refugees'* etc. A new awareness to protect and preserve the "common goods" such as air, water and soil, was recognised as the responsibility of the whole humanity who will hand them over to the next generations, just as they have inherited from their own ancestors. Against the backdrop of the ecological

crises and the dangers that have developed in the recent past, some of the standard definitions of the words related to climate change may be considered. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has defined climate change as:

> *a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the means and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcing or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use.*[4]

Koffi Annan, the former General Secretary of the UN, has said:

> *Climate change is the greatest humanitarian challenge facing mankind (sic) today. It is a challenge that has a grave injustice at its heart. It is the major developed economies of the world which contribute to the overwhelming majority of global greenhouse emissions. But it is poorer and least developed nations that are hit hardest by its impact.*[5]

In July 2008, the 'Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative' released a report on "*Climate of Change: African Americans, Global Warming, and a Just Climate Policy for the United States"*.[6] Around the world, including India, climate change is seriously considered in relation to the marginal communities such as *dalits*, tribals/*adivasis*, aborigines, women and other marginalised groups.[7]

'*Climate sin'* refers to the conscious, systematic and systemic human destruction of creation in the name of development. The perpetrators are aware of the detrimental effects of their actions. The word '*climate injustice'* refers to the consequences of rising atmospheric temperature caused by burning of fossil fuels by human beings that brings major benefits for a few at the expense of the environment, and to the total disadvantage of millions of people. Victims will be the first to share the effects, but finally nobody will be spared. Flora and fauna of a given area totally disappear or they are being alarmingly threatened. *Climate justice* refers not only to the rights of the present generation of humans but also to the rights of future generations of every organism including the human beings. Locally, it is understood as "grassroots initiatives to mobilise local governments and local NGOs to address socio-economic changes on the poor and the marginalised as a result of climate change.''

The reality of aviation dependent tourism

Tourism as a business has a long history going back to Thomas Cook.[8] When he organised a tour for the UK aristocrats in 1840, he never visualised it as tour-*ism.* Tour-*ism,* unlike 'travel' and `journey' classically understood, is not anymore an innocent act out of love of nature to visit enchanting beaches, serene virgin forests, lofty mountains, exotic valleys, crystal clear lakes, stretching deserts and so on. It has various motivations, including socio-psychical reasons, which have attached a halo around air travel. Nobody had suspected that air travel would be so detrimental to the environment.

At a global level, tourism is among the four largest industries on earth, with oil, arms-armaments and pharmaceutical sectors. It has turned out to be a business of greed, avarice and consumption. The damage caused by the tourism sector to environment remains invisible to the naked eye immediately, but the cumulative detrimental effects appear somewhere, sometime, upon somebody else. Neither the real polluters, for that matter, nor the victims, take an immediate balance sheet to the detrimental effects bound to be seriously destructive of the earth.

Tourism industry is no more an innocent business, a "smokeless'', "harmless" industry as it was thought to be around the 1970s. The old euphoria about a pristine, pure tourism remains only a chimera now, as for the last three decades the tourism sector has been plundering nature and resources in various ways. While the whole humanity shares some of the negative consequences of tourism, the poor and the vulnerable are the badly hit. Irreparable damage done to flora and fauna is the backdrop against which we discuss climate injustice and its ecological consequences. By turning it into a double-edged sword with the development ideology on the one side and conservation of environment on the other side, one is bound to ask, "Is tourism a boon or bane?"

No one can disassociate climate changes from the tourism sector. In effect, tourism is the villain as well as the victim of the activities related to tourism. Air travel, the major concern, is inextricably bound to tourism, not only contributing to climate changes, but tourism itself being affected by them as well. The increasing air travel tourism and rising global warming are matters of serious concern. This section traces the nexus between air travel, the greenhouse effect and global warming. Now the 'skyway' has turned to be the 'highway' where a direct connection exists between the number of flights carrying tourists and the CO_2 emission.

Different factors have enabled progress in air travel in the last decade. For example, competition among the budget airlines has made it comparatively cheaper, and online booking from desktops at home through customer friendly devices make travel arrangements less cumbersome. Connectivity among flights to reach the destination with long haul and short haul travel possibilities[9] has been turned much easier. Even the developing countries are competing with developed nations to increase the fleet of their aircrafts, as their governments have encouraged the airline companies by reducing levies on air fuel, and opening their sky for foreign airlines to fly in. The startling facts and frightening statistics show those greater consequences await not only for human life and their habitat, but also for the non-human world.

Tourism helps initiate and ignite catastrophic climate changes through global warming. Global tourism and global warming maintain a hand in glove relationship with its many ramifications. Tourists travelling in the name of various types of tourism are among the significant contributors to the increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Air travel, consisting of short haul and long haul flights, which carry tourists, along with other passengers, has increased by 45% in the last one decade (2000-2010). The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) counted a billion tourism arrivals in 2012. By 2020, their number will be 1.6 billion, which shows a strong increase. It also means that the neo-rich tourists from the "South" and "holiday makers such as the backpackers and the charter tourists" will continue to fly, crossing the boundaries of their respective continents to reach their destination as their economy will have become comparatively stronger. China is a classical example for the skyrocketing number of middle class tourists. No wonder, tourism accounts for about 50% of the movement of people from their homes to other destinations; it will have greater consequences not only on human life and their habitat, but also on the whole ecological system.

Any sort of burning causes the production of CO_2, which is the main atmospheric polluter. CO_2 is generated by the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas (e.g. in industry, electricity generation, and automobiles), and when there are changes in land use, such as deforestation. In recent years, the uncontrolled production of the greenhouse gases (GHGs), causes a great concern for all of us. The GHGs trap heat from the sun, and thereby the atmospheric temperatures rise steadily and systematically. In the long run, the accumulation of CO_2 and other greenhouse gases in the

atmosphere can cause global climate change – a process that is already occurring.[10]

The emission of CO_2 in the atmosphere increases year by year through the aircrafts. The escalating percentages of CO_2 in the atmosphere and the worsening climate change are the two co-related indicators. The emission of greenhouse gases by the passenger jets are one of the fastest growing sources of global warming. The environment cannot cope with the excessive burning habit of humans producing more CO_2.

Of the manifold catastrophes of global warming, a few of them may be highlighted. Some of the statistics given by experts on climate change relating to air travel and tourism are really alarming. Rapidly expanding air traffic contributes about 2.5% of the production of CO_2 in the atmosphere. 05% of the total worldwide GHGs emissions[11] happen due to aviation; and the 40% of this arise directly from the machines carrying tourists. Air craft on both domestic and international flights fly at a height of 33,000-35,000 feet, and the entire greenhouse gases which the aircraft emit can easily and quickly harm the ozone layer.[12] GHGs emissions from aviation are growing rapidly at 4% annually.[13] Globally, CO_2 emission from aviation fuel doubled from 1990 to 2006. If unchecked, by 2050, it may shoot-up by 300-400%. The present pace of CO_2 production has crossed 20,000 times what it was 50 years ago. On May 9, 2013, CO_2 level in the atmosphere touched 400 ppm. The gravity of the situation becomes conspicuous when we know that eight

A contrast indicated in the hierarchy of sin that accords more importance with regard to humans, and low importance with regard to the environment is at the base of our thinking. In the Christian tradition, the concept of sin is very deep and strong, so that if there is no sinful human with God saving them, Christianity becomes just a shell. But in the Christian tradition, sin against nature is not at all accounted for. The early Jesus community missed the role of nature as an interpretative tool to know reality. Every Christian conviction is not merely a wishful thinking, but a hope, hope of a new heaven and new earth in a spirit of *metanoia*. It is our willingness to confess our wrongdoing and to deter from sinful acts. Our mission is to impart these insights to others – the individual, parish, and the wider society.

billion tonnes of CO_2 in the atmosphere equal 1 ppm. Considering all these factors, aviation may currently be responsible for up to 14% of the human

induced climate change.[14] While the amount of CO_2 has been maintained almost the same for centuries almost matching what animals exhale and what plants inhale, according to prognosis, the alarming situation facing us will only shoot up as demand for air travel keeps on increasing. The natural balance of CO_2 has been changing for the last few years due to air travel, cutting down of trees, land conversion exclusively used for various commercial and non-agricultural purposes. Another example is of a cruiser carrying tourists in the ocean emitting GHGs equivalent to that of 12,000 cars.

In 1996, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) started to discuss the parameters for allocating aviation emissions, but has reached nowhere for several years. However, many international rules and regulations already exist to control CO_2 emissions. Since 2001[15] 'global warming' has become a theme of serious concern to the world as a whole, and individual governments have taken some measures at national levels to curb this impending catastrophe. The international rules to limit producers of the CO_2 seem very ineffective because of the elusiveness of the laws and practical difficulties to locate the perpetrators. The UNFCCC distinguishes between rich and poor countries for all other emissions. Per capita emissions in poor countries are higher or at par with many of the countries originally classified as "developed." But, the Concept of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC) says that developed nations have a historical responsibility and moral obligation to tackle climate change and take the lead in reducing and financing emissions reduction. Moreover, the old classic differentiation of developing/ developed, rich/poor does not apply any more since the CO_2 emissions from the same developing countries have grown rapidly.

Theological reflection

Here, let us identify some root causes of our fallacious vision of nature itself, and look for a new theological calibration. For mending the torn eco-canvas, two levels are visualised. Firstly, it applies and pertains exclusively to the oblique vision of the church and the faithful on environment. From a Christian perspective, one evaluates the defects of our vision. However, this language appeals only to a Christian circle. Secondly, the question of justice in tourism applies to a wider public in terms of the steps done at the international level to ensure it. We have done so much havoc to the environment and humans we must take up the responsibility of mending it.

A holistic vision of God-human-nature

Any discussion on the human role as stewards reminds of at least three models: (i) humans above nature, (ii) humans in nature, (iii) humans with nature. The first model is the representative model of the secular, liberal and enlightenment pattern in which humans are considered to be *Humana Mensura"*. This ancient Greek dictum means the human is the measure for everything, and this approach stands in dire need of correction. About a half a century ago in 1967, Lynn White, the famous US historian from the University of California, found fault with this unfriendly approach of Christian faith towards environment. Our arrogance and megalomania to claim human superiority over and against the environment had led us to claim primacy over nature and to tame it which White basically contested. With the backdrop of his observation, as well as other ecological insights, we may identify at least three areas of our indefensible theological presuppositions which demand a re-vision: Humans are not the owners of this earth but only stewards who are assigned to till and keep it. Some biblical verses such as Gen. 1:28; 2:16 were wrongly quoted to argue that human concerns are over and above the needs of non-human worlds. Pope John Paul II has warned us saying: "*There is a growing alarming situation that the world peace is threatened not only by the arms, conflicts and injustices…but also by a lack of due respect for nature…the plundering of natural resources"*[16] Socio-environmental destruction has arisen due to the partial and defective Western Christian vision of environment. Said otherwise, it meant that God deals with humans only, hardly with nature and the environment. Moreover, the Christian faith, obsessed with the idea of human sin in revolt and rebellion against God and leading to eternal perdition, found the solution to the perennial problem of human sin in the spirit of *metanoia* of going back to God.

The over-emphasis of this model – humans above nature – can relate to the tourism sector. It has affected the environment negatively leading to 'ecocide'. All previous populist claims of tourism as 'smokeless', 'non-polluting industry' and so on, remain only a myth. In contemporary times, as with other industries, it is causing so much destruction to nature and backlash on environment. It can create great pressure on local resources such as energy, food, and other raw materials that may already be in short supply. Greater extraction and transport of these resources exacerbate the physical impacts associated with their exploitation. Because of the seasonal character of this industry, many destinations have ten times more inhabitants in the high season as in the low season. A high demand is placed upon these

resources to meet the high expectations of the tourists such as proper heating, hot water, and so on.

Devastation done by tourism may be classified as effects on natural habitat, and those on human ecology. The real human agents who do the harm can cover it up by bringing in foreign exchange, as one in the developing countries is more worried about today's bread rather than tomorrow's harmful effects on nature. Pollution, piling up of waste and loss of biodiversity are some of the many negative impacts. The tourism industry in Maldives for instance causes the poor in that country to face many problems with regard to coral reefs. People travel to their destination in another country or the same country by air or by car to the local national park. Every mode of burning emits CO_2 into the air. Waste, which the tourists dispose of after a trip results in landfills! Physical damage, done especially to the local fauna and animal habitat, by dumping the waste is indescribable. Reckless tramping, careless trampling through the forest or burning deadfall leads to smashing down of delicate flowers and grasses, and destroying habitat for local ground dwelling animals. Loud noises can scare animals out of the area and possibly even disrupt the local ecosystem.

The second model – Humans in nature – is a reaction against the first model and it swings to the other side to romanticise and valorise nature. Even some environmentalists quote Is.40: 6-8 to depict humans as grass. But the third model – humans with nature – is the desirable model. Since the 1970s, in the Christian circles, this tendency has undergone many changes. Earlier, the words such as 'doomsday' and 'apocalypse' had previously attained religious and quasi-religious connotations with regard to the end of chronological time. Now the futurologists and eco-scientists can visualise the great danger of an ecological cataclysmic end created, not beyond ages, but at the door step, right in our midst. A catastrophe is guaranteed doubly and inevitably in light of the reckless destruction of the environment, and its negative effects may be seen from the perspective of environmental ecology and human ecology.

Since environmental consequences with regard to aviation have been already discussed, other causes which trigger climate change and the consequences of climate injustice and tourism may be also referred to. For example, tourism activities, alongside others, accelerate increase in the levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs) causing sea levels to rise, threatening to submerge coastal cities and fisher folk villages. It has other consequences such as monsoon rains arriving at wrong times. Cyclones[17] such as the

recent *Haiyan* wash away creation, not as the wrath of God, but as a result of human interventions and manipulations in nature. Drought and diseases can have a serious effect on inbound and domestic tourism, and thus on local tourism industries too. Climate changes have increased the severity and frequency of storms and weather events which can have disastrous effects on tourism in the affected regions. Natural catastrophes such as drought, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, volcanoes, avalanches, as well as induced catastrophes such as diseases, sun burns and heat waves risk the world as a result of global warming. Alarming climate changes at the global level endanger the whole universe. According to Tourism Concern, scientists predict that by 2015, half of the annual destruction of the ozone layer will be caused by air travel. The tourism industry contributes to the depletion of the ozone layer, which is situated in the upper atmosphere (or stratosphere) at an altitude of 12-50 kilometres, protects life on earth by absorbing the harmful wavelengths of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Here the problem pertains mainly to very basic theological assertions made for centuries by which we qualify ourselves as humans with nature and God.

Tourism like any other industry is doing damage to the environment by throwing waste recklessly all around. A contrast indicated in the hierarchy of sin that accords more importance with regard to humans, and low importance with regard to the environment is at the base of our thinking. In the Christian tradition, the concept of sin is very deep and strong, so that if there is no sinful human with God saving them, Christianity becomes just a shell. But in the Christian tradition, sin against nature is not at all accounted for. The early Jesus community missed the role of nature as an interpretative tool to know reality. Every Christian conviction is not merely a wishful thinking, but a hope, hope of a new heaven and new earth in a spirit of *metanoia*. It is our willingness to confess our wrongdoing and to deter from sinful acts. Our mission is to impart these insights to others – the individual, parish, and the wider society.

Justice for an ecological balance

Here, justice mainly implies socio-economic justice to be done to the poor and rejected of this world. The preceding observations pertain purely to some aspects of the economic dimension in terms of gains and loss. The 2011 document "Last call to Durban" states:

> *The travel and tourism industry has to date protected its business in the name of poverty alleviation. It is urgent to highlight the*

> *complex social, cultural economic and environmental impacts of tourism in destinations particularly as these affect workers and communities and draw attention to the irresponsible stance of the tourism industry in the UNFCCC process.*

How far could the Tourism sector ensure economic justice, and how far will it contribute to alleviate poverty? From the beginning, it was considered as an angel saving the poor from their deplorable condition.

The first model is the representative model of the secular, liberal and enlightenment pattern in which humans are considered to be *Humana Mensura.* This ancient Greek dictum means the human is the measure for everything, and this approach stands in dire need of correction. About a half a century ago in 1967, Lynn White, the famous US historian from the University of California, found fault with this unfriendly approach of Christian faith towards environment. Our arrogance and megalomania to claim human superiority over and against the environment had led us to claim primacy over nature and to tame it which White basically contested. With the backdrop of his observation, as well as other ecological insights, we may identify at least three areas of our indefensible theological presuppositions which demand a re-vision: Humans are not the owners of this earth but only stewards who are assigned to till and keep it. Some biblical verses such as Gen. 1:28; 2:16 were wrongly quoted to argue that human concerns are over and above the needs of non-human worlds. Pope John Paul II has warned us saying: "*There is a growing alarming situation that the world peace is threatened not only by the arms, conflicts and injustices…,but also by a lack of due respect for nature…the plundering of natural resources"*[19]

A myth exists that if the share of tourism revenue remained in the national economy, it will benefit poor people. Studies have shown that it benefits small elites, leaving the real poor missing out on 'the cake'.[18] For instance, a study on the tourism industry impact for the last twenty years in the Dominican Republic reveals that the tourism boom has failed to boost development of the masses there. It is a fact that only 2% of the world population is involved in air travel, whereas its detrimental effects are shared by the whole humanity. Figures show that the tourism business is not going to slow down. Tourism that is good to the oligarchy, provides low level

benefits to a minority of people employed, while pushing millions into poverty, and doing untold damage to humans, environment and energy sources is unacceptable.

Ways forward: plans for action

The World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesberg (2002) called for engagement around the three 'P's – 'political will', 'practical steps' and 'partnership'. On this basis, a few proposals may be suggested as follows:

Given the serious consequences of both tourism as structured today, and the state of the global and regional environment, relevant bodies dealing with tourism should make a concerted effort to inform, and assist people to comprehend the issues;

Parish priests should be provided with some basic statistics and information that will help them to preach on these concerns;

Church bodies should release a white paper on 'The Challenge of Tourism to Theology' in light of the impending ecological catastrophe of climate injustice. Denominations should set aside at least one of their ministerial students to specialise in this area;

The first Sunday in September should be declared as a 'day of tourism' to reflect on its concerns;

Easy to understand leaflets should be disseminated among the public on the ecological consequences of tourism;

Encourage ministerial candidates to write theses on the ecology-economy-tourism nexus, with the superior ones to be acknowledged with a cash award and publicised;

Maintain a constant vigil on developments in tourism in relation to the environment, and continue advocacy, lobbying etc., with decision makers, planners, and other government-related personnel;

Churches should join hands with local NGOs which promote and campaign for the preservation of the environment, observance of regulations regarding land and prudent water utilisation, with no special favours to the powerful interests;

Air travellers should be levied 0.5% of their total ticket cost to create a fund for climate refugees.

In tourist spots, the churches may take initiatives for eco-worship.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

Initiate a pilot study on the effects of climate change in your country, region, or local area, from the perspective of the disadvantaged such as women, indigenous communities, displaced communities and others in light of Christian teachings.

Organise a painting competition for theological students on the theme: Ecocide or Integrity of Nature/Creation and Tourism.

Have an immersion experience with the victims of climate changes where they live, interpret the situation theologically, and develop a proposal for advocacy/action for justice.

Reflect theologically on tourism practices in your region that contribute to climate change.

Endnotes

[1] *Domestic tourism* means residents of the given country travelling only within this country which has increased due to various factors. Disposable income of the middle class, stress and strain due to increased urbanisation and ownership of cars facilitating easy mobility, improved employment benefits, such as the leave travel concession (LTC), development of inexpensive mass transport and improved connectivity to various tourist destinations accelerate the pace of tourism. Cheap accommodations and resorts, promoting through advertisements both by governments, as well as the tourist industry, development of time sharing of holiday accommodations encourage many to go on tours. *Inbound tourism*, involves non-residents travelling in the given country whereas o*utbound tourism* involves residents travelling in another country.

[2] Since the founding of the *United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO*) on November 01, 1974 tourism has caught global attention and participation in diverse manner. As of 2013, the membership of the UNWTO includes 156 states, six territories, six associate members and over 400 affiliate members representing the private sectors, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities. In 1999, 157 countries have ratified the World Heritage Convention of 1972 (protecting the world's cultural and natural heritage), and 582 sites around the globe are inscribed on the *UNESCO* World Heritage List. Besides UNWTO, myriads of commercial concerns and NGO's deal with various aspects of tourism. The world community began to consider climate change as a crucial issue after the Stockholm Conference (1972). The aim of the Kyoto

Summit (1997) was to encourage the developed and developing nations to reduce the production of CO_2. It was enacted on February 16, 2005 but the US, India and China have not yet signed this treaty. The Buenos Aires Summit (2004), the Copenhagen Summit (2009) were aimed at forming conditions for reducing the global warming. In spite of many good suggestions many nations are not ready to reduce their standard of living or to search for an alternative model of development.

[3] See, *Global Warming: Implications for South Asia and the Role of Churches: Papers from a Consultation held at Bombay, September 14-16, 1993,* edited by K. C. Abraham, William Stanley, Allwyn D'Silva, Nafisa Goga D'Souza, (Bangalore:SATHRI),1994;See also ***T****he WORD and the WORLD: Biblical Reflections on Climate Change,* edited by Viji Varghese Eapen, George Zachariah, P.Mohan Larbeer (Bangalore &Chennai: BTESSC & CSI),2013. (later referred to as *The WORD).*

[4] Quoted *in B. Silpa Rani," From Climate Change to Climate Justice: A reflection for Transformation,"* in *The WORD and the WORLD: Biblical Reflections on Climate Change,* edited by Viji Varghese Eapen, George Zechariah, P.Mohan Larbeer (Bangalore &Chennai: BTESSC & CSI),2013, p.16.

[5] James B Martin Schramm, "Human Rights and Climate Change" in *God, Creation and Climate Change: Spiritual and Ethical Perspectives*, ed. Karen L Bloomquist, (Geneva: LWF, 2009), p.43; see also Vinod J Wesley, "Climate Justice as Dalit Justice" in *Gurukul Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XXIV, Nos.172 January & June 2013, pp.84-101.

[6] See, Vinod Wesley, *ibid.*,

[7] *Ibid.:*

[8] The idea of 'tour' struck Thomas Cook as he was waiting for the stagecoach on the London Road at Kibworth. Though there are no details of a particular year, in the UK, Cook is recognised as the first 'tour operator' for taking a group of 540 temperance campaigners from Leicester Campbell Street station to a rally in Loughborough, eleven miles away. On July 05, 1841 Thomas Cook struck a deal with the British rail company to charge one shilling per person that included rail tickets and food for the train tour.

[9] Short haul means the tourists fly in and stay at a tourist spot for a short while, then move to another without staying long.

[10] A meeting of 540 international scientists reported: "*greenhouse gases are making the world's oceans hot, sour and breathless…"* See the report "*Ocean turning hot, sour and breathless*" in *The Hindu* (daily), *op.cit.* p.16. Other reports are equally alarming : the world's oceans are getting more acidic, faster than at any time in the past 3000 million years. The world ocean pH already has gone from 8.1 to 8.0. It is predicted that acidity would hit 8.0 in the next 20 to 30 years and 7.9 in about 50 years. Biodiversity has three components- genetic, species, and ecosystem diversities. In the last couple of centuries India has lost over half of

its forests, 40% of mangroves have become extinct. Many species are under threat. Two main reasons can be found for this loss: habitat destruction and replacement of diversity with homogeneity. As in many South countries, the relationship between local communities and the biological diversity in India is a very intricate one, whereby two-thirds of our populations are heavily dependent upon the biodiversity for their survival. The destruction of biodiversity signifies the destruction of people's livelihoods and survival.

[11] GHG such as CO_2 methane could cause greater warming and results in climate change.

[12] Ozone depleting substances (ODSs) such as CFCs (chlorofluorocarbon) and halons have contributed to the destruction of this layer. UV rays in high doses is dangerous to humans and animals. For instance, one of the reasons scientists have put forward for the global decrease of amphibian populations is increased exposure to UV radiation. Refrigerators, air conditioners and propellants in aerosol spray cans, amongst others, contain ODSs and are widely used in the hotel and tourism industry. Emissions from jet aircraft are also a significant source of ODSs.

[13] Solomon, et al. 2007

[14] "International Aviation: Addressing emissions while respecting equity issues" in *Brot fuer die Welt.*

[15] Since the founding of *United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO*) on November 1, 1974 tourism has caught global attention and participation in diverse manner.

[16] Pope John Paul II: The Ecological Crisis: The Common Responsibility: retrieved from http://www.catholicculture.org on Dec 26, 2013 at 9 p.m.

[17] Cyclones are formed as a result of a combination of very warm sea surface temperatures with the right type of overflow. In the right part of the ocean, the system can start circulating and release all that energy into the upper part of the atmosphere. The energy created from the thunderstorms can then add to the whole system resulting in cyclones and hurricanes.

[18] See *www. Propoortourism.org.uk.*

[19] Pope John Paul II: The Ecological Crisis: The Common Responsibility: retrieved from http://www.catholicculture.org on Dec 26, 2013 at 9 p.m.

6

Threats to Women's Rights and Dignity:
Tourism and Gender in Africa

Omega Bula

Being a predominantly male-dominated industry, and with a high male patronage, Tourism has to be called to account for its impact on women in varied and serious ways. This paper provides a perspective on the reality in Africa. It explores the implications and impacts of commercial tourism on women's rights and dignity within a contextual intersection of patriarchy/sexism and neo-liberal economics based on profit maximisation in a free market economic system. A common discourse on benefits of tourism for women globally has focused on tourism as a vehicle for promoting equal opportunities for women working in the tourism industry, for the creation of opportunities for women entrepreneurship in the industry, for enabling women to study and train to be better prepared to compete for lead jobs in the industry. It has lifted as critical the role of advocacy for the protection of women working in vulnerable areas of work within the tourism industry and their rights to respect and dignity. While all this is patterned variously around the Global South, in present day African economies increasingly driven by profit maximisation and growth (without development), the 'good news' from tourism lacks a class and racial justice analysis, and hence is not true for the majority of impoverished and marginalised women working in the tourism industry in Africa. The tourism industry in Africa creates a context wherein women are exploited sexually; are used as cheap cultural agents; and work in low service jobs as chamber maids, guides and waiters. Life-giving theologies and economies, and a critical engagement in anti-oppression work are a fundamental need. Anti-oppression work requires concrete actions to change unjust systems. Theologies that support anti-oppression work are crucial to enable gender justice in the tourism industry in Africa, and in the wider Global South.

Introduction

"With the end of the cold war, global infatuation with neo-liberal economics has intensified the peripherization of the South along economic, political, social and cultural lines. The facile notion that we have reached the 'end of ideology' obscures the workings of power in a global capitalist political economy, and disguises its cultural and ideological underpinnings. It further elides the radicalized, gendered, and class processes that underwrite global hierarchies."[1]

This reflection is done within the parameters of understanding commercial tourism in Africa as those activities focused on providing services for recreation and rest, which include the creation and provision of related products, infrastructure, travel, and services by private enterprises; and gender as the "array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Whereas biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures."[2]

Because gender is socially constructed, it is imbued with social hierarchies inherent in patriarchy – with men exercising power and control over women both ideologically and materially. A reflection on Gender and Tourism in an African context calls for two critical and interrelated entry points – patriarchy/sexism and political/economy. Over a very long time of learning about the dynamics of ongoing experiences by women and men in Africa, research and documentation continue to show that injustices emanating from gender inequality are rooted in patriarchy and sexism, and are central driving forces in the differential impacts of the economy on men and women. Contextual realities point to situations in which women's perspectives and experiences, women's labour and their bodies are often devalued and exploited by patriarchal ideology of domination and control.

Tourism in the context of Empire

The context of the global tourism industry today is that of empire. Empire is understood as a term that connotes "the gathered power of pervasive economic and political forces throughout the globe that reinforce the division between the rich and the poor."[3] Empire has its foundational basis in patriarchy, and patriarchy thrives in the context of empire, and are the two legs on which hierarchy, domination and control stand in the interrelated

oppressions of sexism, gender, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, casteism and other forms of intolerance. Because patriarchy and empire are inextricably linked, the majority of African women continue to struggle for sustainable livelihoods in poverty and indignity. Yet the empowerment of women's participation in economic development at all levels and capacities remains essential to the building of African economies that are strong, sustainable, life-giving and caring for all of God's creation. Life-giving economies have been described as those economies which "move away from objectives of mindless accumulation and profit maximisation to provisioning for life, redistribution and reparation; generate livelihoods and ensure the provision of basic needs for all, children, women and men; recognise, affirm and value the contribution of social reproduction or care work, which ought to be [re]produced by and [re]distributed equitably among both men and women; nurture the Earth and promote peace."[4]

African economies have not been spared the global financial and economic downturn that has touched even the strongest and largest economies in the world since World War II. At the time of writing this paper, the government of the United States of America has been shut down for a total of 11 days, forcing President Obama to negotiate with those elected to govern what would be sustainable debt levels and budget expenditures. This has huge implications for those who depend on governance and the economy. For many African countries, the global and economic financial crisis comes at a time when their economies are already subordinate, fragile, marginalised and struggling to be part of the global financial and economic architecture and governance. This has compounded the impacts on the continent's political and economic structural vulnerabilities made up of nearly three decades of faithful application of the neo-liberal economic policies of indiscriminate liberalisation of trade and investment; deregulation and privatisation of the public sector; and other revised socio-economic structural adjustment programmes people have experienced since the onslaught of economic globalisation 30 years ago. Included is the added risk of falling back into a debt crisis and the adherence to several new macro-economic policies, economic partnership agreements, and initiatives that support aggressive market economies. They have not contributed to the eradication of poverty, inequality and ecological destruction. On the contrary, there is increased destruction of the environment and enhanced climate change while widening the gap between the rich and the poor, with the most vulnerable being women and children. This path taken by African leaders to

transform African economies into market economies without the required policy-making decisions power has landed many Africans into the majority of the poor in the world, despite the wealth in people and natural resources that God has endowed the continent with. It is in this context that African economies are being challenged once again to transform and diversify their economies; and is the context in which the aggressive development of commercial tourism is locked into.

Local allies and gender injustice

Franz Fanon, in 1965, spoke about "the national bourgeoisie in Third World contexts (that) organise centres of rest, relaxation and pleasure to service the desires of an emerging transnational cosmopolitan class that includes both Western and Third World consumers. This desire economy is sexualised, racialised, and commodified."[5]

Tourism in Africa is estimated to be at 40% of global tourism and growing. It is estimated that 1 out of every 20 jobs is in tourism, especially in key tourism countries such as Kenya [Masai Mara], Zimbabwe/Zambia [Victoria falls], Egypt [Pyramids of Giza], Dienne, Mali [Old City], Cape Town, South Africa [beaches and Table Mountain], Virunga Mountains in Rwanda/ Uganda [tracking gorillas], Tanzania [Mount Kilimanjaro], Zanzibar, Tanzania [history and beaches] etc. The development of tourism as a commercial enterprise within the prevailing market economies is being raised by several African governments as the gateway to the development of local infrastructure such as roads, parks and game reserves; expansion in travel possibilities; employment opportunities; local economy stimulation; attraction of foreign capital investments; increase for the state or local government tax revenues; increase in property values; increase in recreation opportunities for the local people who can access facilities; new technologies and cultural impacts – all these and other locally specific factors are perceived as economic multipliers. The success story is often told of how a small county, Rwanda, has turned 200 mountain gorillas into a 200 million dollar per year tourism industry with trickle sideways effects for its neighbours in Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo. However, they are economic multipliers in a market economy which carry the values and principles [perceived as normative] of economic globalisation, based on the maximisation of profit through the exploitation of the underlying mechanisms of consumerism, individualism, and what David Korten, author of "When Corporations Rule", speaks of as "corporate colonisation" controlled and influenced by a corporate

elite in both the North and South as the new face of global domination and control. They are also economic multipliers in an industry that is gendered in its construction, presentation and consumption to suit the consumer culture or those deemed to have 'the right to tourism', the liberty of tourist movements'. [Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, Articles 7 and 8].

In an economy based on profit maximisation "…the sexual labour and use of women's bodies for consumption in Third World sites cannot be viewed in isolation from the global political economy's generation of profits. Desire economies generate profits for some agents of the peripheries and much more for Western elites of the global economy… thereby sustaining global corporate capital, First World identities, and masculine hegemonies."[6] The current discourse on benefits of tourism for women globally focuses on tourism as a vehicle for promoting equal opportunities for women working in the tourism industry; creating opportunities for women entrepreneurship in the industry; enabling women to study or train so they are better prepared to compete for lead jobs in the industry; and to promote or advocate for the protection of women working in vulnerable areas of work within the tourism industry and their rights to respect and dignity.

Within the framework of patriarchy/ sexism and a political economy of the free market discussed above, there is good news and bad news. An impacting factor to take into account when assessing the success and challenges for women in the above areas in addition to gender would be class and race analysis. For example, there are growing opportunities for women in the informal and self-employed work in the tourism industry. However, work in the informal sector is already vulnerable and unprotected by any labour standards. A majority of women in the African tourism industry are working in low service jobs as waiters, cleaners, chamber maids, comfort workers, receptionists, tour guides etc. Several are found in risk/survival jobs working as prostitutes and poorly paid sex entertainers. Others have taken to buying/sometimes

Again, one sees in the workings of empire that the imaging of Africa still remains as condescending and backward; and in the posh and modern accommodations and facilities the continuing attempt by Anglo-European nations to order the world [Africa] culturally, politically and economically from a Euro-centric world view, and the assumptions of the right to comfort and hospitality for the tourist who in majority is not black or African.

making and selling crafts such as jewellery and other products. The attraction to this self-employment in the informal sector gives women some autonomy in decision making, say about location, hours of work, and place of work – thereby increasing women's mobility and opportunities for networking. The risks are there and they include lowest paying and lowest status jobs, undetermined incomes, abuse, and sexual harassment, vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, and in some cases the lack of family stability and care for young children and older parents. Ingrained traditional notions of masculinity and femininity contribute to how women's economic roles in the industry are determined. In many cases, it is very hard for women to compete with men, as women are expected to do only certain things ascribed by society. For instance, it is not common to find women working as tour guides in a game park, drivers of tour buses, or as 'bungee jump' handlers, or white water rafting guides. On the other hand, it is hard for women to resist men moving into what has traditionally been women's work in the industry. For example, whereas women have traditionally been hair braiders, when the price goes up because tourists are braiding hair when they come to Africa, men have moved in, even across borders. It is not unusual to find Masai men from Kenya and Tanzania braiding hair at the Victoria Falls in Livingstone, Zambia.

Racism and tourism

A growing concern which needs more exploration and analysis of its implications is that of gender and race in the tourism industry. Agathanangelou argues that "in addition to its financial power, this industry shapes the practices of and identities of its producers and consumers, including the identities of nation states within which it resides."[7] Africa is commonly advertised for its places to visit; things to do; attractions in Africa; famous places in Africa; interesting facts about Africa; Africa culture; Africa food; etc., and very little about the richness of African people and their culture, their life and resilience, and their contributions to development in their local context and globally. Again, one sees in the workings of empire that the imaging of Africa still remains as condescending and backward; and in the posh and modern accommodations and facilities, the continuing attempt by Anglo-European nations to order the world [Africa] culturally, politically and economically from a Euro-centric world view, and the assumptions of the right to comfort and hospitality for the tourist who in majority is not black or African. The excesses of a consumer culture are displayed everywhere; in the food, in the water consumed; in the subservient treatment of tourists that is beyond the existing Africa hospitality. The majority of black or African

faces around are workers, servants or entertainers. This picture is uncomfortably racist; it shows that those with privilege and power, which includes access to disposable incomes – can enjoy the 'good life' at the expense of the local poor or indigenous people. And that these people should be grateful that they have a job! The icing on the cake is often cultural entertainment in the form of cultural dancing in which women are major participants. There is no cultural learning that takes place, no interactions as people to people, pictures are taken, to be shared as objects of 'rich experience in Africa.'

Engaging in anti-oppression work

What then are the challenges of gender justice, theology and tourism in Africa? Doing gender justice and theology is engaging in anti-oppression work. The goal of anti-oppression work is the transformation of self, systems and society in ending oppression. It starts with the development of an anti – oppression consciousness and justice living, which includes naming our own complicity in the oppression of others; naming privilege and power and how this benefits or dis-empowers; naming contradictions between our own faith and convictions and how we live these out in reality; working to build bridges and allies as part of the agenda to end oppression. It begins with self – awareness of one's history, sources of power and privilege, and how these are used to benefit self or groups of people and move into new understanding of self and society locally and globally. It requires critical analysis that enables the understanding of systemic injustice in the world; how it is constructed, who benefits, who is oppressed by it and why, and what mechanisms or ideas keep it in place. Anti-oppression work requires concrete actions to change unjust systems. It becomes critical then that theologies which support anti-oppression work be lifted in support of work for gender justice in the tourism industry. In general, theology means talking about God and God's own work in creation and ongoing creation. More broadly, and taken as an area of study, it can be taken to mean "disciplined reasoned inquiry and reflection on the ultimate meaning and understanding of God in all of creation". [*Dictionary of Feminist Theologies,* pg 283]. Theology attempts to do this by interpreting scripture and tradition in particular historical, social, cultural, political and economic contexts, and within particular faith communities and traditions. Because of the changing and dynamic nature of these contexts in which theology emerges, theology or how we talk about and understand God or the meaning of God in all of creation should not be

static or locked in time. It also means that there are many theologies, each with its own methodologies, language, concerns, spirituality etc. As already indicated above, gender is commonly understood as the different social roles assigned to men and women. They take on contextual, cultural, social, religious, economic and historical aspects pertaining in the particular families, communities, societies and nations at large. These roles are socially constructed and not biologically determined. This means that gender and gender roles as we experience them today are not God's created order. They are not universal, should not claim obedience, and are not socially relevant. They are not theologically inscribed – as some Christian theological discourse may claim. A creation story exists which speaks about all men and women being created equal and in the image of God. Today, genders go beyond men and women; in these times we are challenged to include trans-gendered persons in our understanding of the diversity of God's creation. Theologies that challenge obstacles to gender justice, that challenge socially constructed ideas and roles which are passed on from generation to generation by tradition, religious beliefs and interpretations and value systems in society need to be affirmed, and where they do not exist – developed. These theologies must become ingrained in all power structures of theological institutions and in ordinary relations between men and women; become institutionalised in social practices, ideas, and consciousness of people.

An emphasis on rights and dignity of women

Work on gender justice in tourism in Africa should concern itself with rights and dignity of all people and building right relations among all people and all of God's creation. "*If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.*" (1 Cor. 12:26, NRSV) Gospel accounts of Jesus' relationship with those marginalised in his social context make it clear that Christians follow in the way of one who regarded each person he encountered as worthy to be accorded dignity and respect. In his ministry Jesus reflected the call of Israel's prophets, who asserted that healing and wholeness for all God's people would be rooted in seeking justice for those whose rights and dignity were violated by oppression, poverty and exclusion. Scriptural witness also suggests that this vision of justice demands the active engagement of God's people in acts of compassion, solidarity and transformation of systems and structures of domination and subordination.

Areas that would benefit from reflection and action on gender justice

and theology in actions of oppression within the tourism industry in Africa should include areas of concerns and challenges at the decision making levels in the public and private spheres; the realisation of human rights and access to development resources and benefits. Such theological reflection might focus on issues of dignity and rights within these three areas. Dignity has to do directly with what it means to be created equally in the image of God; a God-given right that requires each person and all of creation to have the fullness of life. An approach to rights and dignity calls into question, from a faith based understanding – all systems, institutions, structures, practices, policies, and interpretations that support dehumanisation and legitimisation of unjust practices in human relations. Historically, there have been in several Christian communities voices challenging the church to live as a community of justice and love. Today theologies of liberation and transformation challenge us to express in the life of the church and in relation to all people and creation, norms of justice and right relation, diversity and complexity, wholeness and multiplicity, mutuality and solidarity. This calls us into practices that promote human rights and moral agency of individuals, who are also integrally linked to the support for collective rights, the liberation of oppressed communities, and respect for creation. It also calls for the recognition of the inter-structured nature of oppression based on gender, race, sexuality, class, age, ability and so on. Theological education, reflection and advocacy actions must attend to these links in order to seek wholeness and fullness of life for all people and the flourishing of creation.

Seeking theologies that put justice at the heart of faith

In my formation as a feminist lay theologian, I have been influenced by theologies of liberation which address the intentional social, cultural, economic and political marginalisation of two thirds of the people in the world and the exploitation of the earth. These are theologies that put justice at the heart of faith theologies which push the church to stand in solidarity with those who suffer the most from systemic injustice and marginalisation. Following the justice traditions of the biblical prophets and Jesus in the gospel narratives, reading and interpreting the signs of the times, liberation theologies commonly begin from the place of suffering and powerless people. They are challenged to name religion and the churches' own complicity in the structures of power and injustice. Within this spectrum of theologies of liberation,I have leaned strongly on what M. Shawn Copeland has called "theologies for the liberation of Black, Yellow, Brown and Red Women". [*Dictionary of Feminist*

What then are the challenges of gender justice, theology and tourism in Africa? Doing gender justice and theology is engaging in anti-oppression work. The goal of anti-oppression work is the transformation of self, systems and society in ending oppression. It starts with the development of an anti-oppression consciousness and justice living, which includes naming our own complicity in the oppression of others.

Theologies, page 286]. These are theologies that are projecting into Christian theological reflection the voices and experiences of women who continue to suffer, resist and survive double/triple oppressions. "These theologies interrogate the biblical text and various interpretations of it to expose possible misrepresentations; seek out and proclaim liberating values that have been obscured intentionally; comb the text for the feasts of women; and engage in creative interpretation of the material so that the revelation addresses poor and marginalised women in their need, suffering, and resistance. Furthermore these theologies are unafraid to re-contextualise biblical demands and themes in non-biblical and popular religious contexts." [Tamez 1993, Weems 1998, Kwok 1995 quoted in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, pg 286] This is a useful hook in making the connection between gender justice, theology and its implications in the work toward a just tourism industry. The perspective from which theology is done is critical to mission and ministry in and of the church.

Theological perspective is, therefore, another critical entry point for African theologians in the processes of learning about gender justice and theology and its implications in tourism. God in solidarity with the poor and marginalised calls for doing theology from a perspective that takes into account the experiences of those who struggle the most with systemic injustices such as poverty and impoverishment; and with those yearning for life in all its fullness. This perspective will inform the content and methodologies of theological education and learning to include those theologising from the margins and not a privileged academy; it will place an emphasis of theologising on both lay and clergy; it will seek critical contextual analysis and critical analysis of power relations such as those embedded in patriarchy and masculinity. Its goal will be social transformation of individuals and society. In order to be transformative, theological formation should seek

to contribute to gender-just theologies in its approach, conceptual thrusts, methodologies, and preferences of areas of study, research and writing. (See suggested topic areas at the end of this article).

Potential spaces for impacting theological formation

In conclusion, current and potential opportunities for impacting theological formation in relation to the tourism industry exist. Three sites are given as examples which offer a diversity of possibilities, and if combined they would deepen an understanding and use of gender, class and race analysis in tourism. The first is the Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe, second is the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, and the third are the informal spaces where theological reflection is happening on a daily basis by African women who are not formally educated, expressing their theology in the spontaneous.

The Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe, is a Methodist Church related institution. In 2013, over 500 guests converged at the University campus to mark the celebrations for the World Tourism Day which is marked globally on September 27 each year. The celebrations were held under the theme: 'Tourism and Water – Protecting Our Common Future."

In an Article produced by Acting Director, Information and Public Affairs-Africa University, the Guest of Honour and Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry re-iterated his commitment to the promotion of Brand Zimbabwe, a policy position for the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry aimed at driving the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe to "greater heights". It should be noted that Zimbabwe and Zambia co-hosted the 20th General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 2013. Speeches emphasised the massive tourism potential in Manicaland which could positively impact Zimbabwe. They included the "leveraging of the cultural and natural endowments of each of Zimbabwe's ten provinces to grow Zimbabwe's tourism to unprecedented levels."

In his address, the Acting Vice Chancellor for Africa University, revealed that Africa University had concrete plans to introduce an under-graduate degree programme in Tourism and Hospitality Industry in 2014. He emphasised that this was because "Africa University fully acknowledges the actual role and potential of this sector in local empowerment and overall economic development through such avenues as leisure tourism, eco-tourism, wild life management and historic and cultural preservation." The important

role that Universities and research institutes played in the development of a tourism academic discourse was recognised. It was announced that the "deepening and broadening of the tourism sector's collaboration with national universities and other institutions of Research and Higher learning would be a major part of the Ministry's development thrust."

The day was characterised by traditional music and dance, from students from Mutare Teachers' College and the Africa University Choir. The ceremony was wrapped up by a tree planting ceremony by the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

As a faith-based University participating shoulder to shoulder with government and the private tourism industry, it has great potential and

> Theological perspective is, therefore, another critical entry point for African theologians in the processes of learning about gender justice and theology and its implications in tourism. God in solidarity with the poor and marginalised calls for doing theology from a perspective that takes into account the experiences of those who struggle the most with systemic injustices such as poverty and impoverishment; and with those yearning for life in all its fullness.

opportunity for including in its work theological formation on justice issues such as those impacting the poor, including ecological justice in the tourism industry. Such work would benefit policy development, public witness and advocacy of national and international issues; making connections among wealth creation, the impoverishment of people and ecological justice.

The University would also be a potential space for bringing diverse voices and perspectives in the "interrogation" of empire and its implications for gender justice and ecological justice in the tourism industry from among academia, women, youth, indigenous peoples, and people from different faiths and religious traditions.

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians is an academic space where African women in the last 25 years have been doing theology with particular emphasis on resisting cultural imperialism, as survivors of patriarchy and economic injustice, while at the same time recognising that the coming together of patriarchy and imperialism is the meeting point of women's oppression and must be persistently challenged. The Circle has made great contributions in enabling and making visible the emerging expressions of African women's theology. Stressing on women's lived

experiences, the research and writings of these African women theologians focus on "a theology which is in solidarity with African women; focussed on highlighting the struggles, contexts, and situations in which African women of faith are challenged to live…the theology being expressed reflects anger, resentment, and bitterness on the one hand, and on the other hope, resilience and steadfast love in a God of life."[8] The analysis of women's realities have included themes on culture and cultural practices that are oppressive to women, HIV and AIDS, patriarchy, the impact of religion on women's lives, demystifying the power of traditional beliefs which keep women down, oppressive nature of rituals of sexuality, marriage and family life. Much more recently and in particular contexts of the Circle, reflections have included economic, political and social conflict issues as they impact women in conflict situations such as the use of rape as a weapon of war and other issues at the root of gender based violence.

It will not be out of context for the Circle to extend theological reflection and analysis to issues impacting women in the tourism industry. They are rooted in the same systemic issues already being addressed. The added value the Circle would bring to the table is what Elizabeth Amoa has named as "a contention God as Creator is indeed the source of all life, and all humanity is endowed with equal capabilities ... all share equally in God's common wealth ... no system should be used to dehumanise and marginalise the other on the basis of gender, race, colour and class."[9] The Circle is predominantly made up of women from Christian backgrounds and ecumenical circles. As a case in point, "the church is seen as a community of women and men who believe in God the creator as the giver of abundant life and respect for all of creation ... therefore, the church as an institution cannot escape the criticism when its actions goes against this fundamental law of enhancing and preserving the equality and integrity of all of creation."[10]

The Circle will also bring the gifts of working at different levels ecumenically and with people of different faiths; research, documentation and publication are so much needed in the areas of gender, theology and tourism.

Informal spaces where theological formation happens in spontaneous ways. Elizabeth Amoa notes "the numerical preponderance of women in all the churches, both African instituted churches and those established by Western missionaries,"[11] as pillars of the church who occupy key theological spaces on many diverse issues and challenges. Theologising in these spaces happens in spontaneous ways through song, poetry, prayer, preaching,

prophesying, counselling and faith healing from all sorts of issues including trauma, abuse, and gender based violence.

A few years ago, through the All Africa Conference of Churches, the church women's movement brought to the attention of the African churches the issues of economic justice; child survival and especially that of the girl child; women's health long before the church was ready to speak openly on HIV and AIDS; and the critical voices of women in peace-making. In these movements of women, theology is life, life as it is lived and experienced on a daily basis in community with others. This in itself would be a gift that these informal spaces of doing and living theologically would bring to the issues of gender, tourism and theology.

An invitation to work with all these and other spaces will go a long way in advancing the struggle against the negative impacts of tourism on women in Africa.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing. Study the following in relation to Gender and Tourism issues within your context or region in Africa, or in other parts of the Global South

1. Re-imagine in the context of empire, LIFE-giving theologies that are ethically accountable; address questions of women's agency in God's work in creation; and theologies that bring to the fore Jesus' concern and struggle for justice for all, especially for the poor and outcast and those oppressed and marginalised on the basis of gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and different abilities.
2. Re-imagine approaches to life-giving economies as opposed to economies based on greed and accumulation of wealth; engage theological reflections that enhances the understanding of the links between poverty, wealth and ecological justice. Include in these reflections analyses of power embedded in patriarchy, and how this power is complicit in the impoverishment of women.
3. Advance the work on developing positive masculinities, male roles and male involvement in the promotion of gender equality. Such work must aim at making a contribution to the development of biblical, theological, and liturgical resources that will enable women and men ground their work in a context of long life -learning and faith formation that is gender justice sensitive.

4. Re-imagine and develop methodologies in theological formation which include listening to women's stories and life experiences; lifting up for learnings and theological reflection stories that provide life-giving energies, cultural alternatives and spiritualities of resistance to oppression that is at work in communities of faith.
5. Theological institutions and churches be encouraged to use such work to inform workshops and other strategic learning opportunities on advocacy, economic literacy, ecological justice, gender justice and the linkages among these and other questions of justice for women in all areas seeking justice for women, including the tourism industry.

Endnotes

1 *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations/Reading Race, Gender and Class:* edited by Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair, 2004 pg 1.
2 *Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010*, United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO] and UN Women, pg 2
3 World Alliance of Reformed Churches 24th General Council, Letter from Accra pg 216
4 *Exploring the Reality and Theological Challenges of Ecology, Economy, and Empire from Feminist Perspectives*. Statement from the Feminist Discourse on Economy, Ecology and Empire, Bangalore, India, 12 – 17 August 2008. Pg 4
5 Ibid. Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair, pg 143
6 Anna M. Agathangelou – 'Sexing' Globalisation in International Relations, Ibid: Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair, pg 143
7 Ibid, pg 144
8 Omega Bula: *A Jubilee Call for African Women in Jubilee Wealth and the Market*: Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, 1999 pg 72
9 Elizabeth Amoa: *Theology from the Perspective of African Women in Women's Visions – Theological Reflection, Celebration, Action*. WCC Publications Ed Ofelia Ortega, pg 2
10 Ibid, pg 2
11 Ibid, pg 3

7

God's Welcome is for All:
A Feminist Theological Perspective on Tourism

Liza B. Lamis

This article critiques Third World (TW), or, Global South, tourism from a critical feminist perspective, with a particular focus on the exploitation of human relationships and nature for profit and decadent pleasure, resulting in the denial of God's, and humanity's Welcome to all through creation. It proposes that in tourism both guests and hosts be expressions of God's Welcome by nurturing and grounding ourselves in a hospitality that is just. In embodying this Welcome, we are partnering with God and humanity in ensuring that all are welcome to benefit from and enjoy God's creation.

Questions being raised include: Is there such a notion of welcome in tourism, in Asia, for instance, part of the Third World? For both the hosts and the guests, how is Welcome lived out? What unique challenges does feminist theology pose for tourism? What are the challenges of TW tourism to churches in Asia and beyond, especially for the ecumenical ministry and theological education?

Such questions, formulated though they may be through the prism of Asian experience, are valid for introspection in other regions of the Third World. In light of its evolution, mass commercial tourism calls to be interrogated from women's perspective. This article provides an insight and a platform for similar questioning and analysis in other contexts of the world.

Introduction

My local tradition for receiving and welcoming guests, including strangers, is built around knowing whether one has already eaten. *Kumainkanaba?* (Have you eaten?), would always be the first query. The intent is to make sure that the guest or stranger is not hungry and is well. In many indigenous cultures of the Philippines, sharing a meal together establishes kinship and signifies a full welcome. Eating together 'connects' the partakers by their intestines – *ipinag – dugtongangbituka* (intestines interconnected). Consequently, having been accepted as kinfolk or family after having eaten together, both the guest/stranger's and host's humanity and wellbeing are alloyed as one.

Then I came across news about "Kopinos" (contraction of the words Korean and Filipino), children fathered by Korean men tourists with prostituted Filipino women, abandoned to poverty and a dim future in the Philippines."10,000 Korean children born to Filipina prostitutes", the article headline said.[1] "South Korean men continue to seek out child prostitutes in Southeast Asia", continued the report.

To me these Korean men did not come as tourists to take delight in the beauty of God's creation, which is a human value, but as predators out to devour one of the most vulnerable of God's creation – our women and children. In offering welcome to Korean tourists, we are being 'devoured' and taken advantage of in our poverty and need.

As a stranger myself who was accorded a warm welcome by the Javanese people when I had my ministry in Indonesia, I was a stranger and a tourist who came with wonder and reverence for whatever I may encounter in my travels. I believe that I was treading holy ground, that I should be respectful to the inhabitants of this land. God's Welcome is our world, created by God for all humanity, and is grounded in God's just hospitality. Indeed, our world is Paradise for humanity, permeated by and blessed by Sophia, God's indeterminable presence since the beginning of time, meant for all to live on, delight in, and to be edified by the values that the appreciation of beauty brings.[2] From this perspective I grapple with the issue of Third World (TW) tourism in Asia as a woman who cares deeply about welcoming each other and how it happens or does not, every day.

In this article I explore the embodiment of God's welcome as a feminist theological response to the unfriendly, exploitative impact of tourism, and the absence of God's welcome in many places. Asia is vast, plural and

diverse in culture, extremely rich and gifted in natural and human resources, with pockets of affluence in its immense ocean of poverty. Here is, indeed, paradise with its hidden hell, well projected as exotic and inviting.

I raise some questions to challenge prevailing assumptions about the goodness that TW tourism brings, and to lend articulation to the least heard voices carrying the impact of Asian tourism on the ground, particularly from the perspective of women and children:

> Is there a notion of welcome in tourism, especially in Asia?
>
> For both the hosts and the guests, how is God's Welcome expressed or lived out?
>
> Is there a unique challenge from feminist theology to tourism?
>
> What are the challenges of tourism to churches in Asia, especially to the ecumenical ministry and theological education?

I use the theological framework of the notion of God's Welcome, which is grounded in justice and justice-making, to comprehensively address all the stakeholders in tourism. I find this framework inclusive and most challenging in its essential demand for justice, which resonates well with my own personal passions and work context. I believe that God's Welcome cannot thrive until it is grounded in justice and partnership in justice-making. I believe that with our 'intestines interconnected', our common wellbeing can only happen and flourish well under conditions where justice reigns.

Additionally, this reflection may explicate further the theological underpinnings of my local tradition of offering welcome through meal sharing.

A further analysis of tourism is left to the other sections of this book. My theological rumination on tourism and its attendant challenges is through re-imagining the world, treading uncharted theological paths and discerning the clues to transformation. Concrete realities, the gift of God's welcome and a radical openness to divine leadings are all we have before us.

1. God's Welcome: Where?

Wherever one goes to any tourist destination, it is common to learn that communities that once thrived in that place have been displaced, also were robbed of the basic necessities of land, water and food sources. What once was a community's rustic existence is now replaced by bustling and encroaching luxury hotels and amenities for tourists. This picture is true in many islands in the Philippines and in Indonesia, and most probably all over Asia.

A tourist or guest seldom or may never ask a question like,"What was it like before this hotel or resort was built?" As in most cases, the locals are now the people working in the service sectors of the local tourist industry. It is their voices that are muted or are, to put it rightly, the preferred ones to be unheard when it comes to the long-term impact of tourism business.

Way back in the 1980s, ecumenical groups concluded that TW tourism epitomises the unjust situation of the world at the global, national and local levels. TW tourism most harms women, children, indigenous peoples and the environment. It victimises the most vulnerable – the poor, the disempowered and oppressed – and benefits or gives pleasure to those who have the money and the power that go with it.

Indigenous cultural rituals and practices are bastardised to lure huge profits. Massive deception leading to prostitution of women and children and the commercialisation of human relationships indicate how power afforded by money is abused to take advantage of the vulnerable in their poverty and disempowerment. In short, the benefits of tourism outweigh the social, cultural and environmental costs, thus maintaining and reinforcing the existing unjust economic and social structures and relations.[3] Hardly is there a sense of welcome in this reality today.

II. God's Welcome in Creation?

I imagine all of creation as a feastly spread and a divine welcome for all people where everyone is entitled to live from and off it. Our bountiful and beautiful world is God's hospitality and way to welcome humanity to life. Our world was created and placed first by the Creator God before creating humanity, so much so that humanity is sustained and pleased in living. The Creation Story in Genesis says that creation was pronounced "good" and humanity was created after everything needed for humanity to live were made ready.

The Earth as God's Body, to borrow this famous metaphor to speak of the Divine Being from which humanity springs forth, is sustained and to which all will eventually return, is hospitality at its ultimate expression. In this sense, creation is an absolute hospitality from the divine who is Creator of all things.

In creation, God's handiwork was what She first revealed, the beauty of the Creator herself. In creation humanity not only lives off or is sustained by it. Humanity is pleased in creation's beauty, and this desire for divine beauty entices the human soul. That is why we travel to other places aside

from our own and seek new encounters. Very importantly, in the beauty of God's creation ethics is made possible by evoking a deep yearning for justice.[4] I therefore find the notion of the whole creation as God's Welcome to all people as a challenge of great implication in relation to tourism.

Sadly, humanity's oneness with creation is already a forgotten memory. Creation has been exploited and abused; the Earth as God's Body that gave birth to humanity is being killed. Murder it is, of our Divine Mother. God's welcome as symbolised by the beauty and bounty of creation for all is no more, as the capacity and right of enjoyment of this feast depends on one's capacity to access. "Adventure, culture and nature" is not for everyone, and "it's more fun in the Philippines" is true only to those who have the time to spare because they have the money to use. In truth, most Filipinos have not seen or have been to the beautiful spots in the Philippines even in their own islands. The majority of the Filipino people would rather be busy earning a living to survive, and only have the constant, unfulfilled desire to travel and enjoy the right to leisure in their own country.

A lot of injustice is evident in an industry with its system that breeds further exploitation and abuse instead of creating mutual enjoyment and sense of community. Furthermore, using sex as a lure for tourism is a corruption of human sexuality and its beauty, an abuse and exploitation of the already vulnerable and who are forced to prostitute themselves.

How is God's welcome supposedly to be experienced by all? Using the biblical concept of God's welcome or act of hospitality, I critique TW tourism and its impact especially on women and children. God's welcome will also help in gleaning clues to bring about transformation by embodying it every day and everywhere in our world.

Hospitality is a greatly corrupted term in my own Philippine context. We call prostituted women as "hospitality girls". In asserting the use of hospitality to qualify God's welcome in this paper, I am reclaiming the word in its noble meaning and intent, which is an act of kindly welcoming a guest, stranger or family member

III. God's Welcome in the Bible

The unexpected divine presence

Divine presence is a given in all of creation, and what is needed is the human awareness that all are always in God's presence and welcome. But this memory is most times forgotten so that God's presence is ignored, with

Her welcome taken for granted or abused. Being aware of entertaining angels unawares or just beholding common or rare beauty is an experience of awakening to one's senses, and to remember that we truly are always in the presence of God.

Revelation Velunta, a biblical and cultural hermeneutics scholar in the Philippines proposes that the true meaning of ecumenism is coming to the realisation that God manifests the Godself in most unexpected places and times. The element of surprise is awakening as well as exciting. In this sense, God is the God of Surprises. Travels could reveal surprises and discoveries on the nature of God in addition to Her handiwork, on humanity's amazing spiritual powers, and various expressions of human relationships.

Unlike the experience of Abraham and Sarah at the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 18.1-15), in imagining all of creation as God's welcome to humanity, the divine is an expected presence wherever one goes, but in an unexpected expression. What can be expected is beholding the uniqueness and individuality of the divine presence which brings the surprise. In this sense, one comes as a guest expecting to be welcomed, in openness and awe and with deep respect for whatever would show up, for the divine reveals itself far from what is expected.

The story of the Kopinos mentioned earlier is the other side of the awareness and anticipation of the divine presence. Commenting on the prevalence of sex tourism in Thailand and the Philippines, GazKishere, European Operations Director of *Love146*, an international group working to abolish sexual slavery and human trafficking, observes:

"Those who travel for sex tourism undertake a dehumanization of the other, in this instance those who are in the bondage of sexual slavery, either forced by fear of violence or through the oppression of economic poverty."[5]

Going for sex tourism is coming to kill and to destroy and not to appreciate and be edified by the beauty and enticements of God's creation. Those who travel for sex tourism have a predatory disposition in them, victimising the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.They do not see the humanity of their prey, or divinity in their victims. Coming in a predatory disposition is violently disengaging one's self from the link of the interconnectedness of all creation which is a sinful act. It is cutting off one's 'connected intestines' with the others resulting in death. This is equally true of structures and systems supposedly created to serve humanity, but in truth subtly kill and

destroy life, especially that of the least.

GazKishere has this to say to his fellow Britons:

"For those of us who live in places where our fellow countrymen are booking sex holidays, we must re-sensitize ourselves to the humanity of these wonderful, beautiful and precious people. We must spread the word that these women and girls are someone's daughter, sister or mother. Let's work to abolish myths that tell us they are less than worthy of our high regard and respect. Let's tell their stories. Let's honor their lives. Let's sing and shout about their humanity."

I pray that this will be the attitude of guests who come to visit as tourists to any country, a humbly discerning spirit towards the divine and the human in all creation.

Advocacy for the marginalised

What does it mean to advocate for the marginalised? Whether one is a guest or host this admonition applies. It does not even mean one has to be a believer in Jesus Christ. To advocate for the victimised is to affirm the presence of the divine, especially amongst the least.

Justice in just hospitality if practised in the tourism industry and nurtured in the hearts of hosts and guests dispels the possibility of exploitation. In fact, justice should ground all our actions as recipients of God's generous welcome or hospitality, particularly in the current extremely exploitative and inhuman industry of tourism. God's spread of welcome to all provides an ethical measure of human life which is grounded in justice

In Exodus 23.9, the Israelites are exhorted to not oppress strangers, because once they were also strangers in Egypt. Guests and hosts are strangers to each other, and they have to always remember not to oppress but to treat each other with equal dignity and worth. It is not because they were once oppressed but because they are of equal dignity and worth.

In this kind of atmosphere springs the genuine and respectful desire to know each other, to enjoy knowing each other, and to enjoy each other's unique presence. Hopefully, this attitude will prevent an exploitative impulse from sprouting, and lead to advocacy for the marginalised that is a sign of mutual welcome of each other.

However, this recognition of the equal

worth and dignity of human beings which is inherent in all religions is easily manipulated by using religious precepts. For example, Saudi men are coming in hordes to Indonesia for sex tourism, for 'halal' (Arabic for 'permissible' or 'lawful') sex. These men do not see themselves breaking any religious law by temporarily marrying a prostituted woman for a day or more according to the Qur'an (Mu'ta marriage 4:24) so that, technically, they do not engage in non-marital sex. In their opinion their sexual relations with a prostituted woman are religiously lawful.[6] This thinking reminds one of Blaise Pascal saying that "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

Sex tourism was deliberately avoided as a hot topic at the recent Philippine Tourism Congress. It was said to be destroying the moral and family values of this country, and damaging the name of Philippine tourism. Philippine officials disputed the words of the US Ambassador to the Philippines, Harry K Thomas, Jr., that 40 percent of tourists coming to the Philippines are sex tourists.[7]

Angeles City in the province of Pampanga and where the former U.S. Military bases were located is considered a 100 percent sex tourism destination. There are no tourist attractions, and no 'normal' tourists to meet. It is considered by travel sites as a good place for cheap sex and a horrible place to live.[8] Tourism aggravates prostitution but in the case of Angeles City the lure of tourism is prostitution.

Tourism as a high-profit industry as it is now rests on the exploitation of human relationships in addition to manual labour and natural resources. Poverty resulting from structural inequalities has pushed men, women and children to prostitution. The presence of Eastern European prostituted women in Bangkok and Goa is not about travel but poverty.

One way of reading the account of the "judgment of the nations" in Matthew 25 is discerning that "Jesus is telling his own story so that his disciples would know where to find him".[9] This way of reading the account in the context of TW tourism brings us to ask the question of "Where is Jesus Christ in this business?" Surely the question leads to seeking those who are imprisoned, hungry and naked amongst us. This action and intent to seek Jesus Christ in our victimised fellow human beings is practising God's welcome, which is radical as it seeks justice for the victimised.

To remember the victims of prostitution is not to spoil enjoyment of creation and its goodness. To remember them is to bear in mind and to feel

in our hearts that they are of equal dignity and worth as God's creation, that they are members of the human family. To advocate for the marginalised is to remember them.

Mutual welcome

Paul exhorts Christians in Romans 15.7 to "Welcome, then, one another, just as Christ welcomed you for the glory of God." For the glory of God, and because Christ has welcomed us, then we have to welcome one another- this is what it means to live in harmony with one another. This harmonious living with one another is not possible in unjust social relations and systems. Thus justice and justice-making are necessary components of God's welcome.

The act of welcoming others is, in itself, also an act of worship, for it is being done "for the glory of God". Where hospitality is delighting in the relationship of guest-host, the mutual welcome of each other is indeed a tribute to the Divine Being, and a reflection of the divine in human relations and community.[10]

The mutual welcome of each other in the spirit of giving honour and glory to (God who is) the Creator leads to the next component, the creation of communities.

Creation of community, or community in partnership

When the relationship between guest and host in tourism is one of buyer-seller, no community, much less friendship is built out of it. Prostitution and sex tourism as the height of commercialising human relationships is definitely not a community of human beings as friends and having equal worth. It is a passing and hurting community built on generating profits and exploitation of the vulnerable ones. It is the breaking of community brought about by the building of walls of hostility through a paid price. There is no "cooperation around a divine project" but the gratification of personal egoistic wants and corporate greed that bring in the attitude and act to exploit and to abuse. There is no commitment to live out the way of Jesus Christ who welcomes all but especially the least and the oppressed. There is only the vilest desecration of God's welcome.

I would like to imagine this commitment to live out the way of Jesus Christ of welcoming all, especially the least and the oppressed, that results in communities in partnership, as *solidarity*. Incarnating Christ to the oppressed is a profound expression of solidarity, as profound as God becoming

human in Jesus. Solidarity as a spiritual hallmark is internally rooted in every person and expressed in concrete deeds in being involved in the struggle for justice. The interdependence of creation is no longer theoretical but a practice in solidarity in God's Welcome. Hope for justice to finally reign is not anywhere else but with the people struggling together and who are in solidarity.

Solidarity crosses boundaries of creed, race, nationality and religious claims, and also demands commitment and accountability from each party. I am filled with deep gratitude and high estimation for Fr. Shay Cullen, MSC, a Roman Catholic priest who is rightly outspoken about sex tourism and human trafficking. His life was a longtime commitment and solidarity with the Filipino people in the advocacy to end child sex trafficking in the Philippines.

What does it mean, then, to welcome one another, live in harmony where there are lots of injustices suffered by the least and the victimised? What does it mean to create a community where welcome is grounded on justice and love for fellow human beings and for all of creation? What does it entail to be God's Welcome? These questions and its answers bear some tensions, and taking them seriously has their attendant costs.

IV. Just Hospitality

Welcome and hospitality could be easily overlooked as charity or entertainment. Lest it be misunderstood, God's welcome has to be reframed as Just Hospitality.

The feminist hermeneutic of hospitality as expounded by Russell is helpful here for its inclusivity, its being non-dualistic and non-distancing in 'othering' others. It strives to connect using justice as the bridge. In this regard, Just Hospitality is thus relevant and edifying to both guests and hosts in tourism.

Justice in Just Hospitality

"To live out God's welcome as just hospitality is a calling and challenge. As strangers ourselves, and strangers to so many other people, we have the possibility of partnering with others as a sign of God's concern for us all, and for all creation." – Letty Russell[11]

Hospitality and its traditional notions such as "terminal niceness, charity without justice, and helping others with the underlying intent to make them become like us", or to make merit, or earn a crown in heaven could easily divert the genuine meaning and intent of hospitality. What should hospitality

be in practice so that it is not superficial or with a hidden agenda, especially in the context of tourism in poor countries? As I see it, justice makes things right in hospitality.

Justice in just hospitality if practised in the tourism industry and nurtured in the hearts of hosts and guests dispels the possibility of exploitation. In fact, justice should ground all our actions as recipients of God's generous welcome or hospitality, particularly in the current extremely exploitative and inhuman industry of tourism. Indeed, the implication of this world as Paradise, as God's spread of welcome to all, is that it provides an ethical measure of human life which is grounded in justice.[12]

Justice in the biblical tradition

The God that Christians encounter in the Judeo-Christian scriptures is righteous, loving and just. She is One who wills the good and peace for all creatures. Justice and justice-making are thus central to the Christian faith.[13]

Justice in the Biblical understanding is the quality of the relationship between God and humans, between humans and all of creation. Four terms constitute the semantic field in which various foci point to the central ingredient of justice. Justice refers to right relationships (*sedaqah, sedeq*), with a legal procedural dimension (*mishpat*), the dimension of loving kindness (*chesed*) and covenant fidelity (*emet*).[14]

The practice of justice and righteousness consequently brings *Shalom*. *Shalom* means to have enough, to be complete, to be sound. It also means safety, prosperity and peace from war. It embraces the inclusive sense of peace as prosperity, political and spiritual weal, and wholeness. It intertwines the individual person's total wellness with that of the family and nation. Shalom is a cosmotheandric vision where creator, human beings and all of creation are in harmony and peace. In the New Testament this is embodied by the classical Greek word *ierene*. *Shalom,* encompassing the total wellness of human beings and of creation, is the fruit of practising justice and of righteousness (Isa. 32:17; 59:8; Zech. 8:16-17).[15]

To imagine it another way, *Shalom* is God's welcome to all, unconditional hospitality at its best, where nature or creation is a banquet for all to enjoy, where justice makes up its ground or table.

However, though *Shalom* is God's gift to humankind, it is dependent on people's goodwill. God gives this gift to those whom God favours, that is, to those who have goodwill. Shalom is achieved "depending on the will of the

people to make it a reality."[16] Those who make peace are called children of God (Matt. 5:9). The challenge therefore to Christians and to people of faith is to do the will of God, by practising justice and righteousness, loving mercy and walking humbly with one's God (Micah 6:8). Justice therefore is the core business of our Christian faith.

Furthermore, Jesus revealed God to be the God of justice as well as of abundance. To truly say that justice reigns, people need to enjoy the abundant life (John 10:10). Justice, therefore, is more than meeting at minimum levels the needs of people.[17] Justice is enjoying the abundant life. This abundant life is Jesus' central message and the good news of salvation that he preached and lived and died for.

Hospitality has to be just, and this practice of justice in hospitality is also a practice of genuine solidarity to put an end to exploitation and oppression. Just hospitality necessarily includes the struggle for justice as part and parcel of it. God's welcome then is an act of both love and justice, through the offer of just hospitality.

Claudio Carvalhaes, in his reflection on borders, globalisation and Eucharistic hospitality, engages with Jacques Derrida's notion of hospitality. Derrida coins the word, *hostipitality,* to describe both sides of hospitality. The meaning of the word hospitality, in both French and Latin, identified in the roots of the word the dual meanings of host and hostile. The *hote* as the guest or enemy, guest or parasite, illustrates the crux of the distinction between the conditionality and unconditionality of hospitality. To be hospitable is to be hostile or to be taken advantage of by the guest. Since one never fully knows one's guest, depending on the situation, guest or place, conditions are put in place. In unconditional hospitality, the host loses almost all things, a way of giving one's self entirely. In Carvalhaes' reflection, in the context of the Church as host and home to those fleeing oppression like the slaves, to lose everything in welcoming the stranger is Eucharistic hospitality. That is, sharing God's common table of a life of minimum dignity for all.[18]

In reading Carvalhaes I am jolted into thinking about Jesus' offer of his body at the communion table for all to partake in relation to women and children's bodies taken and ravaged under the condition of "unlimited" hospitality in sex tourism. I heard this saying years ago: "We Filipinos welcome the U.S. military bases with open arms and legs." We can also say that today to Western tourists coming to Asia for sex. Offering everything, literally everything including our bodies to the guest is even thought of as our gain or choice. It is not unconditional hospitality in Carvalhaes' sense,

but unconditional hospitality forced out of our will. It is unconditional hospitality not in the context of sharing God's Welcome but in exploiting it, and even killing it for one's or a system's gain.

A sex tourist does not have the comprehension of the smile that masks suffering to avoid beatings from the pimp for disappointing a client. In the victim's heart what plays is the cowering line of "Your pleasure, my pains."Instead of a communal enjoyment of all humanity of the gifts of God's welcome, sex tourists are actually devouring many of us, and the most vulnerable of all.

It is already an established fact that the rising sex tourism is the major aggravating force of sex trafficking and prostitution in Asia. What makes this picture grimmer is the reality that fathers and mothers would even 'offer' daughters or sons to the guests. (In which I am reminded of Lot offering his daughters to his male guests.) This expression of hospitality is gut-wrenching as it values only the pleasure of the guests at the expense of the dignity and worth of women and girls as human beings, which is no more existent since they were 'offered' to the guests. Many parents out of massive poverty have sold their sons and girls to go with recruiters to become sex slaves, unknowingly. This is a common story in rural Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand from where girls are brought to Bangkok, Malaysia or Taiwan.

Governments do push its women citizens into prostitution. Tourism shifted prostitution from cities to rural areas in 1993, right after the US Military Bases closed down in the Philippines. Massive poverty pushed most young women from rural provinces to urban centres to end up in prostitution, particularly around the Bases area. Right after the bases closed down, the Philippine government started promoting tourism in the rural provinces. Truly, "…driving prostitutes out of urban areas and promoting tourism in the country's rural areas without concurrently promoting the economic upliftment of the people is like putting prostitution at the doorstep of the poor."[19]

"We can't arrest a white man," seemed to be the general policy in Sri Lanka, a favourite destination of pedophiles and sex tourists in South Asia. Thus the locals were asking why the Ceylon Tourist Board was only trying to educate them and not the foreigners. Governments are themselves selling their own people and resources to Western tourists who come for holidays but bring nightmare to the locals.[20]

A 'genuine stereotype' of a sex tourist is one who travels for sex "because it's easy, uncomplicated and no longer on his moral compass as

even questionable behaviour…genuinely feels that the girls he pays for sex want to be there. He believes he is in fact doing them a favour, or worse, that they are there because they enjoy it." This is privilege freezing a sex tourist's view of reality and distorting it. Women and children and their cheap sex services have become the lure for more male tourists from rich countries to the Philippines and Thailand, for example. For the bodily pleasures of some, children and women's bodies are arbitrarily 'offered' or sacrificed at the temple of mammon, while for the victims, for their minimal and inhuman survival.

Rape and deaths due to severe abuse of girl sex workers are common stories in sex tourist destinations. These horrible abuses happen in the intersection of sex tourism and authority ascribed to the male gender which is the root of violence. Men, though not all, feel that they are entitled to abuse women and treat them as lower than animals. Losing ground in justice and critical mindedness, a sex tourist becomes a predator with his money who comes in hostility rather than as a guest worthy of a host's hospitality. He is the modern-day coloniser in search of "sun, sea and sex" to find new territories for colonisation, rob the locals and the future generation of their natural resources, and bastardise their culture. God's welcome thus is obliterated and reduced to a broken covenant that demands justice.

The enduring message of the prophet Amos is God's call for healing and justice in our world. He demands that in our life and actions we have to be life-giving not just to ourselves, but to all (Amos 5.24). But many Christians today do not see the unity of God's requirement for justice-making and of one's religion. Justice and its practice, and perhaps a faith that does justice, are missing in our churches. Why should churches now care about tourism, with some even owning and operating hotels and guesthouses in touristy areas?

Here we see the tensions and hindrances to practising justice in Just Hospitality. In many instances to ignore justice in tourism, particularly by governments, means violating and trampling upon the rights and dignity of a people and their natural environment. It is using violence to quell resistance and deception to cover up structural inequities. It is muting the dissenting voices and prostituting people and places in order to sell.

But God's righteousness and justice are putting things right. It is restoration of right relationships, as well as judgement on those who are unjust. The role of the churches therefore, is prophetic and evangelical in this regard. That is, to denounce the injustices and announce the good news

that God welcomes all but wears all the time Her middle name, Justice.

Hospitality in Just Hospitality

Hospitality or welcome is a way to demonstrate God's presence in our world. But when greed for profits shapes the terms of tourism, it distorts and even removes the possibility between host and guest of "meeting God in one other," consequently resulting in the exploitation and devaluation of people and nature.

Hospitality as a gift from God needs guarded treatment and good practice to keep ourselves more open to its blessings. According to the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand, in its May 21, 1990 Pastoral Letter,[21] tourism has its blessings in encounters resulting in mutual understanding and growth. This could promote good human relations among people and a far-reaching dialogue which is the basis for true world peace and harmony. The freedom and the means to travel, meet other people and immerse in their culture is our right as human beings.

It is not true that this "well designed plan" of sexism buttressed by racism and classism cannot be subverted and changed. Critical consciousnesaising is crucial in naming the injustice, as well as in constructing the meaning of the fullness of life. I use 'critical' as a qualifier because religious teachings have helped buttress the false belief in women that their bodies are evil and are sources of evil.

Indeed, the practice of hospitality leads to a relationship of solidarity and friendship among peoples, across difference and distance. And as we are instructed, hospitality is a way of relating to be shared and not left behind when travelling. When we travel our passports are humility and patience, and the awareness that one is treading on holy ground.

Our practice of hospitality can be nourished and strengthened by paying attention to God's concern to 'mend creation'. This concern to mend creation is expressed through justice and justice-making, a concrete way of showing that God cares. To instruct us is the metaphor of Jesus Christ as God's ultimate welcome, as a call to action. This call to action for me is to follow the path that Jesus took, the path of justice. Justice with justice-making makes abundant life possible here and now. It is the source of our life, the reason and source of the churches'

prophetic mission.

Who pays heavily the costs in human and economic terms in the negative effects of TW tourism? This question brings us to the story of Jesus in Matthew 25, as it nourishes and strengthens our embrace of God's welcome. They who are the sinned against – the most vulnerable, exploited and oppressed in their vulnerability, are the ones to lead us. Perhaps they could lead us out of our convoluted theologies and life-wasting hesitations into the light of salvation - if only we have the radical openness to recognise the presence of the divine in them. If only we ourselves are hospitable to the surprising and least expected revelations of the divine, we would be greatly blessed being simultaneously a guest and host in God's Welcome.

Jesus Christ bids us to welcome one another, whether one is guest and host. In his earthly life stories we are shown how Jesus was welcomed, how he travelled in humility and respect, how he showed great compassion to the least. Now, he may not be known to all guests and tourists, but in him we have an exemplar of what it means to be welcoming and all-embracing, but with a clear bias for the marginalised and the oppressed. He showed how just hospitality is a relationship that is rooted in our God-given human nature, which is not limited but is for all.

The notion of God's welcome and hospitality is a challenge, even a mandate of faith, to both guests and hosts. Christians and churches should not stand by on the sidelines and witness the wipeout of the bounty and beauty of God's welcome that is supposed to be justly enjoyed and to benefit all. Churches should never hesitate to speak truth to powers, to fellow churches in the West, and especially to themselves in the spirit of self-edification.

V. Embodying God's Welcome

The challenge at hand is how to be God's Welcome, whether one is a guest or host. Concretely, what does it mean then, to be just in our hospitality as both guests and hosts? Here are some clues to embody God's Welcome, but there could be more possible ways depending on particular contexts, cultural and church traditions.

A. Integrating gender justice in the task of social transformation

There are no theological impediments for the full participation of women, lesbians, gays, homosexuals and transgender and queer people, the gender marginals as I would call them here, in all spheres of human life. However,

in our present patriarchal societies these gender marginals are marginalised and silenced, further violated, with their violation conveniently justified biblically. We still lack the will to "manifest the true meaning of faith and ministry as God's people through genuine respect and reverence for the integrity and dignity of women"[22] including the LGBTQs. Gender justice is about and achieving the well-being of all humanity created in God's image and likeness. Rendering justice to them is not only a women's or the LGBTQ people's issue. Gender justice is a human issue, and therefore a theological one.[23]

As a feminist I insist that the wellbeing of gender marginals is a key theological issue and not just a socio-economic or political problem, though it also is. The movement to attain gender justice, though distinct, is integral to the oppressed and the marginalised people's movement for transformation. The struggle for gender justice is a constituent dimension of societal transformation and not an isolated, separate one. There can be no total human liberation without their liberation. Gender marginals have a stake in the socio-structural transformation because this is a necessary condition, though not sufficient, for completing the task of (women's) liberation.[24] In this regard, since women with children with the LGBTQ people, are most likely the "oppressed of all the oppressed" and "the poorest of the poor" in any social context, I assert a hermeneutical privileging of these groups in the issue of TW tourism as they are obviously the worst victims here.

We are thus challenged to transform our traditional theological anthropology into an inclusive one where we are able to see the gravity of the impact of tourism, particularly sex tourism. We need to see humanity and all of creation, in all our unique ways or expressions of being, as bearing divinity. Until we have this seeing by the heart, we will keep on assuming it is normal and a privilege for some men to 'use' women, boys and girls, and to 'buy' sex since the prostituted are not seen as humans like the men. We will keep on assuming that it is the women's job to take care of men's irresponsible sexual behavior and be responsible for them.

Men in general have to bear responsibility for their sexuality and stop passing on the blame and burden to women for their sexual irresponsibility. Men should be brave to stand up and speak out against prostitution, and against the assumption that all men naturally objectify and do not see women as human beings, which is not true.

There should be a stop to thinking and calling women 'sex workers'as prostitutes. Prostitution could hardly be called a profession of choice. Always

that choice is under duress given the burden of poverty and family responsibility that falls heavily on women and girls. Recalling the story of the prostituted woman accused in the presence of Jesus, we need to understand that in a male-dominated and male-defined culture, the woman always is blamed for the irresponsibility of man. Prostitution should bring us to a critical thinking on why it thrives and how it dehumanises both victims and victimisers.

No matter how far have our feminist theologians have gone in their theological articulations, the church in general yet remains a bastion of patriarchal values and practices, theologies and traditions. We have failed to 'see' and 'hear' the divine in humanity other than that of the males and the men.We have also failed to discern the divine in the natural world. That is why the subjugation and rape of women and children's bodies are closely linked to the domination and ravaging of nature to serve the wants of men in power. For me the church has failed to grapple with the fact that God is un-containable, undefinable and is beyond our limited human imagination and

> Our practice of hospitality can be nourished and strengthened by paying attention to God's concern to 'mend creation'. This concern to mend creation is expressed through justice and justice-making, a concrete way of showing that God cares. To instruct us is the metaphor of Jesus Christ as God's ultimate welcome, as a call to action. This call to action is to follow the path that Jesus took, the path of justice, the reason and source of the churches' prophetic mission.

capacity to apprehend and to express. Gender justice is an urgent human, therefore theological, agenda.

"The outpost of the enemy is in our minds." An important note on how poor, prostituted women view reality from their perspective is in order.

In one of the group sessions at the Fountain of Life Center in Pattaya, Thailand, Roman Catholic Good Shepherd Sister, Michelle Lopez raised the question of how prostituted women "fall down into the river" of prostitution. The usual litany included white male tourists, rich Asian men, people with money, families in destitute poverty. A young woman participant named Dang, angrily answered her: "This is our present world order? It is no accident. Who are we to change the world?...Don't ask such questions.

You only make us aware of our fixed place in this well designed plan."[25]

It is a sad reality of life that women themselves, particularly exploited and oppressed women like the prostituted ones, accept their lot as fate being born females, without any sense of their worth and dignity as human beings. It is true that in this case women have effectively internalised their oppression to which they have conformed without question.

Socialised to be 'secondary' human beings and of no worth especially if poor, they could not be blamed. Thus the task of advocating for gender justice necessarily starts with the female sex and the rest of the gender marginals. In saying this, it is crucial to give importance to the work of raising a critical feminist consciousness amongst women. Half of humanity cannot remain oblivious to their humanity, and remain victims or potential victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Half of humanity cannot remain the potential or actual abusers of the other half, with the others just standing by in complacency.

It is not true that this "well designed plan" of sexism buttressed by racism and classism cannot be subverted and changed. Critical consciousness-raising is crucial in naming the injustice, as well as in constructing the meaning of the fullness of life. I use 'critical' as a qualifier because religious teachings have helped buttress the false belief in women that their bodies are evil and are sources of evil, and that suffering is their natural lot as women bearing an evil bodiliness. Unless women themselves think critically with their own bodies, they will continue to believe what is taught to them by religious leaders, parents and other authorities in their lives – that they are of no worth or are less than others.

B. Paying attention to the power quotient involved

In imagining that the whole of creation is God's table of welcome to all, attention must be paid to power relations and in equalising the means to access the Earth's gifts. Is the table round enough or without sharp corners so that all have equal and easy access?

There must be acute awareness of the varied levels of power and access to resources based on social location, and how power is used to balance power. For example, the Filipino thinking that Americans are "blessed" by God because America is a Christian country, that they work hard and therefore deserving respect or high regard as God's beloved is a social construct that has been used by Filipinos to bestow privilege on the White people in many

ways. This perception has been historically exploited to impose American values and hasten Philippines colonisation.

The question of power is central to justice and justice-making. Justice, with a reference to right relationships, is therefore power-in-relation. A materially-privileged guest comes in peace, friendship and solidarity and not in hostility if s/he is aware of how s/he can wield power. Power must not be split from responsibility. For a system or a person to be non-abusive, power and responsibility must be inherently joined.[26]

The poor women and children in communities are usually the disempowered, which makes them more vulnerable to abuse and prostitution. The poor should not be perceived romantically as the beloved of God but as mostly victims of exploitation and abuse. The question thus is: How can the disempowered regain their power to will for a better life? How can one of considerable power help in the balancing act?

C. Giving priority to the perspective of the 'other'

Attention to concrete injustices seen in the industry of TW tourism requires hearing and telling stories of injustice and struggle. The unheard and muted voices are those of the locals in tourism. Their local stories need a second or critical look.

Indigenous Aeta community leader in Boracay Island, the Philippines, Vicente Guillermo, said in 2010 that his community is thankful for the development of Boracay. "Our women are hired to do laundry in different resorts, strangers come to our community and give our children money, toys and clothes. We men get jobs in constructions sites and help in getting food to tourists. What matters for us now is for us to survive."[27]

This voice of the 'other' for the guest sounds like 'good news' as the tourism industry is helping locals to earn for survival. However, looking at the situation these days the hills of Boracay are literally littered with resorts and mansions owned by foreigners, its lowlands ploughed by sex tourists targeting children, where drug use is rampant. The question here is, do guests hear what the locals are not allowed to say?

Giving priority to the perspective of the 'other' is not an exclusive option according to Robert McAfee Brown.[28] It is a starting point for giving attention to and in overcoming injustice. Listening to the perspective and concrete pains of others is really hearing and heeding the call to be just.[29] This challenge is difficult particularly to the Philippine government, for example. In refuting

the statement that 40 percent of tourists come to the Philippines for sex, it has shown its proclivity to protect its international image rather than the wellbeing of the poor women and children. It could have looked into the ground reality instead of questioning the statement of the US Ambassador Thomas.

The local parish in Boracay Island and a Catholic religious congregation have mission programmes to the Aeta community. I have no idea what the mission is teaching the locals but I hope it is a 'hearing' one, and encourages people to speak up the truth. I hope it is cultivating the values of justice and equality between hosts and guests, and not teaching to accept abuses as trials in life but injustices where Jesus would be angry about had he been alive today.

In sum, I propose that mission on tourism be shaped by the notion of a just hospitality that thinks of genuine welcome as possible only among those who consider themselves as human beings of equal worth.

VI. Challenges to the Ecumenical Ministry and Theological Formation

How can God's generous welcome for all, be promoted and upheld in the context of TW tourism? I pose here some areas to explore in ecumenical formation and ministry.

1) *On a personal note, how are you being God's Welcome especially to the least?*

This is an important question which is crucial in how one views the issue and the attendant problems of TW tourism. Assuming the stance of 'know-it-all' and self-righteousness makes one deaf and blind to real problems and its root causes. It is thus important to bear humility and radical openness to divine leadings and possibilities.

Our churches and their missions on tourism, if any, can be assessed in the light of God's Welcome, too.

2) *Being Just and Hospitable as Host/s*

From the perspective of the Indigenous Peoples (IP) in Asia who are usually 'showcases' of indigenous Asian cultures, and particularly IP women, how is being just and hospitable expressed in tourism? Aside from the prostitution of women and children, it would be challenging to look into the prostitution

of IP cultures and traditions, and how it links to the prostitution and exploitation of IP and non-IP women.

In 1995 it was reported that there were already 102 hotels, restaurants and other establishments in Puerto Galera's eight villages, mostly owned by Filipino women married to foreigners who were former tourists. Puerto Galera has natural coves that sheltered the Spanish galleons in the 1500s, and was the Philippines' most visited tourist spot in the 1990s. Here some women got rich on marrying foreigners, but many got separated and divorced. Many foreigners have married the town's women to legally own property. What is interesting is that usually these white men were former tourists when they discovered they could stay in the place of their choice in Asia, though some have come as tourists to find a wife.

3) ***Integrating gender justice in advocacy for responsible tourism***

Integrating gender justice in theological and ecumenical formation is already a formidable task that has not made a breakthrough yet in Asia. As a matter of ideological shift, how can this be done in a setting that is thoroughly unfriendly towards women, lesbians, gays and transgender people?

4) ***Rejoicing in God's unfolding promise.***

God's self-revelation is an unfolding promise that could only be met by excitement in being surprised. This promise is said to be not a guarantee, but it sure is for those whose heart is a big welcome to all possibilities. It is therefore an invitation to imagine a different world that is entirely the opposite of the unwelcoming one we have. It thus invites all of us – guests and hosts – to work together.

What if there is no common rejoicing in the unfurling of God's self-revelation in creation? I suspect there is only the impulse to exploit, to devour and to destroy. The guest becomes an enemy subject to God's judgement and the verdict of the oppressed and the marginalised who are in solidarity for justice – those who are awakened and aware of what is inherently in them, with the will to be fully human and fully alive. Should there be limits to hospitality so that it will not be exploited?

What, then, is the ethical implication of our world as God's welcome to all? What is our faith mandate towards a predatory and exploitative disposition and stance of social systems? What is there with the God of Surprises and with the beauty of creation that would eradicate the morphing of desire into domination and ownership? How?

5) *Possibilities of partnerships for justice in world tourism*

If we as Christians wish to partner with God in recreating a world which is life-giving for all, then we are mandated to partner with others in transforming the world. Together our analysis, resistance and reconstructions could be powerful and effective. In our common work of sharing God's mission, we live side by side, actually with 'intestines interconnected', and at the same time ensuring that we all share the same quality nourishment for our total wellbeing without depriving or exploiting others. As it is said by African Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, "We can only be human together."[30]

A friend from Hamburg, Germany, told me that group tours of Asian men, usually Korean and Japanese, come to Hamburg or The Netherlands for sex tourism. At first I was surprised to hear about it. These men come from the First Worlds of Asia, they have the money and they are men. What mission partnerships on tourism could be possible between churches in the South and churches in the North?

In Asia, this could also be explored between churches in affluent countries like Japan, Korea and Taiwan, and the 'poor' countries. What can churches do with regards to Kopinos, for example? Though this action could be reactive, it could point to the reality that Korean men continue to seek young Filipino women for sex and leave them with a child or children. What could be the prophetic mission of churches to sex tourists coming from affluent Asian countries?

6) *Prophetic Hospitality*

In embracing the values of Just Hospitality, how can hosts/receiving countries be prophetic in tourism? In practising Just Hospitality, one cannot but be prophetic. In the context of TW tourism where receivers are mostly poor countries, to be prophetic means creating measures to ensure that God's welcome safeguards a life of dignity for all, not just for the rich, protects and upholds the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised. What should be the standards of these measures based on particular and concrete realities?

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can imagine that God's Welcome or Just Hospitality is a partnership with God and humanity in showing God's welcoming and liberating presence.

In tourism, both guests and hosts can be expressions of God's Welcome grounded in justice. We are thus challenged in our different contexts and locations to strive to be just and to be justice-making communities, to be God's Welcome. In embodying God's Welcome, we are partnering with all humanity – with our 'intestines interconnected', and as partners with equal worth and dignity – together with God – She whose Welcome is everywhere in creation that is meant for all.

If and when churches decide to promote responsible tourism, Just Hospitality should be its measure and standard.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1) *From your personal experience, how can you and your church be God's Welcome, especially to the least?*

   This is an important question which is crucial in how one views the issue and the attendant problems of TW tourism, and assesses the church on that.

2) *Being Just and Hospitable as Host/s.*

   From the perspective of the Indigenous Peoples (IP) who are usually 'showcases' of indigenous cultures, and particularly IP women, how is being just and hospitable expressed in tourism? Aside from the prostitution of women and children, it would be challenging to look into the prostitution of IP cultures and traditions, and how it links to the prostitution and exploitation of IP and non-IP women.

3) *Integrating gender justice in advocacy for responsible tourism*

   *I*ntegrating gender justice in theological and ecumenical formation is already a formidable task that has not made a breakthrough yet in Asia. How can this be done in a setting that is thoroughly unfriendly towards women, lesbians, gays and transgender people?

4) *Rejoicing in God's unfolding promise.*

   God's self-revelation is an unfolding promise that can only be met by excitement in being surprised. This promise is said to be not a guarantee, but it sure is for those whose heart is a big welcome to all possibilities. It is therefore an invitation to imagine a different world that is entirely the opposite of the unwelcoming one we have. It thus invites all of us –

guests and hosts – to work together.

What, then, is the ethical implication of our world as God's welcome to all? What is our faith mandate towards a predatory and exploitative disposition and stance of social systems? What is there with the God of Surprises and with the beauty of creation that would eradicate the morphing of desire into domination and ownership? How?

5) *Possibilities of partnerships for justice in world tourism*

If we as Christians wish to partner with God in recreating a world which is life-giving for all, then we are mandated to partner with others in transforming the world.

What mission partnerships on tourism could be possible between churches in the South and churches in the North, or between churches in affluent countries like Japan, Korea and Taiwan, and the other 'poor' countries in Asia? What could be the prophetic mission of churches to sex tourists coming from affluent Asian countries?

6) *Prophetic Hospitality*

In embracing the values of Just Hospitality, how can hosts/receiving countries be prophetic in tourism? In practising Just Hospitality, one cannot but be prophetic. In the context of TW tourism where receivers are mostly poor countries to be prophetic means creating measures, to ensure that God's welcome safeguards a life of dignity for all, not just for the rich, protects and upholds the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised. What should be these measures based on particular and concrete realities?

Endnotes

[1] http://www.koreabang.com/2013/stories/10000-korean-children-born-to-filipina-prostitutes.html(accessedJuly 7, 2013).

[2] Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of this World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008), xv. The world is as well Sophia's welcome to humanity. For further readings, ElisabethSchüsslerFiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001); Mayra Rivera, God at the Crossroads: A Postcolonial Reading of Sophia, in Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner and Mayra Rivera, *eds.*, *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St Louis: ChalicePress, 2004), 186 -203; and Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

[3] http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/1989/08/18/asian-tourism-

harms-women-children-tribals-ecology&post_id=740 (accessed July 23, 2013).

[4] Brock and Parker, *Saving Paradise*, 155.

[5] http://www.relevantmagazine.com/reject-apathy/loss-of-innocents/columns/22025-12-hours-with-a-sex-tourist (accessed August 21, 2013).

[6] http://1389blog.com/2011/08/22/halal-sex-tourism-just-marry-the-prostitute-for-a-day-or-two/ (accessed July 23, 2013).

[7] http://philippines.ucanews.com/2011/10/01/sex-tourism-in-the-philippines/ (Accessed 14 July 2013).

[8] http://lifein.asia/pattaya-thailand-or-angeles-city-philippines-sex-tourism-comparision/ (Accessed 14 July 2013).

[9] Letty Mandeville Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 83.

[10] Russell, *Just Hospitality, 84.* "Everyday welcomings of the 'other' especially at table, are really acts of worship, 'for the glory of God'", as Paul Koenig would say.

[11] *Ibid.*, 101.

[12] Brock and Parker, *Saving Paradise*, 4.

[13] Reimund Bieringer and Ma.Marilou Ibita, "Justice as Participation: Toward a Theology of Justice," *HimigUgnayan* VIII (2007): 18-55; and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, "Weaving the Patchwork of Justice and Peace in a Broken World," in *Weaving the Patchwork of Justice and Peace in a Broken World* (Quezon City: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 2007), 82-88.

[14] Bieringer and Ibita, "Justice as Participation…", 50.

[15] Orevillo-Montenegro, "Weaving the Patchwork…", 83.

[16] *Ibid.*, 84.

[17] Bieringer and Ibita, "Justice as Participation…", 53.

[18] Claudio Carvalhaes, Borders, Globalization and Eucharistic Hospitality, in *Dialog*, Vol. 49, Issue 1, Spring *2010: 45-55.*

[19] http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/1993/04/13/tourism-shifts-prostitution-from-cities-to-rural-areas-says-nun&post_id=43136 (accessed July 13, 2013).The fact that there is a thing called the "sex industry" and "sex workers" with regular government services like monthly health check-ups of 'hospitality girls' in my home city indicates the reality that governments are pimping its own constituents.

[20] http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/1993/08/19/irresponsible-tourism-fosters-sexual-exploitation-of-children&post_id=43844 (accessed July 23, 2013).

[21] http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/1990/07/03/pastoral-letter-on-tourism-by-bishops-of-thailand&post_id=942 (accessed July 23, 2013)

[22] Excerpt of the NCCP 17th General Convention Statement on Violence Against Women, "NCCP Deplores Violence Against Women" *NCCP Newsmagazine*, October-December 1995, 29.

[23] Nam Soon Kang, "The Centrality of Gender Justice in Prophetic Christianity and

the Mission of the Church Reconsidered" in *International Review of Mission* 94, no. 373 (April 2005): 286; and Musimbi Kanyoro, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2002), 64, 29.

[24] Mary John Mananzan, "The Women's Movement in the Philippines – Challenge to the Church" in Narciano, M. R., ed. *Empowering Women in Crisis* (Quezon City: Gabriela, 1989), 15, cited in Estrada-Claudio, *Rape, Love and Sexuality,* xiv. Thus, women's struggle cannot be subsumed under the struggle for national liberation. Ruiz, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," 60.

[25] http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2004/07/13/combating-sex-tourism-needs-a-multidimensional-approach&post_id=1260 (accessed July 23, 2013).

[26] In non-abusive systems, power and responsibility are inherently joined. See Flora Keshgegian, "Power to Wound, Power to Mend: Toward a Non-Abusing Theology" in *Journal of Religion and Abuse* 1, no. 1 (1999): 38-39.

[27] (http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2010/03/25/tourism-a-mixed-blessing-says-priest&post_id=51905 (accessed July 23, 2013).

[28] Robert McAfee Brown, cited in Russell, *Just Hospitality, 46.*

[29] Marion Iris Young,cited in Russell, *Just Hospitality, 46.*

[30] Cited in Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 67.

PART - II

Mass Tourism in the Global South: A Challenge for Missional Theology and Praxis

8

The Objectified People and the Objectified God of Tourism

M P Joseph

The chapters in this anthology point to the negative impact of tourism from various angles. Given its reach, its footprint is visible in the lives of women, children, breadwinners, families, and communities, and in the distortions it imposes on nature, biodiversity and other dimensions of creation. While such effects are evident, the question arises as to what organising principle operates that explains the reality of this massive industry. We get an understanding of this when we realise that the industry operates within a neo-liberal globalised system wherein the primacy of profits is sacrosanct, and a minimally regulated or free market is a means to that end. The tourism formula is designed to rake in maximum profits for the investors through the agency of the tourists who interact in myriad locations and destinations in the Global South. The financial power of the tourists and their expectations and demands for personal satisfaction are at the crux of this interaction. Human beings and nature have value only in so far as they are objects or tools for their pleasure that they wish to extract from their holiday of a few days. Objectification of the other in various forms is the characteristic of modern commercial operations. Mass commercial tourism has its own variety of objectification that leaves many in the Global South used up, exploited, demeaned, 'converted to throwaway commodities, like plastic cups and syringes'. The insights in this article are an eye opener for the theological community, and constitute a framework for a penetrating analysis of tourism sited within the communities of the widespread Global South comprising Asia, Africa, the Pacific, the Middle East, and Central and South America.

The term 'tourism' appears to be misleading. Various types of travels undertaken by people, often with diverse objectives, are described with this common denominator, tourism. For example, the travel undertaken by a person from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia for Hajj, perhaps once a life time, and the occasional travel of a few Saudi Arabians to Indonesia seeking sex, are described by an overarching term tourism, though at times certain prefixes are added. This is erroneous. The danger is that since the Hajj evokes sympathy and public approval, travel for seeking cheap sex services which is carried under the all-encompassing term tourism gains legitimacy.

This contention is true in relation to the tourism which has been staged through political patronage. Using a single denominator to describe the government-sponsored travel to Israel used as a means to legitimise occupation, and the travel by various solidarity groups to Palestine to express their solidarity with struggles of the Palestinians for their right to life is also grossly misleading. Such usage helps to construct rationality for the political project of domination.

Unfortunately, the present tradition of using hyphenated adjectives, such as spiritual-tourism, justice tourism and whatever else, will propose a notion that tourism in general is a law of nature, and thus everything that comes under the larger genre of this term is legitimate.

This confusion is also part of the etymological roots of the term tourism. One explanation among the various propositions on the etymology suggests that an Old Saxon term *torn*, which could roughly be translated as "departure with the intention of returning", perhaps be considered as the root from which the modern term tourism evolved. This meaning evolved from the aristocratic tradition wherein leisure was considered as a means for the privileged class to affirm their higher social position compared to the commoners and the slaves. Slaves were, by definition, people with no right or privilege of leisure. Aristocrats had no requirement to convert time to seek the means of their living since they had the ability to appropriate labour time from the slaves. The leisure was in abundance for them as they strengthened the exploitative mechanisms.

A second assumption relates the term tourism to the travel of Hebrew Patriarchs described in the book of Genesis to Mount Moriah. This interpretation perhaps is informed by the Zionist political project which finds in this story a legitimation for the claim of a community over a specific area of land. The concept of pilgrimage in the ancient Near Eastern societies

was informed by the Persian demonologies which assumed that heavenly beings descend to the mountain tops to meet the earthly beings. Travel to the mountain hence was an act of seeking spiritual enlightenment. The same metaphor is found in various ancient cosmologies.

The central function of this travel was to pursue meaning for life. Therefore travel should be considered as an ethical act, for it refuses to accept the prevailing understanding of what constitute right and wrong. Travel also qualifies to be identified as the spiritual faculty of people that enables people to be in an eternal journey to seek the ultimate meaning of life.

These diverse etymological assumptions suggest that the single denominator for the description of the various travels needs critical valuation. While pleasure mediated through the body was the objective of *torn* for the aristocrats, seeking meaning of life was the motivating factor behind the travel to the mountains or to the locations of the oppressed to express solidarity. A single denominator for these diverse forms of travel offers a possibility for the unethical to take shelter in the ethical and thereby hide its hedonist character.

This conflicting character of travel is evident in the history of human societies. In the construction of modern world history, two expeditions/travels assume great significance: one was undertaken by the Chinese navigator Zheng He since 8th March 1421[1], and the second travel by Spanish traveller Christopher Columbus in 1492. Zheng He's travel had a defining role in the construction of epistemologies in ancient societies. The China plate that helped human society around the world to improve hygienic qualities while handling food was an invention of Chinese culture but perhaps universalised through the travels of Zheng He. Zheng He's extensive travel (1421-1434) – which took him to the Americas seventy years before Columbus "discovered" that land, and to the East to New Zealand and Australia nearly three hundred and fifty years before Cook reached this part of the globe – promoted a give and take relationship; he took Chinese art, culture and technologies to various parts of the world and brought technologies from others parts to China. Those travels had a humanising impact. Unlike Zheng He, the travel of Columbus, probably using the Chinese maritime maps created irreversible damage in human history. Social science may require two words to describe the travels of Zheng Ho and Columbus. Zheng He's travel universalised china plates, while the travels of Columbus made 'coca-cola' a global product. These are the two symbols expressing two and

divergent genres of globalisation.

Notwithstanding the persistence of this erroneous confusion regarding the nature and impact of travel, commercial tourism has grown as a mammoth industry around the world. At the Global Tourism forum organised by UN World Tourism Organisation, Jeffry Sachs, one of the prominent figures among neo-liberals said, "The tourism industry is a huge employer, is a huge creator of economic values: it's a huge benefit to society, … and it can be a huge beneficiary of rapid growth in developing countries."[2] The total contribution of tourism industries amounts to US$ 6.6 trillion in gross amount. This figure is higher than the GDP of rich nations such as Japan. The tourism industry claims that it provides 260 million jobs, while the global auto industry which brings to the sale platform around 60 million vehicles provides employment to about 9 million people for making the vehicles and the parts that go into them.

The enormous growth of the tourism industry is not only appealing to nations for greater participation, but also threatens that the marginality from tourism capital will entail their total marginality from the global economic space. The argument that increased involvement in the tourism industry accelerates economic growth, and economic growth is the only elixir for addressing issues of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and other ills of the society, elevates the tourism industry as a moral agent in society. Though this argument gained currency in the neo-liberal discourse in recent years, it offers a twisted truth. The history of the emergence of tourism as an internationally promoted industry, perhaps, explains the imperialist agenda behind the construction of this myth.

An economic instrument for neo-liberal expansion

One of the accomplishments of the Bandung Conference is the construction of an economic thinking that international divisions of labour created by the colonial forces will accelerate economic deprivation of third world nations by encouraging faster movement of resources from the third world to the industrial West.[3] They observed that the nations which were totally embedded in the economic systems of the colonisers tended to become extremely poor, while others who enjoyed a relative independence from colonial relations of production, fared better. As a result, protectionism ruled as a legitimate economic doctrine of the newly independent nations in the post-Bandung period. Bandung also did create a format for a counter political power structure in international relations by consolidating the solidarity that emerged

during the meeting of the Afro-Asian nations and by extending it to Latin America later. The 'non-aligned movement' was born as a result of this solidarity. Non-aligned nations signalled their "refusal to take orders from the former colonial nations."[4] They promoted the idea that in the absence of economic freedom, political independence will reduce to "flag independence" with no real substance. Political nationalism assumed the characteristic of an economic nationalism in the majority of the third world countries. However, this claim of relative independence of the former colonies from the control of global capitalism was perceived as a great threat towards the expansion of capitalist forces. Through a compelling analysis of the origin of the concept of development and modernity, Alvin So argued that "development theory" was constructed to reverse the relative independence that the third world nations gained through slogans of economic nationalism.[5] The practice of the theory of development and modernity was also aimed at refastening the embedded relationship that the third world had with the industrial West during the time of colonialism.

Legitimacy gained by "developmentalism" was evident from the fact that the churches and the ecumenical movements around the world have taken development as mission, propagating it as a soteriological principle for the nations and communities around the world. It assumed that development is another term for growth, a natural and necessary process towards an end, which is goodness, peace and shalom. Development offers selfhood to all, since it ensures better life.

In the ecumenical movement, the development discourse gained currency as a follow up to the responsible society discourse presented as an alternative to monopoly capitalism and state sponsored socialism. Under the responsible society slogan, the ecumenical community favoured a system controlled by large measures of private ownership but functioning with government planning and regulation. This proposal for the middle

Seeking sensual gratification through the objectification of the "other" is the quintessential reality of tourism…In tourism, nonetheless, the objectified other is converted into "use and throw away commodities" like the plastic cups, or syringes, and are exchanged according to the rules and dynamics of neoliberal markets. The "objectified" other ontologically assumes the form of a disposable commodity.

axiom was not too much distanced from Keynesian economics. This idea emerged in the first two assembles of the World Council of Churches which met in the shadow of the cold war rhetoric. The Church and Society Commission of the World Council of Churches had taken the task to study the common responsibility towards areas of rapid social change, and observed that Christians need to become agents in the technological and social revolutions that were taking shape in the world. Asian theologians accepted these proposals without too much reservation. Using the exegetical interpretation on Psalm 144 given by John Mathai, a former deputy finance minister of India, M.M. Thomas observed that Christian participation in development creating material prosperity is a source of Christian hope. The captivity of the ecumenical social thought to the development ideology is explicit in several other studies as well.

The fictitious language of the development ideology proposed two things. (1) Material growth is an imperative for achieving well-being for individuals and communities. Growth is the law of nature. And material growth is integrally connected to the ability to generate capital which will be possible when the orientation of production shifts from producing use value to producing exchange value. Hence production should be geared towards and regulated by the market. (2) Attracting capital from outside is an imperative, like oxygen for sustaining life, for the so-called under-developed countries, a new rechristened term to identify the former colonies. Since the underdeveloped countries suffer from the deficiencies of capital – capital alone helps to create new capital – a flow of capital from outside is the best option for survival. Moreover, the term under-development is employed as a definition to depict those societies which confront structural deficiencies for generating capital. Facilitating the movement of capital from outside therefore is vital.

The most effective propaganda machinery for development was the educational initiatives. It is evident from the fact that international organisations including World Bank, have given priority to "Fundamental education" in its funding decisions. These programmes expected that schooling will enhance an individual's ability to think 'modern'. Besides, they will change their political attitude so that they may psychologically be prepared to make possible changes in the economic and political structures of their respective nations. As a consequence, education appeared as a package; while offering agricultural techniques to farmers, fundamental education also offered lessons in banking, loans and credit, family budgeting

and other 'necessary' details to enhance the competitive abilities of the small farmers. What has resulted is a development *coup d'etat*, and at the base of the new social order created by development, stand the techno-bureaucrats of developmentalism, and they hold the moral power to pontificate between right and wrong.

The political role of high-end tourism assumes importance in this context. The aim of development was to reverse the economic nationalism emerging after Bandung, and the tourism industry had become a handy weapon for international capital to accomplish this goal. As Naomi Klein has observed, tourism served as the principal weapon to seek entry of global corporations in the economic systems around the world.[6]

Tourism serves two primary purposes in this context. (1) Tourism has become one of the favourite and profitable spots for parking capital. Besides, tourism was hailed as one of the efficient means to attract capital in the so-called under-developed world. In 2012, tourism was credited globally for contributing US$760 billion in investment and US$1.2 trillion in exports. Its contribution represented 9.3% of global GDP, 1 in 11 jobs, 5% of investment and 5% of exports.

(2) Development capital has transformed tourism as a demonstrative kit for fundamental education. It is assumed that tourism has the ability to penetrate into the public consciousness with the values and glittering promises of modernity. Tourists in their person reify potently the images and norms of modernity and thus introduce and encourage the rather "traditional cultures"[7] of the third world to embrace modern culture, modern technologies and modern socio-political values. As walking billboards, tourists invade the public consciousness of communities and people in every corner of the world. As a result the consumer culture is made normative for being modern, creating a feeling of inferiority among the villagers in the tourist-receiving centres. Tourism encourages the villagers to embrace a new aesthetics, which is reflected within a short span of time, in the pattern of clothing that village people begin to wear, in the speed with which the local people empty the cosmetic items, especially the skin lightening creams, from the shelves of the local markets, and the fast changes in the food that people consume.

Several universities around the world opened departments for the study of tourism. Many a time, cross cultural education runs parallel with tourism studies. Both these genres of studies promote the idea that tourism has the potential to create better understanding among various cultures of the world,

primarily because of its ability to unify desires of the people; desires akin to the modern, meaning, western individuals.

Commodification of life

Ramifications of these changes were evident in the system and relations of production as well. Economies previously based on subsistence production began to shift towards production of consumer goods, souvenirs, hand bags, hats and other items, which are not necessarily useful for the life of the people in the villages. People in the villages adjacent to the tourist centres learned that, to be successful, priorities of production should not be regulated by the daily needs of the people in the village, but should be informed by the demands of the market; and in their case, the superficial market created by the arrival of the tourists. While they produce for the (fictitious) tourist market, they depend on the import market for satisfying the daily needs of their life. As a result, capital never remains in the tourist-receiving villages and hence the villagers remain poor.

The eclipse of use value under the rise of exchange value signals that commodification[8] has reached a stage in which life is no more a reason for economic activities. The consumer culture further seduced the individuals to believe that happiness and fulfillment of life depend upon creating increased proximity with commodities, and as a result the urge for buying more 'things' became an ontological necessity.

Moreover, governments in the third world have used the slogan that revitalisation of the economies is possible through tourism because it leads to forging ties with international capital. In reality it means selling national facilities and resources including beaches, national parks and forests to potential 'consumers', and divert the national revenue from the welfare programme for the people to the construction of state-of-the-art airports and national highways.

In service of the Empire

A second function is to offer justification for the entry of Empire into every corner of the world. One of the decisive natures of the rule of capital under neo-liberal globalisation is the vertical ordering of society and people. Ensuing globalisation has brought home this painful reality across the world. The combined wealth of the 7 richest individuals in the world is greater than the gross domestic product of around 567 million people belonging to 47 poor countries.[9] Poverty is escalating universally, including in the richest countries

in the world. The reality of the present time is the construction of a social system where enclaves of capital cohabit with umpteen numbers of ghettos of poverty that can only be more or less successfully *managed* for some time but never definitively *overcome*".[10] Capital has also destroyed the existing social relations in society to further the culture of modernity but failed to put anything sustainable in their place. The role of empire assumes importance when global capitalism is challenged to locate an effective organisational strategy to "manage the jungle like contradictions" that it has created. Thomas Friedman, an ardent advocate of corporate globalisation, argues: "For globalism to work, America can't be afraid to act like the almighty superpower that it is....The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist – McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."[11]

Among several other options, tourism has turned out to be a political instrument of the empire to ensure access to countries around the world. The perceived concern regarding the danger/safety of the tourists creates a trail for the Empire to extend its influence. To ensure tourist arrivals, the host country should create an environment where the potential tourists feel safe. Two conditions are necessary to establish confidence among the tourists. i) The host country should increase policing activity. Through employing advanced GPS systems, micro and macro navigation facilities, the State should improve the controlling skills of the police and the military. ii) Tourists should have the assurance that their governments have access to rescue them in case of a (security) emergency. This requirement prods the establishment of strategic agreements with "sending countries" for permission to monitor the movements of the tourists in the host countries. These strategic alliances are not limited to establishing surveillance systems, but also to include the right to intervene.

Objectification of the Other

In spite of the controversy regarding the function of tourism in economy and culture, tourist arrivals in different locations around the world have grown unabatedly. This growth however derails the power-relations in society because the "subject" of tourism is the urbanised modern individual who has access to surplus resources and surplus time. Tourism is an economic, cultural activity with religious propensity of individuals seeking the meaning

for their existence. The individual self is the subject as well as the end of this search. And concern of the self is the most sacred dogma.

The common logic of tourism proposes that the subjecthood of a tourist is established by objectifying the other as a means for his/her hedonistic satisfaction. Women are reduced to flesh[12] for satisfying sensual pleasure, and the other locals as cooks or waiters to address the various unsatisfied sense organs. Nature is reduced to scenic objects to satiate the eyes. Culture is boxed in a systematic order to enable customers to pick and choose according to their taste. In essence, objectification of the other is the pivotal locus on which tourism operates.

Since sensual aggrandisement of the self is the singular objective, objectification of the other including prostitution/child prostitution, child labour for service industry/souvenir production and all other exigencies, are legitimised.

As long as the essence of tourism remains as the individual's search for self gratification, it differs from the other forms of travel. The difference of tourism from "travel" lies in its disposition as an agency for self gratification. Travel has existed in history from time immemorial. The travel involving migration, seeking refuge in distant lands, travel of the general public to attend social events, visiting family and friends, and other forms of travel are part of the annals of history. But migrants or refugees are not tourists; they are not seeking sensual pleasure, but they are seeking the means of survival. None of the movements catalogued in history agrees with the character of what tourism represents at the present time. In recent times exchange-visits and study encounters are becoming more commonplace among various communities, and travel for such purposes cannot be depicted as tourism. Seeking sensual gratification through the objectification of the other is the quintessential reality of tourism.

In tourism, nonetheless, the objectified other is converted into "use and throw away" commodities like the plastic cups, or syringes and are exchanged according to the rules and dynamics of neoliberal markets. The "objectified" other ontologically assumes the form of a disposable commodity.

Tourists are but people

Why is objectification of the other becoming a normative of social life? In 2012, 1.035 billion tourists, close to 15 percent of the global population, arrived in different destinations. The majority of these tourists are workers

in different factories and economic organisations, who convert themselves as objects to be exploited in various economic activities around the world. For instance, the domestic tourism in some third world countries, such as in India, is largely supported by the migrant labourers who toil in the Middle-East nations in slave – like situations.

Two factors force them to embark on the path of tourism.

To escape alienating work

Under the prevailing conditions of production, which target singularly at the expansion of capital, labour is an act of alienation. "Workers engage in production for alien goals"[13] to satisfy the demands of the national and transnational capital. Technological development in production has made human activity to be largely surrendering to seemingly impersonal forces that regulate the process of production. For the majority of the situations, living labour has no subjective participation in the process of production; instead living labour is objectified to satisfy the conditions of production. Furthermore, in industrial society the goal of production is accumulation of capital, and labor power is treated as a commodity in exchange for meeting the basic needs of the living labour. As a result, production is no more a humanising act, neither an act of self-fulfillment, enabling oneself to see her/his creative potentials blossom. To be a humanising act, production should let the overflowing of one's own being in time and space. In the absence of any subjective participation in the process of production, labour remains an act of alienation. Work is an act in which the labour power of a person seeks detachment from his/her personhood. During the time of labour, the person is not present, only the labour power is present. The personhood is the sum total of feelings, aesthetics, subjective decision making capacities and several other subjective

The world of an urban modern individual has reduced to the self and it revolves around a sense of "everydayness." A passage beyond the orbit of "everdayness" to move to the unknown, expecting evocative delight, is the motivation behind tourism. Running away from "everydayness" is an attempt (though vain) to gain sanity. As alienation of neighbour from neighbour, and people from community, intensifies, the travel to the beyond from the familiar also swells.

faculties. When one goes to work in the "conveyor belt culture" the person does not go, only the body, which has the ability to convert itself as labour power, travels to the factory. That leads to alienation; and to an ongoing negotiation, almost on an everyday basis, between the personhood and the body of the living labour, to regain sanity.

A safety-valve

Such alienation leads to conversion of the working space into prison cells, and it is rather natural for living labour to seek an exit from such spaces that reify the death of their subjective personhood. And the act of a momentary exit appears as an alternative for both the worker and capital to prevent exigencies. Social history reiterates that accumulated and suppressed feelings of exploitation and alienation pose a serious threat to the stability of society, if not addressed periodically.

The emerging theme – parks in the urban cities and especially in the industrial cities are modern cathedrals where labourers unload their suppressed feelings of alienation. Tourism expands the choices for the same purpose. Hence, as a mechanism of social engineering in an exploitative industrial society, tourism is used as a significant means to diffuse potential social and political disorders. Since the majority of tourists are industrial workers, a creation of avenues, to release the accumulated feelings of alienation, oppression, and self-hate due to the dehumanising working conditions, is needed to avoid unrest and to keep the "living labour" fit for production. That is one reason why special gifts to travel to distant places are often offered to workers by the owners of capital. It is expected that these travels will help workers to safely unload their feelings of alienation and heal the conflict between their personhood and the body (the labour power).

Further, the workers also internalise and accumulate the consciousness of the oppressor.[14] They often would like to imitate the oppressors and seek safer (socially and legally) places to unload the internalised consciousness. Such an act functions as therapy for the dehumanised worker. Paulo Freire argued that women are often at the receiving end in this social hierarchy of oppression and have been converted as objects for others to unload the feelings of dehumanisation.

The nuclear self in modernity

The norms of modernity promote alienation of people from people. Modernity

is rooted in the concept of the individual and as a result the society is absent from his/her mind. To accelerate the detachment from the other, capitalist production has turned the neighbour as a potential competitor or only as an object to be exploited. In the culture of modernity, the "individual is an exclusive concept, defined in opposition to other individuals, in so far as one's freedom and rights are defined in opposition to other individuals."[15] Within this politically defined cultural nuance, a subject-to-subject relationship with the neighbour is a frightening reality in modernity. Individual freedom is defined and delimited by that of other individuals. It leads to the reality that there are no "persons" in modern culture, only individuals. The concept of a 'person' denotes a web of relationships; it "is an inclusive concept", whose being is enmeshed with the being of others.

The world of an urban modern individual has reduced to the self and it revolves around a sense of "everydayness." A passage beyond the orbit of "everdayness" to move to the unknown, expecting evocative delight, is the motivation behind tourism. Running away from "everydayness" is an attempt (though vain) to gain sanity. As alienation of neighbour from neighbour, and people from community, intensifies, the travel to the beyond from the familiar also swells.

Sacred is defined space

Religious, theological nuances, nonetheless, offer legitimation to the travel that an individual undertakes to escape from his/her alienating work and community. The concept of pilgrimage is stretched to include the common cliché that "there is a pilgrim" in every individual in order to rationalise tourism. At the empirical level, pilgrimage is considered as a journey undertaken by a person to a certain place that she/he believes has the ability to offer solace or spiritual nourishment. A pilgrim thus sees the sacred outside of his/her own immediate space. The sacred is what sets apart ordinary activity. It is seen as beyond the objective world of the individual. In the absence of the true sacred, the present assumes the form of eternal, the objective world around us will be seen as god. The Sacred is needed for human life, but the crisis is that tourism has reduced it to a defined and tangible object.

However the concept of "pilgrimage" has its roots in religious nuances. Pilgrimage invokes various theological rationales. A theological journey to know God is often identified as pilgrimage; the metaphorical journey with God to realise the reign of God assumes the image of pilgrimage; theology

> The tourist industry has artfully manipulated the concept of the Sabbath and reduced its meaning to leisure in service of capital. This perverted reading of the biblical concept of the seventh day has assisted the tourist industry around the world to pocket more capital.

of grace, the idea that an individual could earn merit by engaging in acts to please God and thereby procure their own salvation also has its roots in the concepts of pilgrimage. Furthermore, the central religious experience of conversion through repentance is often translated into the language of pilgrimage or journey. Pilgrimage receives further rationalisation in conventional soteriological assumptions, by using the metaphor of human life on earth as a sojourn and the real home in eternity.

A ramification of these theological formulations of pilgrimage is seen in the act of justifying the travel that people embark on, from one geographically defined space to another, provided that the journey is perceived as a search for self-fulfillment. It may, therefore, be said that to be in journey or being dissatisfied with the given space and thus shunt to another space is an ontological character of human nature and history. This view holds the common cliché that the "essential form of a human is not her/his urge to live, but the motivation to navigate." If the act of pilgrimage is a law of nature, why should one question the escalating volume of tourists, even though the tourists may bring havoc to the environment, communities and people?

The myth of 'holy city'

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the concept of pilgrimage gained rationality through the theological construction of Jerusalem, the royal city as the seat of the god/temple. The Jewish tradition of having only one temple/one seat of god reinforces the perception surrounding the holiness of Jerusalem as a geographically defined space, thereby provoking the need of pilgrimage as an essential manifestation of faith in search of knowing or encountering god.

The building of the temple was a monarchic political project and so also the theological formulation of the nexus of king, temple and Jerusalem city as the divinely ordained system to offer protection to the people. The ideological construction to offer royal/sacred city status to Jerusalem was intended to fortify hegemonic monarchic rule. Monarchic propaganda claimed

that "king-temple-royal-city complex is the guarantor of both social and cosmic order"[16]

With the advent of European colonialism, the narrative of a pilgrim cohabited with the imperialist pursuit to conquer land and resources. And later the political establishment of modern Israel has become the theatre for demonstrating the ruthless character of the monarchic construction of "holy city-temple-pilgrim" syndrome as a political narrative to justify the violent occupation of Palestinian land.

Prophets rejected the ideological construction of identifying a defined space as the seat of God. (Jer. 4, Is. 65: 17ff) The distinctive character of the Jewish tradition was the concept of holiness in time. Physical space is divested of any sanctity.[17] Rejection of this principle of time is also the root of the crisis in civilisation. Civilisation is equated with the possession of material and cohesive power, which one gains by expending time to make things that occupy space.[18] The accumulation of things is the provider of power. However, in that attempt, reality is reduced to thing-hood. Those which are not things are not real. Development of this perverted concept has its roots in the enlightenment tradition. Enlightenment rationality reiterated the truth claims of things. The argument that truth should be objectively verifiable reinforces the fact that outside the world of objects there are no truths. Objects are subjected to verification; other realities that refuse to submit themselves for corroboration, are rejected as untruth or superstition.

If reality is in the form of things, then temple and physical space are needed to perceive God. God cannot escape from being boxed as a thing by humans. God assumes thinghood.

The Sabbath tradition was introduced to correct the preoccupation of "thing/space" in human consciousness. The Sabbath is the affirmation of the holiness of time, rejecting the idea that space has any ability to offer spiritual satisfaction for people.

Space-oriented pilgrimage is the corruption inherited from the monarchic political project that seeks to negate the theological understanding of a free relationship between people and God who inhabits with people, and to propose the view that the accessibility of god[19] is a privileged gift that one needs to earn. The monarchic attempt to place god in a 'permanent' 'house' signals this theological shift that led to the conversion of faith in god as a cultic formation which cohabited with sacred spaces, sacred cities, and sacred rituals [2 Samuel 7: 2-3]. Sacred space helps to mediate in order to please a

god to solicit blessings. This theological transposition from a free God to the regulated accessibility is to satisfy the hegemonic interests of the monarchy. The notion of a regulated accessibility to God is the rational foundation that promotes "pilgrimage."

Holiness in Time

A related concept employed by the travel industry along with pilgrimage is the concept of the Sabbath, and it effectively commodified the practice and understanding of the 'Sabbath'. The significance of the seventh day is introduced in the Bible through the tales of the wilderness, where people were offered a new economic lesson of equality while receiving the gift of manna. [Exodus 16: 14-27]. At the heart of this story is an invitation to the ancient society to engage in an economic practice by accepting the gift of receiving what God abundantly offers, while maintaining responsibility, equality and mutual respect. This ancient story also reminds us that what we have, is not created by people, but is the gift of the Creator.[20] Since the material reality is not created by people, they should not maintain any sense of ownership either.

The Exodus and Leviticus narratives on the Sabbath shed more light on the principle of equality. These narratives use two logical instructions: (a) On the seventh day people should cease from all forms of work. In ancient society where social identity was determined through a mechanism of social hierarchy based on the division of labour,[21] ceasing from work ensured the negation of the perceived social identity and the relative social hierarchy of the members of the community. The Sabbath principle is a decisive demand to the ancient communities to negate resolutely all social hierarchies from the organisation of the collective life of the people. The Exodus narrative explicitly unravels this principle of equality by demanding that the Sabbath is for all. [Exodus 20. 10-11] All created beings, including nature, gain subjectivity on the holy day. A subject-object relationship among people, and between people and nature is an aberration of the principle of the Sabbath.

(b) The Leviticus instructions extend the concept of equality into land relationship and other economic activities of the ancient communities. It creates provision for restoring equality in land holding, freedom from debt and from debt slavery. These narratives suggest that freedom and equality are the two regulating normatives of the Sabbath, that people need to observe.

The above knowledge implies that relating the Sabbath to rest/leisure is a misnomer or an aberration. The Sabbath marks the completion of creation.

Heschel observed that there is "a creation on the seventh day. Just as heaven and earth were created in six days, "rest" (*menuha*) was created on the Sabbath"[22] The term *menuha* often translated as rest is not a negative concept. It does not mean a withdrawal from labour, but denotes tranquility, serenity, and peace[23] which need to be gained through constructing equality and freedom.[24] The writer of Psalms equates tranquility and stillness (*menuha*) (Ps. 23) to the essence of good life, and in other traditions tranquility is understood as a synonym for the soteriological promise of God.

On the other hand, "rest" as withdrawal from the drudgery of labour, is a need of an exploitative production relationship. Because rest ensures the capacity of the living labour to maintain his/her invading power over space in order to create more things. Gaining more space (because of the assumption that space satisfies the deepest aspirations) is the objective of the rest promoted by industrial capitalism.

The tourist industry has artfully manipulated the concept of the Sabbath and reduced its meaning to leisure in service of capital. This perverted reading of the biblical concept of the seventh day has assisted the tourist industry around the world to pocket more capital.

Theology of Tourism - a misnomer?

Is it possible to speak of a theology of the corporate-led, market-mediated activity labelled as tourism? Will the term "theology of tourism" be a misnomer?

Two things need to be considered. One, theology is a human language of God. Shoki Coe reminded that theology is an articulation of the response the human makes to the living incarnational events in contemporary history. It is a living process; initiated by the ongoing encounter of the living God in the living history of the humans. This assumption presupposes two things. First, for the articulation of the response of humans, the existence of a human society is assumed. Only a living society could experience the presence of a living God. What is deficient in the world of market-mediated pleasure seeking tourism is a true human society. Personhood is not given, as African philosophy contends[25], but created in the context of a subjective relationship with other persons. According to Ubuntu Philosophy, a person becomes a person through creating an inter-subjective conviviality in which the 'other' becomes a mirror for one's subjectivity. It implies that humanity is not embedded in my individual existence, independent of the other, but co-substantively bestowed upon the other and the self.

Tourism on the other hand prevents an individual from the possibility of becoming a person. A primary perception taken for granted in tourism is that people have the ability to gain fulfillment through interaction with an object, assuming that a subject gains subjecthood by relating with an object.[26] Object in the tourist catalogue is perhaps nature, beaches, ocean front, or objectified humans as prostitutes. This is absolutely erroneous. In the absence of a subjective relationship with another subject, people are deprived of gaining peoplehood/being. Because, the greatest need of a person is another person. A face-to face relationship reinforces an inter-subjective circularity which is the basis of subjecthood. The attempt to seek fulfillment of life through interaction with objects (objectified people or objectified nature) leads to the erosion of people-ness. Tourism reinforces an "it-it" relationship, borrowing from Martin Buber, where persons and nature are objectified as things for consumption.

Secondly, theology of tourism is an incongruity because God is also absent in tourism. Recalling the Platonic understanding of God as the ultimate goodness, Thomas Aquinas observed that God is what is not evil. The doctrinal assertion of 'omnipresence' is a heresy. In evil there is no God, because God is what not evil is. Incarnation of God is the mark of goodness. When the incarnation was crucified darkness enveloped the world. As the evangelists of the gospel narratives observed, at three o'clock, light disappeared from the face of the earth.

It implies that market-led tourism denotes the absence of God, not the presence of God. Tourism depicts the sovereignty of capital and thus theology of tourism is an aberration.

Theology should be a response to the crisis of those who have been objectified by the evil forces of tourism. This warrants a renaming of what is now called as theology of tourism. One of the primary assertions of the poor is their epistemological privilege in knowing God. Aravind P Nirmal who first articulated Dalit theology affirms that the sufferer alone knows God. While making pain/pathos as an epistemological starting point of theology, Nirmal argues for a methodological exclusivism, because only the sufferer has the ability to know God. One may need to qualify that those who are forced to suffer under the dominating system have the exclusive privilege of knowing God.

This assertion has two implications. First, the modern tourist who objectifies the other as exchangeable commodities cannot be a subject of doing theology, even though they too suffer dehumanisation by capital. The

God of the bible is a biased God, being present in the life of the poor and the marginalised. That is to say that the poor and their struggle for life alone are the subject of theology. Modern or post-modern man/woman, who has surplus time and surplus money at his/her disposal and thus travels around the world as tourist, is not a theological subject.

Secondly, language of theology should resonate with the language of the sufferer who experiences and responds to the incarnational event in their living histories. In their language alone there is the vibrant presence of God. The language of the sufferer is not a polemical language, but creative; not oppositional, but celebrative, acknowledging the presence of the Divine in their collective life. Experiencing the presence of the Divine is an expression of hope of the future. Besides, in the language of polemics or the oppositional, the dominant maintain the right to decide the agenda for the debate. On the other hand in the non-polemical creations of the sufferer, the sufferer decides how to express the joy of being in the company of the Divine. Their lamentations, which are not polemical, are confident expressions of hope induced by the presence of the Divine.

The language of modernity has the political function to delegitimise the cosmologies of the sufferer. These cosmologies are the languages through which the sufferer perceives the presence of the Divine. The languages that appear as derivatives of modernity also have modern as the reference point.

Theology thus should return to the language of the sufferer, the women and children who were forced to sell their bodies in the flesh market, the fisher people who lost their right to survive, the farmers who were compelled to abandon farming and produce fictitious products in the tourist market, and the language of all those who were made to suffer by the market-mediated tourist industry.

The theological affirmation (not historical account of the origin of the human) that people are created in the image of God is a statement of responsibility. It is as well a statement of self-understanding of the people about who they are. This statement is not denying the possible presence of/ or image of God in other creations as Lynn White has contended. But being a theological statement, the Genesis – writers were reiterating that because they manifest the image of God, that image imposes the responsibility to witness the righteous, compassionate, and just God in history. All forms of objectifications are maledictions of God since the objectified form represents the fetish.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1. Scrutinise the type and quality of tourism in your region/area from the perspective of 'objectification of the other'. How does it show in the impact on lives of the local people?

2. Is your area/region/country known for pilgrimage sites? How do you critique them as expressions of 'God being boxed in a physical space'? Consider them, and the pilgrimages, in light of the teachings and insights of the prophets.

3. Where do you understand 'theology of tourism'? How do you situate and contextualise theological scrutiny of tourism and its impact? How would you describe and term this undertaking?

Endnotes

1 Gavin Menzies, *1421: The Year China Discovered the World*, (London: Bantam Books, 2002)

2 Keynote speech at the UNWTO Global Tourism Forum, held at Andorra la Vella, Andorra on March 6 to 7, 2011.

3 The theory and practice of international division of labour was expressed by Cecil Rhodes, the British colonialist (who named Rhodesia after himself). He said: "we must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labour that is available from the natives of the colonies. The colonies would also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories." Edward Goldsmith "Development as Colonialism" in *The Case against the Global Economy,* ed. Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith, (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996) p. 254

4 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations,* (New York: The New Press, 2007) p. 41

5 Alvin Y. So, *Social Change and Development: Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990) p. 17-18

6 Naomi Klein *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007)

7 A term used by W.W. Rostow, the chief architect of the modernisation school. Rostow defined traditional society as "one whose structure is developed within limited production functions, based on pre-Newtonian science and technology, and on pre-Newtonian attitudes towards the physical world. Newton is here used as a symbol for that watershed in history when men came widely to believe that the external world was subject to a few knowable laws, and was systematically capable of productive manipulation." *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) p. 4

[8] The concept of commodification refers to an economic order where exchange-value establishes dominance over the use-value, which leads to a consumer society where market relations subsume the dynamics of social relations.

[9] Quoted in global issues.org/poverty/facts

[10] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Massa chusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000) p.13

[11] Thomas Friedman , "What the World Needs Now", *New York Times*, March 28, 1999

[12] The term sex is consciously avoided because of the conviction that sexuality is a gift of God, as well as the law of nature, and thus is a sacred act. Sex is an act of love between two persons having subjecthood. A subject to subject relationship informed by love and commitment. Prostitution industries are not centred on sex, but seeking superficial sensuality in human flesh where a subject devours the flesh of an object.

[13] Sebastian Kappen, *Tradition, Modernity, Counter Culture: An Asian perspective*, (Bangalore: Vistar, 1994, p.97)

[14] Paulo Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 30

[15] Sebastian Kappen, Ibid, p.3

[16] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, (USA: Fortress Press, 1978), 39

[17] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951), p. 79

[18] Ibid. p.3

[19] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, (USA: Fortress Press, 1978), 37

[20] The first law of thermodynamics suggests almost a similar view. This law observes that energy and matter cannot be created. Humans cannot create anything out of nothing. They can only transform what already exist in this universe as gifted by God.

[21] Babasaheb Ambedkar made similar observation regarding the caste system. According to him caste is an hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other.

[22] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951), p.23

[23] Ibid., p.23

[24] Ibid., p.22-23

[25] Nature produces babies and a society creates persons.

[26] What Buber refers as "It-It" relations, see Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958)

9

Tourism and Justice: New Testament Insights

Rienzie Perera

As with the Old Testament, the New Testament is replete with calls for justice, especially for the many who have been marginalised, rejected, and impoverished by the powerful pursuing their self interest. This occurs, of course, because of the prevailing standards and yardstick of the world that are instituted, legitimised, and established as normative for all people by a minority of the privileged and the well connected in society. They go against the very nature of a God who stands with the poor and suffering. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus has strong words to say about the rich who, he suggersts, have already had their reward in this life.

The teachings of the New Testament are relevant wherever and whenever oppression and exploitation emerge. In our world today, marked as it is by shocking inequality, as a result of the lion's share of income, resources, and power being claimed by the 'principalities and powers', mass commercial tourism, one of the largest industries on earth and anchored in global capitalism, impacts on countless human beings in communities across the Global South. The insights presented in this article help to deconstruct this industry in the light of New Testament values.

Introduction

It is a fact that we live in a world where distance has become shortened, communication easy, and travel to any part of the world possible within hours. This has enabled human beings to go beyond their borders to taste

the beauty of God's creation, and break their own parochialism. In various ways, this fact has been asserted as one of the bases for tourism. However, it must be stated that moving beyond one's borders is limited to a particular class of people within nations and among nations. Some are free to move anywhere and anytime, while others are confined and restricted. Therefore, it is important to state at the outset itself that we live in a world which is unjust and favours a few, while a large majority of people created in God's own image do not have equal access to enjoy God's creation entrusted to all humans at the beginning of creation. That is the reason it is recorded in the book of Genesis that the God, who looked at his own creation and said that "everything that he had made…was very good", repents later and says "And the Lord was very sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."[1]

The *Oikoumene* in which Tourism operates

What I state below is the reason for God's heartache, and God grieves over the sin of humankind. According to statistics we could see how human greed has led humans to distort God's creation at the expense of one's neighbour, as the world of tourism displays. This is not merely greed but violence against the other. The victims of this violence are known as the "sinned against". What I intend to do in this section is not to engage in an in depth analysis of the world scene, but to indicate that something is wrong with this world that God saw as good.

Poverty

We are told that 2.4 billion people live on less than $2/day (USD), and roughly 1.2 billion people live on less than $1.25/day (USD) – the definition of "extreme global poverty."

Water

3.4 million people die every year from water-related diseases around the world, and roughly 780 million people do not have access to clean water.

Health

Nearly 11,700 people die every day from HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Close to two-thirds of these people are living in sub-Saharan Africa.

Education

61 million children of primary school age were out of school. More than half

of them (33 million) were in sub-Saharan Africa and a further one fifth (13 million) in Southern Asia.

Women

A woman dies every minute due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

Human Trafficking

Worldwide, there are nearly two million children in the commercial sex trade, many of them caught up in tourism.

Agriculture and Hunger

Malnutrition is the underlying cause of death for at least 3.1 million children, accounting for 45% of all deaths among children under the age of five.[2]

Tourism activity coexists with, and even takes place amidst human beings suffering from such unacceptable and indefensible dimensions of a world of contrasts.

M.P Joseph makes an in depth critique when he gives more statistics and calls it the global apartheid. According to him:

"This is the nature of the global apartheid, which is euphemistically called as the global order that the Empire is morally mandated to protect. This global order, unfortunately, is also a racist order. James Petras pointed that 48% of the largest companies and banks are U.S based and 30% are from the European Union. 'The concentration of U.S economic power is even more evident if we look at the top 25, 72 percent are U.S. owned and the top 100, 57 percent are U.S. owned. Africa and Latin America are absent from the list. The so- called Asian Tigers have 3 companies among the top 500, less than 1 percent."[3] M.P. Joseph makes the following remark which is interesting and disturbing and has implications for the Tourist Industry. According to him:

"If one was to add the share of US, Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and white South Africa, one may find that outside the white world there is hardly any significant form of wealth that exists, except the declining wealth of Japan which now accounts for roughly ten percent"[4]

Globalisation of the "Free Market"

The data given in the preceding section is a reflection of today's socioeconomic system. What is striking now is the degree to which the

current dominant ideology has an economic thrust rather than a political one. Neo-liberalism or free market ideology affirms that free markets, free trade, and competition unfettered by governments and international organisations offer the best solution to the world's needs and thus justify the current difficulties faced by some sectors and nations.

One of the authors found most helpful to understand the present situation is Ulrich Duchrow. In his book, *Alternative to Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action*, published in association with the European Kairos movement, he explains how since 1960s there has been a power shift away from the Keynesian balance of economic and social interests under government regulation, with a commitment to a wider range of social welfare concern, towards a primary commitment to profit and wealth accumulation through regulation, government withdrawal, and increasing submission to the dictates of the marketplace. "The result is that the accumulation of money assets is now the absolute, immutable yardstick for all economic, social, ecological, and political decisions. It is no longer just an aim but a concrete mechanism"[5]

But, the fundamental question is: does commercial tourism liberate or enslave the wretched of the earth or those who are being identified as the "sinned against"?

This power shift is justified by an ideology that is founded upon a peculiar understanding of and commitment to freedom. This ideology is advocated as the freedom of everyone, every social sector, every enterprise, and every country to compete in the market place. The assumption is that all will become more efficient producers and all can effectively gain prosperity. The overwhelming evidence is, however, that this ideology leads rather to the strong becoming stronger and the weak weaker, the rich richer and the poor poorer. As globalisation progresses, we are witnessing economic and social polarisation beyond any previous period in human history.

This is the reason Weibing Zhao said that:

"Tourism is advanced by business and governments alike as a development mechanism which can lift people out of poverty and make them equal partners in society. But regardless of how altruistic this claim may sound, it is doubtful whether those who are intended to benefit – at least according to the rhetoric – have gained nearly as much as those

promoting tourism through corporate globalisation…The tourism sector is tied closely to the globalisation force which pursues profit over justice…"[6] Zhao also says:

"Besides the economic imperialism embedded in the globalization of tourism, socio-cultural and ecological impacts of international tourism on countries also demonstrate some characteristics of imperialism. In the ecological domain, although the development of tourism avoids direct resources exploitation by the advanced capitalist countries, indirect resources exploitation in the form of environmental degradation should not be underestimated."[7]

Tourism in General

In light of the above, I raise the question whether commercial tourism which has become a global industry, and is advocated by people in power and authority as a solution to the issue of poverty, has liberated more than the 2/3rds of the human family from their miserable plight? Today there are different forms of tourism advocated under different names. But, the fundamental question is: does commercial tourism liberate or enslave the wretched of the earth or those who are being identified as the "sinned against"? In this regard it is important to reflect on a comment made by Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) at its 25th anniversary. The following is what they said:

> The facts on the ground and the writings on the wall are clear. Tourism is proving to have severe social costs in the developing world and elsewhere. The entire enterprise is top heavy, and ignores the need and protection of host communities. It violates their dignity and their rights. It degrades the need and protection of host communities. It violates their dignity and their rights. It disregards and 'commodifies' their culture. It abuses their women and children and upsets the balance of their natural surroundings. It exploits workers and is based on patterns of global relationships and transactions that are unjust and inequitable.[8]

This critical stance on commercial tourism is taken further by Fr. Desmond de Souza of Goa, India when he says: "People have been brainwashed into believing that tourism is a new form of liberation for the peoples of the South."

It has been pointed out by critiques of large scale tourism that tourism can and has turned local cultures into commodities where religious rituals, traditional ethnic rites and festivals have been reduced and sanitised to conform

to tourist expectations, resulting in what has been called "reconstructed ethnicity." Some say that once a destination is sold as a tourist product to a multinational company, and when tourism demand for souvenirs, arts, entertainment and other commodities arises, basic changes in human values tend to occur. Sacred sites and objects may not be respected when they are perceived as goods to trade. These incidents have occurred in Sri Lanka, and there are several charges brought against tourists who have desecrated sacred religious sites. We also know that some tourists want to visit other countries and look at sacred sites with respect and veneration. In fact some of them want to travel like pilgrims. But, the way mass tourism is structured, it has become purely for money and leisure. Therefore, from a Christian perspective, the most pertinent question is: whether tourism exists as a "structure of sin," soaked in leisure and money?

Mass and luxury tourism epitomises the blatant injustice of the development process. But, many governments in the southern hemisphere, Sri Lanka included, advocate that tourism is going to boost our economy, provide jobs for the youth, and transform our societies and improve the infrastructure of our countries. This is a blatant lie as many of the Third World countries have not experienced the forecast economic miracle, except a few becoming rich and powerful. Therefore, one can conclude that modern mass and luxury tourism organises human relationships so unjustly that it can be identified as a" structure of sin", and therefore becomes a religious issue to investigate and respond to. To further delve into foundational considerations regarding this topic, I will look at it from the biblical point of view, especially through the teaching of Jesus the Christ.

The Biblical Faith

According to the critical reflections made on the dominant ideologies and economic systems of power, we notice that all these lead to the domination of the vast majority of people scattered throughout the world. Global tourism as shown above is a part of the global socioeconomic structure. Therefore, it is embedded in global structures of exploitation and marginalisation. The story of the Exodus in the Old Testament is the foundational paradigm for the history of salvation, and the ministry and the message of Jesus provide the foundational paradigm for the history of salvation in the New Testament. While looking at the whole enterprise of tourism from the point of view of the New Testament, I wish to offer a few thoughts on the Exodus story and the experience of the people of Israel that provide insights into the issues and concerns of tourism.

Walter Brueggemann in his book, *Hope within History*, summarises the essence of the Exodus experience for the people of Israel. According to him there are three important dimensions of the Exodus experience which are foundational for the formation of Israel's faith. These three are: a) Critique of the dominant theology; b) Public processing of pain, and c) Release of new social imagination.

Therefore, it is important for us to understand how this arrangement of Mammon was at work in the early days and draw insights to understand how global tourism is at work, and expose its exploitative nature and dismantle its structures of deception and falsehood.

The story of Moses and the liberation of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt, narrated in Exodus 1-15, was and continued to be a powerful model for resistance and hope not only for original actors in the story, but their descendants throughout the Old Testament period, and later for Christians and many others who are concerned about human liberation, including in the arena mass commercial tourism.

Jesus' Ministry and Confronting Structures of Sin

It is evident from the four Gospels that the main thrust of Jesus' ministry was teaching about the Reign of God within a context where structural sin or principalities or powers of his day were operative, and people created in God's image were marginalised and denied the opportunities of experiencing the fullness of life. It is from that perspective one has to look at the stories of healing, casting out of evil spirits and forgiveness of sin. William Herzog, in his book, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed*, examines afresh the parables of Jesus using insights from Paulo Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. According to him:

> The parables were not earthly stories with heavenly meanings but earthly stories with heavy meanings…Instead of reiterating the promise of God's intervention in human affairs, they explored how human beings could respond to break the spiral of violence and cycle of poverty created by exploitation and oppression.[9]

Let us look at a few parables from the Gospel according to Luke to see how Jesus addressed the issue of greed and our captivity to Mammon. The parable of the rich fool, Luke 12: 13-21, is set in the context of a squabble over a family inheritance. Jesus begins by warning against the dangers of

greed, "for one's life does not consist of the abundance of possessions." Then, he tells a story about the rich man who produces abundant crops and decides to build larger barns in order to store them, to hoard and accumulate more wealth. His expectation is to enjoy a luxurious lifestyle and be happy for many years, but alas he dies." So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

Ross and Gloria Kinsler in the book *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life*[10] says that this parable was related by Jesus to show how Sabbath economics is negated and people are captive to the economics of accumulation. The reference to the building of larger barns may have brought to Jesus' listeners' minds the experience of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, when they had the task of building the great storage to supply cities to benefit Pharaoh's empire. The death of the rich man, according to the parable, is simply one way of expressing the divine judgement upon that socioeconomic ethic and lifestyle, which proposes abundance for some at the expense of many but ultimately leads to death.

It is from this perspective one has to see the parables and conversion of people like Levi and Zacchaeus, and their subsequent actions were all subversive of the dominant customs and structures of oppression. They were manifestations of Sabbath economics, Jubilee spirituality, and liberty for all God's people.[11]

The Power and Captivity to Mammon

Within this context it is also important to address the the power of Mammon which Jesus rejected outright. According to Kim Yong Bock, the biblical word Mammon is not a demon but simply an Aramaic word meaning "wealth" or "property". Mathew says clearly no one can serve two masters and therefore says that one cannot serve God and Mammon (wealth) (Matt. 6:24). According to him the mammonic nature of global capitalism is not compatible with faith in God. According to Kim, the key points of mammonic ideology are: a) It affirms God's sovereignty over life and the earth, by affirming private ownership of land and property as absolute; b) It also provides unlimited freedom for the corporate agency of the market to override regulations of any kind. This means that its freedom is absolute; c) It also allows the use of any means, including speculation, to maximise profit and satisfy unlimited greed. Further he also says that mammonism is an economic ideology that justifies the victimisation of all living beings in resistance to God, and further the "ecological genocide" of all living beings. Therefore,

he says the power of mammon which is greed in the global capitalist should not only be resisted but rejected.[12]

That is exactly what Jesus did during his earthly ministry by confronting the system of domination. This confrontation is the result of Jesus' proclamation of Reign of God as Jubilee. The Sabbath-Jubilee mandates were a direct challenge to the way power, wealth and religion had been arranged in the 1st century, especially in Palestine. Therefore, it is important for us to understand how this arrangement of Mammon was at work in the early days, and draw insights to understand how global tourism is at work and expose its exploitative nature and dismantle its structures of deception and falsehood.

Despite the benign images advertised by the industry, the enjoyment experienced in holiday destinations by a minority of the world's people, the empty promise of an upliftment from poverty for the many in whose midst tourism often takes place, and the strong support by modern day principalities and powers, in the final analysis make mass tourism, as it is structured today, a system of exploitation of people and nature, of domination by a few who wield the power, control the resources, and benefit handsomely in the whole enterprise. It is grounded in patterns of relationships and arrangements that are unjust and inequitable.

To quote Fr Desmond de Souza again: "A careful analysis of how tourism is structured reveals that it is infected with the virus of capitalist society and encapsulates all its injustices". Its mammonic nature, that it shares by virtue of it being part of global capitalism, provides the basis to analyse it within a structure of sin.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1) Investigate the power imbalance perpetrated by the tourism industry in your region or country, and how this impacts on communities who are disadvantaged, within the framework of 'structure of sin'.
2) How do you understand the statement that 'tourism is infected with the virus of capitalistic society and encapsulates all its injustices' in reference to tourism in your part of the Global South?

Endnotes

[1] Genesis 1: 31: 6:6

[2] UN Report, see also *UN report of Poverty Facts and Stats-Global Issues*. www.globalisues.org/article/26/poverty facts.stats

[3] Quoted by M.P. Joseph from James Petras' article "Who Rules the World", Z Magazine, June 2002 Volume 15 Number 6, in `*They Left By Another Road: Rerouting Mission and Ecumenism in Asia,*' pp 16-17

[4] Ibid p 17

[5] Ulrich Duchrow, *Alternative to Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action*, Utrect, Holland: International Books, 1995, p 71

[6] Weibing Zhao, " Globalization of Tourism and Third World Tourism Development-Apolitical Economy Perspective," web; also read D.G Reid, *Tourism, Globalization and Development: Responsible Tourism Planning*, London: Pluto Press.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Caesar D'Mello, "Introduction : Questioning Tourism" in `Transforming , Re-Forming Tourism' (ed) Caesar D' Mello, ECOT, Chiangmai, 2007, p 9

[9] William R. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed*, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1994, p 3

[10] Ross Kinsler and Gloria Kinsler, *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life*, Maryknoll: New york, 1999, pp 88ff

[11] Ibid, p 120

[12] Kim Yong Bock, "The Theological Reflection on the Economic Crisis" in *Justice not Greed*, Pamela Brubaker and Roger Mshana (Ed), Geneva: WCC, 2010, pp 210-211.

10

Tourism and Conflict:
A Perspective from the Kairos Palestine Experience and Holy Land Tourism

Rifat Odeh Kassis

Tourism often serves governments in presenting favourable national self-portraits to international visitors. It is also urged by some as a tool of peace building and understanding between nations, between peoples. Conflict-ridden societies and countries, too, turn to tourism to depict a positive image of themselves to the wider world that may be at variance with reality, and the experience of victims. In Sri Lanka, as its ethnic conflict of three decades is officially at an end, its government, with the encouragement and assistance of international financial institutions, has now embarked upon an extensive tourism programme that will feature areas devastated by the long struggle.

The Palestinian-Israel conflict is a crucial one for our times that has ramifications for world peace. A region where the Holy Land is sited obviously attracts pilgrimages from around the world that are strongly promoted by the Israeli government. But it is a tourism from which the benefits for Palestinians are miniscule despite their links with the holy places. This article is written from a perspective informed by "A Moment of Truth", also known as the Kairos Palestine document, issued in 2009, and framed around the burning issues of Palestinian self-determination in the face of a continuing and ever tightening control by Israel.

This article's ideas and insights into ways of understanding conflict in relationship with tourism invite study, reflection, and analyses in other relevant parts of the Global South.

An Introduction to Kairos Palestine

As the Kairos Palestine group – co-authors of the document "A Moment of Truth," which is Christian Palestinians' word to the world about the occupation of Palestine and a call for support in establishing a just peace – we try to reflect often and deeply on what it means *to see*.

With the Kairos Document (launched in December 2009), as well as in our subsequent advocacy, we address ourselves, in hopes of truly seeing and responding to our reality, our history, and our rights. We address the churches and Christians of the world, in hopes that they will truly see the injustices of this reality, and that they will take up the responsibility of solidarity in order to walk and work beside us along the path to justice. And we address the international community at large, in hopes that they will see the complicity of their own governments in our oppression and work to hold them accountable.

We believe that a true, full, three-dimensional vision of the truth – a vision informed not by what you are told to see, but by what your senses plainly say about the world before you – is crucial for effective and compassionate action. In this way, Kairos Palestine also believes in facilitating the "sight" of the many people who visit our land: tourists and pilgrims.

The Troubled Relationship Between Tourism and Conflict

To be a tourist is to play an unusual role.

You arrive to a place you have never seen before with the knowledge that you will leave it as abruptly as you came. You stay for a few hours, a few days, a few weeks in some cases. You explore; perhaps you read a book that tells you where to go, or pay a person who will take you there; you take pictures; you look and look and look, and what you see will be the only material with which you can try to make sense of where you are.

Maybe you meet lots of different people, chat, joke, ask questions; maybe you stay within the confines of your tour group and focus on the amplified announcements of your guide. Perhaps you are cognisant of skimming the surface of a place, any place, too complex to interpret on your own and after so brief a time. Perhaps you realise that the information offered to you is in itself a purposeful narrative that will demand your acceptance, your affirmation, often at the exclusion of other narratives. Perhaps you do not.

In these ways and others, tourism is a heavily political business anywhere you go, whether or not the politics are advertised. When it comes to tourism

in places of conflict, this is all especially true, and it raises many crucial questions:

What does it mean to be a tourist in a place of conflict? How can you be sure of what you are seeing? What must you do with the narratives you receive when the narratives themselves are at odds? Who has power over those narratives and who does not? How do you know you are not contributing to a situation of injustice? What are your responsibilities?

Before I go on to discuss the ways that these particular questions – and some of their answers – figure in the context of Palestine and Israel, I would like to put forth several passages from important articles written on these subjects. I find these passages to be particularly relevant lines of thought with respect to the overarching concerns at work in situations of tourism and conflict.

Martha Honey, co-director of the Center for Responsible Tourism (CREST) writes in her article, "It is *responsible tourism,* not simply conventional or mass tourism[,] that holds the potential to prevent conflict and promote peace" (the italics are hers). Honey goes on to describe many of the simplistic circumstances and damaging tensions that exacerbate injustices in situations of tourism and conflict: "…creating the connection between tourism and peace requires that the conditions on both sides of the equation be right: peace must be more than an absence of conflict, and tourism must be crafted so that it truly benefits local communities and the environment ..." Honey stresses that "tourism developments that come in from the outside without respecting and working with the local communities can exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts; they can also give rise to new injustices, inequities, and conflicts."

In short, Honey reminds that we must pay attention not just to how tourism narrates conflict, but also to how it may *inflame* conflict. And, importantly, she emphasises that the purposes for tourism must be just and beneficial for local communities – thus working to actually peace and justice, not stifle or intensify existing conditions of inequality.

In their article "*Tourism armed Conflict: Consequences, Copings, and Creativity for Peace-Building through Tourism in Nepal,*" authors Pranil Kumar Upadhayaya, Ulrike Müller-Böker, and Sagar Raj Sharma address the crucial issue of the international media and government advisories as influences – for better or worse – in promoting or destroying the possibility of just tourism. Describing the international response to the Maoist presence

What does it mean to be a tourist in a place of conflict? How can you be sure of what you are seeing? What must you do with the narratives you receive when the narratives themselves are at odds? Who has power over those narratives and who does not? How do you know you are not contributing to a situation of injustice? What are your responsibilities?

in Nepal, the authors write, "USA is the only country in the post-conflict period which has continued to issue negative advisories…such an unrealistically negative travel advisory is associated with power relations and uses tourism as a political tool…"

This emphasis on external portrayals of a local context – whether to encourage tourism to a particular place or to discourage it – will be important to remember as we continue our discussion of tourism in the Palestinian and Israeli context.

To approach that context, then, several different forms that international tourism can take in Palestine and Israel are now discussed: tourism organised directly by Israel itself; tourism organised by other countries, including religious pilgrimages, with Israel's coordination and approval; Birthright Israel programmes as a particularly deliberate tourism campaign; and "political thrill" tourism. Each of these forms will reveal a different facet of the political agendas at work in the tourist industry – and at work in shaping the terms of the conflict itself.

The Many Faces of Tourism in Palestine/Israel

Tourism organised by Israel itself

Over time, and particularly since 1967, Palestine's historical, cultural and religious heritage has been exploited to serve Israel's political and commercial interests at the expense of Palestinian identity, dignity, and economic autonomy. Not only do most tourists remain ignorant of Palestine's cultural richness, but they also tend to be provided – as a matter of overt Israeli policy – with a distorted (positive) image of the Israeli state and a distorted (negative) image of Palestinian society. Israel knows that tourism is its window to the world: a first, powerful glimpse onto the image it wishes to project, as well as a way to mould and control this image. In this sense, tourism is also a tool that Israel uses to market itself as a civilised democratic country.

Most countries use tourism to market themselves; this idea may be acceptable as a general objective. But, in the case of Israel, its strategy is

not to market *itself*; rather, it works to demonise the Palestinians, vilifying their narrative and stripping them of the places, resources and rights involved in telling it. During the past decades, Israel has actively prevented Palestinians from taking the initiative, let alone the lead, in their own tourism. Indeed, since Israel controls all borders, regulates all movement, and maintains exclusive authority over who can (and cannot) enter and travel about, impeding Palestinian-led tourism is just another tactic employed by a comprehensive occupation.

As generally occurs with tourism in areas of injustice, Israeli-led tourism either ignores the injustice altogether or manipulates reality on the ground to elicit sympathy. There are tours of natural wonders like Masada, the Dead Sea, the deserts; circuits through Holy Land highlights like the Old City of Jerusalem, the centre of Bethlehem, the city of Nazareth; trips to Israeli beach towns, or the posh downtown area of Tel Aviv – and in all of these "packages" of sights and settings, the messages are virtually the same. The "natural wonders" are offered up like jewels on display, omitting the history (and continuous reality) of Palestinian dispossession and ethnic cleansing from those very places. Jerusalem and all other holy sites are presented as the spiritual and symbolic property of Israel alone, as if the Palestinians had never lived and worshipped there all along – and as if they did not exist today, either. Tel Aviv is shown off as a city so modern and cosmopolitan that it is "practically Western" – immediately urging tourists to compare it with New York, Paris, other cities known for expensive clothes and sidewalk cafés and unwavering democracy. Such tourism implies: *all of this belongs to us.* It scoffs: *there is no conflict.* It amends: *all right, maybe there is – but this is our right. Anyone who claims otherwise is bitter, hostile, backwards*.

Such tourism also includes a scathing afterthought: *and don't go to the West Bank. It's dangerous.*

Tourism organised by other countries in coordination with Israel

These strategies of distortion and repression are present not only in tourist initiatives led directly by Israel, but also in those funded and organised in other countries. And this is the case not just for standard tourists, but also for pilgrims: pilgrimages, too, have been successfully monopolised by the Israeli tourism industry and its accompanying political agenda. Beginning with coordinated Israeli propaganda at home, before their trips, tourists (including pilgrims) are received in Israel by Israeli tour guides,

accommodated in Israeli hotels, and accompanied by Israeli stories and Zionist interpretations of the Old Testament. While visiting the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, an Israeli tour guide may offer a quip about Arab backwardness or a warning about Arabs' exploitative nature; they may be discouraged from wandering beyond the immediate vicinity of the touristic zone and from patronising Palestinian businesses; they are then ushered back onto their buses and sped through the checkpoint back to Jerusalem, which few Palestinians around them are permitted to do – a reality that the tourists may never be told.

The tourists then return to their home countries bearing not only souvenirs, but also the impressions made upon them during their visit. They have been made to feel sympathy and admiration for tiny, peaceful Israel, "the only democracy in the Middle East," surrounded by Arabs who "want to destroy it." They have visited our lands and walked our roads, but we have been prevented from telling our own stories, recounting our own history, selling our own wares, and asserting ourselves, too, as a real community composed of real human beings with rights to be upheld and truths to be told. What Palestinians "gain" from the Israeli tourist industry is a total of 2 million people worldwide – the number of visitors every single year – who have been conditioned to deprecate and distrust us without ever knowing or even seeing us.

Birthright Israel

Taglit-Birthright Israel, an organisation that funds free ten-day "heritage trips" for Jewish young adults around the world, is Israeli-run tourism at its most extreme. These programmes consist of tightly scheduled trips and activities that are designed to paint the rosiest possible portrait of Israel for Jewish youth – and encourage them to consider Israel as their own, as their natural and rightful "home." Contact with areas inhabited by Palestinians is basically prohibited, political questions are discouraged, fraternising with Israeli soldiers (who accompany each group for several days) is definitely encouraged, the country as a whole is presented as a kind of summer camp. Facilitated by a staggering budget and defined by systematic censorship, the Birthright programmes are nothing short of propaganda tourism. If we consider the implications of the name alone (*birthright*, promoting the idea that anyone Jewish anywhere in the world can and should think of Israel as a land to which they are literally owed), and then consider the millions of Palestinian refugees around the world who are forbidden from ever setting

foot again on the soil from which they were expelled, the hypocrisy of such tourism becomes even more outrageous.

"*Political thrill" tourism*

The types of tourism discussed so far are all fuelled by a certain right-wing, nationalistic agenda. But it would be naïve to think that this is the only political orientation to generate opportunistic or insensitive tourism. Even visitors seeking to meet Palestinians and express solidarity with the Palestinian struggle can commit the error of looking without seeing. This kind of tourism could be termed "political thrill" tourism: people who come to Palestine, travel around, are shocked by the occupation, attend a demonstration or two, run from a blast of tear gas like everyone else, feel the adrenaline rush, and go home to tell *their* story. termed to "political thrill" tourism: people who come to Palestine, travel around, are shocked by the occupation, attend a demonstration or two, run from a blast of tear gas like everyone else. By no means do I wish to criticise or hamper the instinct toward solidarity, toward true joint work, toward true spiritual or political accompaniment. This, indeed, is exactly the kind of cooperation and collaboration we need. However, the distinction is that real solidarity is brought about by really *seeing*. Political thrill tourism is something else altogether – and while it does not vilify Palestinians like many other kinds of tourism, it exoticises us instead, which is damaging and insulting in its own way. True international solidarity is carried out with humility, respect, and self-questioning.

Consequences of Tourism in Palestine

Attention has been drawn already to various damaging consequences of tourism, but it is important to address them in more detail and as explicitly as possible.

Exclusive historical narratives

Israel's policies and politics of tourism are in line with its policies and politics of occupation in general: they seek to erase Palestine's narrative from the map, appropriating its geography and history to stake Israel's claim on the land. Renaming historical sites, discouraging tourists from interacting with Palestinians, and controlling visits and tour guides are all tactics to further fragment and isolate Palestinian culture from the rest of the world – and from Palestinians' right to their own narrative.

Even the least overtly political tourism – such as tours of natural areas

in Palestine/Israel, like the Naqab Desert (the Hebrew name is Negev) or the Dead Sea – are studies in political whitewashing. Tours that emphasise the glories of the natural landscape are careful to omit the past and present stories of Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land and expulsion of Palestinian communities. For instance, Israel has demolished the same Bedouin community in Al-Araqib, a village in the Naqab, countless times, as Israel intends to use its land for a new forestation project – a contemporary example of touristic initiatives literally bulldozing Palestinian life.

Cultivated prejudice

As the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT) has written, "Tourism promotes the wrong assumption that people have the ability to gain fulfillment through interaction with objects, like nature, beaches, or objectified humans…and that a subject gains subjecthood by relating with an object. In the absence of a subject to subject relationship, people are deprived of their human dignity. Interaction with objectified people or nature leads to the erosion of peopleness. All forms of objectifications are anathema to God in whose image we are created." (Statement from the ECOT Consultation on the Theology of Tourism, 21 March, 2011)

In the case of Palestine, the concept "objectified people" does not necessarily refer to situations of commercial or sexual exploitation, as the term is often used in other contexts of conflict. But it certainly refers to the way in which tourism – in conjunction with the Israeli occupation itself – portrays Palestinians as backwards, or savage, or innately violent, or bloodthirsty fanatics. This kind of objectification, skillfully and persistently employed by the Israeli state in its warnings against travelling to Palestinian areas or engaging with Palestinians, promotes toxic stereotypes that intensify racism both within Israel and around the world – in a contemporary global environment that is commonly fearful of and hostile towards Arabs in general.

Another example of how Israel combines tourism and the cultivation of anti-Palestinian prejudice occurs on a daily basis on its own borders: any tourist who has flown in and out of Ben Gurion Airport, for example, can tell you about how rigorously and specifically she was questioned about where exactly she had gone, who she had met, what she had bought, and so forth. Airport agents ask tourists outright if they know any Arabs – and, if so, what their names are, what they do for a living, where they live, where they know each other. In the airport, Israel makes no effort to hide its intimidation and sinister intelligence work against Palestinians, stigmatising and tacitly

punishing visits to Palestine and contact with its inhabitants. This attitude is merely unpleasant for tourists – who, after all, can always just go home. Their questioning in the airport is barely a fraction of what most Palestinians endure every single day, and with incomparably graver consequences. But the strategy with tourists is indirectly destructive to Palestinians, as it perpetuates racism and segregation and increases the stigmatisation of their land and culture.

Economic damage

In controlling the tourist industry as it does – both in directly organising tourism and by banking on the images of the Holy Land that encourage mass tourism in general – the economic profit for Israel is extraordinary. But not only that: this profit is coordinated and monopolised through Israel's control over Palestinian land and movement, which means, in turn, that *this profit emerges from the occupation itself.*

As ECOT thoughtfully expresses, "The *diakonia* call of the Gospel that enjoins we should act for our neighbour and social justice, leads us to seek a basis for our analysis of tourism that is not dictated by those who profit from it, some of the powers and principalities of the day. It is incumbent on us that we assess and critique tourism from the perspective of the victims of tourism development that is anchored in the economic and political structures of today. The human cost of an industry so shaped is paid by the vulnerable in the local communities, including women, children, indigenous peoples, those dispossessed of their land, and others marginalised. They are close to the heart of a compassionate God, and it is their reality that should guide and inform our critique." (See Caesar D'Mello, *Alternative Tourism as an Ecumenical Challenge for Justice in Asia,* in Handbook for Theological Education and Ecumenism, Antone, Longchar, Hyunju, Huang, Werner, eds., Regnum Studies in Global; Christianity, 2013)

To extend these thoughts in the Palestinian context, the dominant tourist industry in Palestine/Israel not only perpetuates injustice; it is actually built upon it.

Furthermore, this dominant industry, in conjunction with the occupation itself, actively damages the Palestinian economy. Earlier, the example of tours to Bethlehem has been mentioned – one of the few standard stops that Israeli-run and –sanctioned tours tend to make in the occupied Palestinian territories, due to its fame in general and specific primacy for Christian pilgrims. In this way, Bethlehem has become a bona fide tourist destination

– and yet it is a region of profound economic strain. Tour buses flow into Bethlehem and take their passengers virtually to the door of the church; tourists are often advised against straying from the immediate commercial circuit, which covers a couple blocks in either direction from the church. Thus, not only do Israeli-run tourist agencies have a monopoly over the Bethlehem area, but they also actively limit foreign patronage of Palestinian businesses. In a region surrounded by walls and checkpoints – and where residents are restricted from accessing employment opportunities, health services, educational institutions, and spiritual sites beyond their occupation-imposed ghetto – the Bethlehem economy suffers, rendered simultaneously dependent on Israel's own economy and stunted by it. The thousands of visitors every day are more of a taunt than an opportunity.

The erosion of solidarity

Tourism to Israel/Palestine is certainly well-represented by Western countries that maintain cosy relationships with Israel: the United States, various European nations, and so forth. Increasingly, however, we have seen waves of tourism from the global South, fostered both by the popularity of Holy Land tours in general or by the specific appeal of spiritual pilgrimage. Not necessarily but frequently Christian, scores of tourists visit Jerusalem and other sites from Nigeria, China, India, Brazil ... As both Palestinians and Christians who believe in the transformative power of social and spiritual solidarity, it wounds us that Israel's touristic campaigns have been so effective that they thwart connections among Southern communities. It wounds us that our brothers and sisters from other parts of the South, with whom we could share so much – and *do* share so much – are systematically prevented from recognising their affinity with us. In this way occupation-orchestrated tourism not only fragments and segregates Palestinian communities from each other, not only Palestinian and Israeli communities from each other, not only Northern and Southern communities from each other, but also Southern communities from each other. It pre-empts solidarity itself, which makes it all the more important for us to strengthen our own channels of communication, to expand our own opportunities for connection, to share our own narratives, to speak them together.

Early Attempts at Tourism from Within

In recent years, Palestinians have been trying to counter the unjust restrictions imposed by the tourism industry and to put themselves on the map – in both literal and metaphorical senses. Alternative and authentic tourism groups

have flourished in Palestine as a way to secure a new kind of tourism, tourism from within, that tells our stories and speaks our truth. Predictably, Israel recognises the power of these alternative tours and continues placing

> Even visitors seeking to meet Palestinians and express solidarity with the Palestinian struggle can commit the error of looking without seeing. This kind of tourism could be termed "political thrill" tourism: people who come to Palestine, travel around, are shocked by the occupation, attend a demonstration or two, run from a blast of tear gas like everyone else, feel the adrenaline rush, and go home to tell *their* story.

obstacles in their path. But Palestinian tourism has already gained great momentum, and its participants are determined to keep building its networks, resources, and communities of supporters.

To bridge divides, to refute inequality, and to find a new role as advocates, a group of five people (including this writer) established the Alternative Tourism Group (ATG) in 1995 – a trial initiative to introduce our land from within, giving tourists and pilgrims a chance to make contact with us and hear our narrative.

Throughout the past 16 years, ATG has been successful in attracting a range of tourists, religious pilgrims, and solidarity groups, seeking to enrich their knowledge and understanding of political issues in Palestine by organising tours to areas generally ignored by tour operators. The ATG's fundamental purpose lies in the concept of Justice Tourism: ethical in formulation, spiritual in orientation, and placing human dignity at the core of the touristic project. Justice Tourism encourages people to encourage others as equals, place cultures and religions in dialogue, celebrate discovery of the unknown, and celebrate previously unfamiliar perspectives.

In large part, ATG was founded to fill a void: many Palestinians felt that their political and cultural realities were not adequately expressed or responded to by standard pilgrim-oriented tourism. Indeed, pilgrim-oriented tourism itself is under threat, due to the land-grabs and movement restrictions imposed by the Separation Wall and other occupation policies, damaging (as previously discussed) tourism to previously thriving sites like Bethlehem. As an answer to these losses, ATG was created to promote Palestinian cultural heritage through tourism as a way to bring greater economic strength to Palestinian

areas. As ATG has expressed in its internal statements, "Whilst expressing these grassroots dynamics in a non-party-affiliated (even apolitical) way, the Alternative Tourism Group therefore sees itself as fundamentally promoting the welfare and benefit of its native culture and people, for the enjoyment, enlightenment and revelation of intelligent world tourists, so that Palestinian society may take its place in the community of nations, as experienced by visitors from other communities. For a community whose nationhood and culture have for so long been denied, whether as a fact or at negotiations, this healing process is long overdue."

In 2004, ATG began a fruitful relationship with the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), an organisation committed to promote a paradigm of tourism by means of which tourism becomes a quest for spirituality through encounters, a quest in search of God's truth. Within this paradigm, a traveller can make the choice to seek people-to-people encounters, a path that leads to mutuality, solidarity, and the real discovery of human community.

Following the establishment of its relationship with ECOT, ATG engaged in extensive preparation work for the fifth World Social Forum. Starting with this process, ATG strengthened its ties to another relationship: Golan for Development (GD). ATG and GD have subsequently worked together to organise solidarity work in the occupied Syrian Golan, projects that have expanded through alliances with other actors in the network comprising the Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI).

ATG has also played a key role in establishing the Palestinian Initiative for Responsible Tourism (PIRT), a network involving multiple NGOs and other institutions like Holy Land Trust, the Siraj Center for Holy Land Studies, the Network for Christian Organizations in Bethlehem, the Joint Advocacy Initiative, the Jerusalem Inter-Church Center, and Bethlehem University; it later expanded to include the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Holy Land Association for Incoming Tourism, and the Arab Hotel Association. This open network – which individuals and local institutions, organisations, and companies who share its vision may join – focuses on analysing the tourism industry in Palestine by identifying the difficulties and threats that the occupation imposes on tourism, as well as on discussing the internal obstacles suffered by Palestinian tourism. PIRT is committed to transforming tourism in Palestine so that it benefits local communities, enables encounters between tourists and host communities, and works for more just and equitable tourism to the Holy Land.

With ATG, then – and with ATG's projects carried out in cooperation

with other justice-focused organisations – substantial progress was made. But it was not enough. Indeed, it was crucial to involve the international churches, since they are one of the principal coordinators of pilgrimages to the Holy Land. This need led to a major idea presented in the Kairos Document, and which became one of the document's most important calls: "Come and See."

Kairos and the "Come and See"

Kairos Palestine believes in the fundamental importance of its call to "Come and See." Kairos emphasises the power of "seeing" because we believe that for many people of goodwill – as is true of the many tourists who come to visit Israel and Palestine – a clear vision of the reality around them is enough for them to be transformed. Kairos knows many people for whom this is the case.

There are obstacles at work too: many people come to Palestine, but they do not see. Many look at what is around them, but they still do not see. The "Come and See" call was borne of the belief in the significance of tourism as an economic and political force that can effectively and truthfully advocate for the Palestinian struggle for peace with justice within a context of Palestinian-organised tours. We believe, then, not only in the potential solidarity manifested by such tourism, but by the power of what it can enact with consciousness, information, and sincerity.

With "Come and See," tourists are urged to experience Palestine from within. Accommodated in Palestinian regions, tourists are greeted by Palestinian hospitality and introduced to the rich Palestinian culture by means of the voices, hands, stories, and lives of Palestinian individuals and communities eager to deliver the truth and forge connections. While the commercial effects of the tourist industry cannot be underestimated, its political capacity to create strong advocacy for the Palestinian cause –not just during a tourist's visit but after his or her return home – holds even greater value and significance. Living among Palestinians and accompanied by their tour guides, tourists come to more fully understand and appreciate the Palestinian people, learning to identify with them and comprehend the continuous injustices committed against them by the history and actuality of occupation.

By no means does the "Come and See" call seek to garner sympathy or rally support in the many ways that such feelings can opportunistically be evoked. We seek truthfulness – truthful communications of our reality, truthful

connections with those who visit us within it – not melodrama or pity. For this reason, we aim to introduce Palestine in all its cultural, historical, and religious richness, unaltered by Zionist influence, to international tourists – many of whom hail from Western countries and are familiar only with the pro-Israel, anti-Palestinian rhetoric of those countries. The "Come and See" call allows Palestine to speak for itself, to present its people and their identity with thoroughness and sincerity. This clarity of experience, too, will speak for itself, leading to more enlightened attitudes toward Palestinians, our reality, and our work for a just peace.

Two other important initiatives have been developed to accompany tourists and pilgrims on their trips to Palestine, both in the spirit of the "Come and See" call. First, during a theological consultation about the call that was conducted in Geneva in May 2010, Kairos Palestine together with ATG, the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT), the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) launched an educational guidebook to assist churches and pilgrims in preparing themselves for travelling to the Holy Land. And one year prior, various ecumenical institutions participated in the Palestinian Initiative for Responsible Tourism (PIRT), spearheaded by ATG and Kairos Palestine, to draft and adopt a code of ethics for tourists: a crucial set of guidelines to ensure that tourists, however inadvertently, do not hurt Palestinians or invest in the Israeli occupation and/or fall in the monopoly of Israel for the Holy Land narrative.

I will now raise 20 points, divided into four different subjects, to explain the power of seeing, especially in a conflict zone, and why we need people to truly open their eyes.

A. When Do We Need Kairos Pilgrimages?

1. When the "See" becomes easier for tourists than for indigenous communities.

Palestinians are not free to "travel" in their own home: this means that many sights, many forms of seeing, are denied to them. As a result of the illegal Israeli occupation, Palestinians' daily lives are controlled by roadblocks, checkpoints (both established permanent ones and temporary checkpoints set up without any prior warning), draconian permit systems, and other restrictions. Due to the enclosure of Jerusalem, most Palestinians (both Christians and Muslims) are unable to physically access their major religious and touristic sites.

Tourism, in addition to being a cultural enterprise, is obviously an economic

one. Since Israel monopolises the tourist industry, as well as its corresponding narratives and resources, they also monopolise the profits that result. For Palestinians, this adds insult to injury: not only does Israel prevent Palestinian access to their own lands, holy sites, and stories, it also prevents their access to the income generated by tourism. Given that the Palestinian economy has already been strangled by occupation – rendered dependent on the Israeli economy even from the other side of the wall – this is yet another act of injustice.

Israel's monopoly over tourism is also used to score political points in the eyes of the international community. A poll conducted in 2012 by the BBC and Globescan surveyed over 22,000 participants across 22 countries about the countries that have the worst influence in the world. Israel ranked third, along with North Korea, following Iran and Pakistan. The reason why they ranked third, not first, is that some African countries gave them good marks – like Nigeria, for instance, which has a high rate of tourism to Israel. So, tourism has a direct impact on masking political realities, not to mention painting them in rosier colours in the political arena.

2. When the "See" is perceived as a threat to national security and is confronted and fought against.

Many people around the world have already "seen" the truth of the Israeli occupation and engage in public nonviolent actions to show what they see. Israel does not like this, of course, and tries to stop them. There are many examples: the Gaza-bound Freedom Flotilla (which was invaded by the Israeli army in international waters, ultimately killing nine activists and injuring many others); the "Welcome to Palestine" campaign, where people from many different countries peacefully try to enter Israel while stating that they intend to visit Palestine (Israel denies entry to most and deports them on grounds of being "pro-Palestine"); the conference "Christ at the Checkpoint," which gathered over 600 international and local Christians in Bethlehem to address the issue of how to find hope in the midst of conflict.

Israeli opposition to these events only sharpens the focus of our sight.

3. When the state monopolises the "seeing" industry and turns it into a tool to justify its own oppression and brutality.

This was discussed earlier with respect to Israel's manipulation of tourism in order to whitewash its image before the international community.

Justice Tourism: ethical in formulation, spiritual in orientation, and placing human dignity at the core of the touristic project. Justice Tourism encourages people to encourage others as equals, place cultures and religions in dialogue, celebrate discovery of the unknown, and celebrate previously unfamiliar perspectives.

4. When the tourist comes to our home thinking that he is visiting the Holy Land – while, in reality, he is visiting a land without holiness, where the dignity of God's creation is humiliated on a daily basis.

Such a country cannot be legitimately called a holy land. Maintaining this illusion – both due to the people leading tours and the people who participate in them – does not bring hope to this land, as many visitors think. On the contrary: it removes hope.

5. When the oppressed indigenous adopt the narrative of the oppressor because they fear losing their jobs.

Some Palestinian tourist guides have come to call the West Bank "Judea and Samaria," in accordance with the official Israeli discourse, or refer to all our land as "disputed land." This is the result of fear: fear of being reprimanded or fired. And it speaks to an urgent need for Kairos Palestine, for Kairos pilgrimages, for a kind of tourism that not only respects Palestinian dignity but is also produced by it.

We are not simply proposing that indigenous communities get a higher percentage of the tourism "cake." The need, rather, is a complete transformation of the system itself.

B. When Can We Call a Pilgrimage a "Kairos Pilgrimage"?

1. When the "See" becomes a necessary step in the journey of a spiritual pilgrim.

In this sense, we understand the spiritual necessity of the "See" as answering needs beyond those found in an exclusively spiritual context. The *hajj*, for instance, is not a journey undertaken for comfort: rather, it is undertaken out of concern for a person's spiritual, emotional, intellectual and social wellbeing.

The "See" is an expression of commitment to the other; of understanding that, along with the other, I am a link in a chain.

2. When the "See" becomes a step based on will and determination, not a step taken by accident.

"Looking" means you are simply in a certain place at a certain time. "Seeing" means you actively involve yourself with what surrounds you.

3. When the "See" becomes an act of repentance for the sins of silence and ignorance.

Every human being is implicated in his or her community, in the actions of that community, in the omissions of that community. "Seeing," while it may be an individual gesture, can only occur by assuming collective responsibility. If we have looked away from injustice before, we must repent for having looked away, and we must then look farther inward than ever before.

4. When the "See" becomes an experience of living and walking with the oppressed, not just talk about them.

In earlier eras, pilgrimages lasted for many years to cover the same distance! In this way, then, the distance was *part* of the pilgrimage. Today, given all the speed we live with – the speed of technology, of transportation – we must find new ways to grasp the obligations of and commitment to pilgrimage. We could say that we must develop a "same distance" spirituality.

5. When the "See" becomes a true journey to solidarity.

One starts from bias (a state of being against someone) and travels to a change of belief; from changing the belief to scepticism; from scepticism to committed engagement and involvement, to true accompaniment and solidarity.

C. When Must We Be Careful?

1. When the "See" becomes an alternative to action.

"Come and See" is a beginning, not a conclusion. What must follow is "go back and witness."

2. When the "See" takes much longer than the desired result.

It is not enough for people to simply see and not act; seeing must not replace action.

3. When the "See" takes the form of normalisation with the occupier.

Today, some Palestinian officials call upon Arabs and Muslims to go visit Jerusalem. One needs to be careful: this could be seen as an act on normalisation with the occupation. In other words, it addresses people as if the situation on the ground were normal, as if Israel were a country that actually respected freedom of worship, when this is not the case in any sense. Indeed, Israel interpreted these calls as recognition of their democracy. But it must not be forgotten that, in reality, Israel is a country that systematically denies the indigenous people, the Palestinians, the right to visit their holy sites and pray there. Such a country cannot truly be democratic or civilised, and we must not credit it with being these things before it respects our rights in a democratic and civilised way.

4. *When the oppressed look at the "See" simply as an industry they need to compete in and forget the original goal, which is solidarity and action.*

Part of the complexity of "seeing" is that it involves a relationship: your vision reaches out to someone or something that in some way reaches back. It is not only the visitors who must "see" the oppressed: the oppressed must "see" the visitors, too. The oppressed must not become passive or instrumental in the act of seeing; they must participate in it. Only then can solidarity take root.

5. *When the "See" becomes restricted to the rich and those able to secure a visa.*

We need to detach ourselves from the idea that the matter in hand is only tourism. It is much, much bigger than tourism: what we are calling for is a fundamental act of advocacy and solidarity, and then making this act into a broader practice. This is the great challenge we are faced with today.

D. When Do We Bear the Fruits of the Kairos "See"?

1. *When it becomes an act of conscious struggle.*

   … not simply a goal to be fulfilled, a task to be completed, or an idea to be contemplated alone.

2. *When it becomes an act serious solidarity…*

   … despite all the propaganda against tourism in Palestine and its supposed "dangers," in addition to all the negative stereotypes about Palestinians.

3. *When it becomes a platform for continuous education.*

   Kairos pilgrimages remain powerful and productive when accompanied by materials that are easy to use and understand, and when based on planning, coordination, cooperation, and a thorough database.

4. *When the Palestinian tourism capital realises that dignity comes first and financial benefits come second.*

   Just as we Palestinians must refuse to let others objectify us, we must also refuse to objectify ourselves. Occupation tries to strip us of our dignity; we must remember that our dignity is our treasure precisely because it is our right.

5. *When all of us – both pilgrims and Palestinians – are transformed.*

   To quote "Theological Reflections on Tourism" by ECTWT/ECOT in 1985, "To talk of a theology of tourism is to seek a contextual theology in the midst of our historical involvement with the issues of Third World tourism, which will establish the human in the midst of the inhuman, the just in the midst of the unjust, the participating in the midst of dominating, the delivering in the midst of captivity. It must reveal how our faith in God opens up to the possibilities of human freedom, and points to a better human society for which we must work."

   To experience the possibilities of human freedom – together – is indeed to be transformed.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this article, I quoted a passage by Martha Honey that I would like to return to now: "It is *responsible tourism,*" she writes, "not simply conventional or mass tourism[,] that holds the potential to prevent conflict and promote peace."

And now, in conclusion – after examining many aspects of tourism and conflict in general, the multiple faces of unjust tourism in Palestine, the consequences of such tourism, the previous attempts at Justice Tourism from within, and the crucial calls of the "Come and See" – the true meaning of Honey's phrase, "responsible tourism," is clearer, as is its relationship to the prevention of conflict and the promotion of peace.

In other words, this relationship is not a straightforward or an immediate one: it is not that responsible tourism singlehandedly ends conflict or creates peace in a situation of profound and aggressive injustice. What it does,

rather, is take that injustice by the root. It strengthens knowledge of that injustice. It empowers collaborative resistance against that injustice. It generates solidarity, which joins people together in compassionate struggle: the kind of struggle, and the kind of compassion, that does not come to an end when a tourist's trip comes to an end. This is the solidarity engendered by true seeing: the kind of seeing that opens the pilgrim up to the reality around you, which, in turn, causes the reality to embrace, involve, and transform you.

This is the solidarity that prevents conflict by committing to hear and to tell the true narrative of that conflict – and by refusing injustice. This is the solidarity that promotes peace by understanding that peace is meaningless without justice – and by insisting on justice.

The words of Kenneth Cragg, an American Methodist who visited Beit Sahour a couple of years ago, provide an insight. His words eloquently speak to what the "Come and See" call seeks not only to express, but also to achieve: "We should all feel an urgency to know the 'Arab Christian,'" he writes, "lest the aura of the Holy Land lead us to think of a spiritual museum rather than of living, dying people in the throes of a deep struggle for survival and fulfilment."

We, Palestinians, are, indeed, very much alive. It is gratifying that Mr. Cragg wrote not only "survival," but also "fulfilment." We will get there. Come and see.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1. Many theologians would understand the Holy Land as the fifth Gospel. Fr. Jamal Kadher, one of the Kairos document authors, explaines that there has been a popular understanding among the believers that in order to understand the four Gospels of the New Testament, the journeying in the fifth Gospel is a clue to know the rest of the gospels. How does this understanding appeal to your context?

2. When there is a lot of injustices, colonisation, violence of occupation, destruction of properties and theft of land to construct colonies and settlements by the occupiers, and when there is struggle for freedom and liberation by occupied Palestinians, with what attitude should Christians

go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and what is the theological significance of their pilgrimage?

3. Is pilgrimage still relevant today? Pilgrimage has become more of a touristic ritual when visiting the Holy Land. Does the pilgrim search for God in the Holy Land? Are pilgrims willing to listen to the local narratives of the people whom they visit? Can we call someone a pilgrim who visits the Holy Land if he/she does not encounter the local communities and accompany them in their struggle for life and justice?

11

Pilgrimage Tourism: A Case Study
Sabarimala and its Impact on People and Nature

M T Cherian

India attracts tourists and pilgrims with the slogan "Incredible India," and with pictures of landscapes, mountains, temples and pilgrim centres. Pilgrims are different from tourists, but in some situations they merge as one. Pilgrimages and tourism are not new phenomena, having existed from the beginning of history. The tourism/pilgrimage industry is expanding very rapidly but its economic benefits and the income generated for some are at the cost of the environment. Either the local government or the local people are not aware of the environmental problems posed by the pilgrims, or even if they are aware, they are silent on the important issues, and promote the short term gains. This article is an attempt to present a snapshot into pilgrimage tourism by focusing on Sabarimala, a pilgrim destination in the southern Indian state of Kerala, and its impact on the people in the neighbourhood. It concentrates on Ranny, 64 kilometres from Sabrimala, where its river Pampa (considered to be a holy river in which all devotees are supposed to bathe) is an important place for pilgrims, but also a place of rest. The locals feel the impact of the Sabarimala pilgrimage season more than in other places. The writer undertook a field survey to investigate.

The issues raised around the impact of pilgrimages are not unique to India. Hence this article could hold lessons for pilgrimage sites elsewhere, and suggests a template that can be modified for similar investigations by theological students and others in the wider Global South.

Kedarnath

By way of background, and to set a context to Sabarimala, I refer to the events surrounding Kedarnath, which is at the other, northern end of India. Most Indians are probably aware of the temple town tragedy, which claimed the lives of many thousands of people. Property worth billions of Indian rupees was lost. Kedarnath is one of the best known pilgrimage sites, which gradually became a tourist centre with the intervention of the tourist agencies and package tour operators.

On June 16, 2013, at about 7:30 p.m. a landslide occurred near the Kedarnath Temple with a loud thunder, followed by gushing of waters from Chorabari Tal or Gandhi Tal in downstream Mandakini River, washing everything away in its path. Again, the next day, at about 6:40 a.m, waters rushed down river Saraswati and from Chorabari Tal or Gandhi Sarovar, bringing along with its flow huge amounts of silt, rocks and boulders. A huge boulder was stuck behind Baba Kedarnath Temple. The flood waters gushed on both sides of the temple destroying everything in its path. Thus, in the middle of the pilgrimage season, torrential rains, cloud burst and resulting flash floods nearly destroyed the Kedarnath town. Thousands of people were feared killed and many thousands of others (mostly pilgrims) were reported missing or stranded due to landslides around Kedarnath. The surrounding area and compound of the Kedarnath temple were destroyed. The Uttarakhand (the state where Kedarnath is situated) Chief Minister said that pilgrimage to Kedarnath would not be possible for the next two to five years. The rescue operation resulted in about more than 100,000 people being airlifted with the help of the Indian Army, Air force, National Disaster Response Force and Indo-Tibet Border Police Force. A helicopter (MIG 17) crashed during this exercise, killing all 20 soldiers on board involved in relief and rescue work. The Air Force dropped logs to build pyres for mass cremations of the victims.[1]

Why do such things happen was the question that emerged in India. An unprecedented destruction by the rainfall witnessed in Uttarakhand was attributed by environmentalists to unscientific developmental activities undertaken in recent decades contributing to high level of loss of property and lives. Roads constructed haphazardly, new resorts and hotels built on fragile river banks and more than 70 hydroelectric projects in the watersheds of the state led to a “disaster waiting to happen” as termed by certain environmentalists. They pointed to the tunnels built and blasts undertaken for the 70 hydro electric projects as contributing to the ecological imbalance

in the state, with flows of river water restricted and the streamside development activity contributing to a higher number of landslides and more flooding.[2]

The Hindu swamis attributed the tragedy to God's punishment for misusing the sacred landscape for honeymoon pilgrimages.

> In a twist to people's understanding of Uttarakhand's monsoon mayhem, Dwarka peeth Shankaracharya Swami Shree Swaroopananda Saraswati has blamed the sex-food-fun oriented consumerism propagated by tour operators in the land otherwise known as "devbhoomi," for the plight of thousands of pilgrims.[3]

Sheela Bhatt writes from her interview of the Sankaracharya of Haridwar Ashram: "Asserting that these mountains were not for the newly-married to enjoy their honeymoon, the religious leader suggested that the disaster was also brought upon due to the dams that have been built on rivers of Uttarakhand."[4] However, a close look into the tragedy proved that the cause of nature's fury was because of the mindless developmental strategy introduced by the state government. In the last two decades, instead of taking precautions and implementing the agenda of adaptation measures in the Himalayan region, the governments have steadily been violating the environmental norms and liberalising the land use policies. These land use policies are designed to support the production of surplus hydropower for exporting power to metropolitan cities on the one hand, and supporting the burgeoning pilgrim traffic on the other. This year there were an estimated 25 million tourists on the Char Dham route, a figure that is more than two times the population of the state. Infrastructural support for these pilgrims is closely linked to industrial development of the state.[5]

In addition, illegal mining is rampant in the region. A 2011 district report in Haridwar indicted the state information technology minister for having an illegal mining business on the banks of the river. Most of the illegal mining is for sand, 'bajri' and boulders for construction. Hence the illegal mining economy is tied up with the growth in the pilgrim economy which have led to the burgeoning of both the legal and the illegal construction sectors. In 2011, about 141 stone crushers and 40 sand mining projects were reported in a small area of the Ganges riverbed alone, causing both deforestation and flooding.[6]

There is a close connection between the hydro power projects and the pilgrim economy in the state of Uttarakhand. The State government harnessed its water resources to generate power and supply to the mega cities like

Delhi, for generating income as well as to cater to the needs of the pilgrims – further providing power to the multitude of hotels, resorts, guests houses and so on that support the pilgrim economy. It is reported that there were at least 100, 000 illegal electricity connections in the pilgrim routes. But these pressures have forced the damming of the entire Bhagirathi, Alaknanda and Ganges rivers in the state. At present, 42 hydropower projects are in operation while 203 are under construction or in the clearance stage. Further, the continuous tunnelling of hills has itself weakened the geological structure and led to repeated landslides. According to the Central Audit General report of 2011, the changing land use pattern and the tunnelling of the hills have resulted in an increased spate of natural disasters between 2007 and 2011. About 653 lives were lost, of which 21 per cent were lost from landslides, 28 per cent because of flash floods and excessive rains, eight per cent from earthquakes and two per cent from cloudbursts. If the toll from the current disaster is included, the figure will rise exponentially.[7]

It is interesting to see that the pilgrims come by first class, second class air conditioned coaches on the train and air conditioned buses from other states. Many even come by air and then travel to Sabarimala by air conditioned coaches. They are ready to spend any amount of money. Who are these travellers – pilgrims? They are rich and the affluent? Many of them are rich and they have enough money to travel. It is more a leisure time for them than divinely- oriented pilgrimage. Therefore, the Sabarimala trip can also be categorised under pilgrimage tourism.

Such disasters make all think about the unjust use of the natural resources for the benefit of the pilgrim tourist economy. It is not only in Kedarnath, but also in several other parts of India the state governments and the authorities carry out developmental activities to cater to the pilgrim tourist economy, without taking seriously the problems created by the developments. The pilgrimage tourism locations in developing countries are subjected to extraordinary economic pressures and change. Often being the only remaining open spaces in densely populated urban or rural agricultural landscapes, they are in danger of being overrun, either by surrounding development, or by growing recreational uses. A location faces pressures from pilgrims, international tourists and local day-visitors, all with different

goals and needs. There are two apparently conflicting goals: to increase international pilgrimages and tourism use of the location, and to enhance the location for local day-visitors. Strategies are presented, which would reduce these present conflicts, allow for growth and respond to local management constraints.[8] Some of the considerations relating to Kedarnath also apply to Sabarimala. This paper is an outcome of such reflections on the rampant hazards and the destruction of the environment by the tourism pilgrimages in Kerala. I feel, and fear that Sabarimala and the adjacent areas may also become victims of pilgrim tourism in the future.

God created the universe and human beings in it, human beings created religions, religions created gods and temples, gods and temples promoted pilgrimages, corporates and tour operators highjacked the pilgrimages to make profit, and finally God's universe and the entire creation are destroyed by unjust use.

Abstract

This is an attempt to reflect upon the emerging issues from an interfaith perspective. Terms such as pilgrimage tourism, religious tourism and faith tourism are used interchangeably in this work. The first part deals with a literature review to understand the meaning and definition of tourism and religious or faith tourism, the next section looks into the origin of pilgrimage tourism, Indian experience of pilgrimage tourism and the specific case of Sabarimala pilgrimage. Following this is a report on the field research which brings to light people's opinions, fears and their frustrations. Finally, the paper makes an attempt to reflect on the issues from an interfaith perspective.

Main objectives

To know the current position and future issues related to tourism in India with special reference to the State of Kerala.

To assess and analyse the development of pilgrimage tourism in Kerala.

To highlight the importance and significance of places of pilgrimage in Kerala.

To highlight the social and ecological problems in Kerala due to pilgrimage tourism to Sabarimala.

To reflect upon the emerging issues from an interfaith perspective.

Methodology

The present study is based on primary and secondary sources. As the study investigates the rise and growth of pilgrimage tourism in Kerala, the historical method is applied to collect primary and secondary sources from various repositories. The research approach takes the paper through literature review which follows government publications/records, the libraries and state tourism department, statistical reports, periodicals, press reports on Sabarimala Temples which are covered by various journals and newspapers. Fifty people were interviewed to see the real impact of Sabarimala pilgrimage on the people.

Literature review

A study conducted by **Gupta V**., "Sustainable Tourism: Learning from Indian Religious Tradition" IJCHM, Vol. 11, 1999 praised Indian religious tourism, and recommends to the government to identify 25 important tourist sites and spend more money to develop the infrastructure.

A study by **Woodward, S. C**, "Faith and Tourism: Planning Tourism in Relation to Places of Worship" *Tourism and Hospitality Planning Development,* Vol. 1. , No.2 August, 2004 highlights that most of the world famous religious sites were not able to contain large numbers of pilgrims at the peak seasons, and the lack of facilities led to several accidents, damages, noise pollution, overcrowding, littering and parking problems. There are several recommendations suggested by the authors to overcome the said problems.

Sarathy in an article in 2006 pictured the overview of religious tourism with respect to all major religions. He also talks about the national and international importance of religious tourism. According to his understanding, Hinduism is the third largest religion, and it has the world's largest number of pilgrim centres celebrating the greatest number of religious festivals like Kumbh Mela, Brahmotsavam, Makar Jyoti and Rath Yatra. Kumbh Mela is the largest religious gathering at a single place in the world.

Libison and Muraleedharan in a joint study in 2008 discussed the importance of the Sabarimala pilgrimage tourism in the lives of the people in nearby areas and of the Pandalam area. This study also brings to light that the number of people visiting the Sabarimala Temple is equal to the population of Kerala state. As a great amount of economic activities takes place during the pilgrimage season, the nearby areas are greatly benefited. There are some suggestions in this work that there should be a development committee

with various plans to exploit to the maximum pilgrimage seasons (See Sarathy P. (2006), Regional Tourism: An Overview" in *ICFAI Journal of Service Marketing,* Vol. 7, pp.49-63*).*

Concept of pilgrimage tourism

Religious tourism or pilgrimage tourism is defined here in this paper as travel with the motive of experiencing the spiritual enhancement by visiting places of religious importance. A pilgrim tourist is one who visits a specific place with the intention of spiritual enhancement with or without religious compulsion within the divine context. However, faith tourism displays an element of leisure oriented travel with both recreation and religious needs.

India is a land of religions and pilgrimages. There are enormous numbers of pilgrimage spots in the land from Himalayas in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. People have been, by walking, or using animals or carts, taking up pilgrimages (Tirth Yatra) from the very early days. Pilgrimage is undertaken as an act of deep commitment to the divine with faith and feeling for future liberation. It is also a spiritual or faith tourism leading to integrating humanity and divinity. In Hinduism, Dharma is the foundation of Hindu ethics. Dharma is the right way of doing things prescribed in the scriptures (each individual's duty according to the scripture). Kuladharma (social or the community duty and individual duty) are the two divisions of dharma. As dharma dictates, pilgrimage is a rite of passage that helps the individual and community to attain liberation from the samsara or often taken as an easy way to liberation (e.g, a bath in river Ganges, visit to Banaras or Rishikesh to attain liberation). Thus, it works as a transitional space between the material and the divine. Earliest sources of information on the matter of sacred space comes from the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda. While the act of pilgrimage is not specifically discussed in these texts, mountain valleys and the confluences of rivers are spoken of with reverence, and the merits of travel to such places are mentioned. Following the Vedic period, the practice of pilgrimage seems to have become quite common, as is evident from sections of the great epic, the Mahabharata (350 BC), which mentions more than 300 sacred sites spanning the subcontinent. Indians have succeeded in creating and recreating a sacred landscape by interconnecting the various regions and locales. Diana Eck puts it thus:

> By linking together the twelve jyothirlingas, an imagined landscape is composed by linking the three goddesses of Vindhyavasini, a local landscape is articulated. And by linking the three goddesses-

> Minakshi in Madurai, Visalakshi in Kasha, and Kamakshi in Assam – a force field extending from south India to farthest northeast India is imagined. When places are linked one to one another, patterned and displayed together, a landscape emerges.[9]

The emerging trend in the present context is that the pilgrim sites have become holiday sites and at least in some places, religion becomes subordinated to pleasure. It is believed that these pilgrim places are lands of gods and goddesses, but, of late, it is understood that some of these pilgrim places are used as tourist places instead of pilgrimage centres to cleanse the soul and attain Nirvana. This new trend of swinging over to the new found style has added a new economic dimension by discovering their market value by the tour promoters and operators providing the holiday packages. It can be a journey to shrines associated with a person's faith and belief like Chardham and Jyotirlings, Kumbh for Hindus, Ajmer Sharif for Muslims, and Velaankanni for Christians. Indian tour operators are more successful in promoting pilgrim sites for tourism purposes because Indians respect all religious sites, and without any difficulty Hindus would visit and pay their respect. All pilgrimage sites have undergone tremendous changes in terms of infrastructural developments for the use of an increasing number of pilgrims. However, it is important to note that most of the pilgrimage sites in India are in ecologically sensitive locations with environmental resources.[10]

According to a recent estimate, more than 250 million people go on 'pilgrimage' every year. The 23 pilgrim places noted in the whole world record above half a million pilgrims annually, and among them in India, there are nine such sites, viz. Sabarimala (34 million), Tiupati-Tirumala (33 million), Golden Temple-Amritsar (30 million), Shirdi (12 million), Magh Mela [30-35 days] at Allahabad (10 million). Kumbha Mela, celebrated every 12 years, records the highest number, which reached 74 million in Jan-Feb. 2013 (spread over an area of 20 sq. km inhabited by 200,000 people), eg.Vrindavan (6 million), Dvaraka (5 million), Varanasi (1.5 million), and Amarnath Cave (650,000).[11] In addition to these sites, there are several holy rivers and sacred shrines situated on the banks of these rivers. Shakti (the creative power) is also worshipped as the Divine mother and as an enforcing discipline. There are nearly fifty-one shakti peethas (holy spots) all over the country. These peethas are visited by tourists throughout the year. Thus, religious tourism is a mixture of both ancient and modern cultures.

Though there were enormous opportunities for tourism developments till the sixth five year plan (1980-1985), the government did not take any

interest to see tourism as a possibility to bring in income to the state. While concentrating on international tourism, the Indian government gave importance also to pilgrimage tourism as an important area to be developed because it was mostly an area involving the middle class and the poorer sections of the society. The government's initiatives to develop the tourism industry identified religious centres in the eighth five year plan (1992-1997). A committee on pilgrim tourism was established to identify the major religious centres to be converted as tourist centres. Buddhist religious places were identified for tourism purposes in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh with the help of funds from Japan.

Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple

Like the rest of India, Kerala has been an abode of saints and the religious activities from time immemorial. There are several shrines in this southern state. The most important of them is the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple, which houses one of the most venerated deities of the Hindu pantheon. Irrespective of caste, creed or language, Sabarimala is opened for the devotees and it is understood that the god communes with the devotee directly in Sabarimala without intermediaries.

According to the legends, the temple at Sabarimala is built by Parasurama, who reclaimed the land of Kerala from the sea. It is one of the five temples erected by him to protect Kerala from destructive elements, the others being Kulathuppuzha, Aryankavu, Achankovil and Erumeli. At Kulathuppuzha, the Lord is worshipped as an infant boy, at Aryankavu as an adolescent on the verge of matrimony, and at Achankovil he is depicted as a 'grihasthashrami' with his wives, Poorna and Pushkala. In Sabarimala Lord Ayyappan is a brahmachari in a state of eternal bliss or Samadhi, holding 'chinmudra'. It is said that Ayyappa sought this solitary abode to meditate soon after vanquishing the demon, Mahishi, in a ferocious battle. The Sabarimala temple is open to devotees only during mandalapooja (November to January), Makaravilakku, Vishu and the beginning of every month of the Malayalam calendar. Surrounded by lush tropical jungles and 18 hills, the shrine is over 1260m/4135ft above sea level. Sabarimala is part of Western Ghats; remnants of ancient temples are visible in the adjoining hills and at Nilackal, Kalaketi and Karimala. Offerings are still made to the devis/devas in these places. East of the temple is 'Vavarnada' which commemorates Vavar, a Muslim associate of Lord Ayyappan.

Pilgrimage to Sabarimala

By adhering to an austere way of life and observing tapas in body, mind and speech, human beings transcend earthly limitations and change for the better. Devotees aspiring for a darshan of Ayyappan have to be pure both mentally and physically and for this, he is expected to observe a mandatory fast (vritham) of 41 days that usually begins on the first day of the Malayalam month of Vrischikam in mid-November. As a prelude to the actual pilgrimage, the aspirant wears a beaded mala/garland usually of tulsi or rudraksham to highlight his renunciation of material temptations. The majority of the devotees begin wearing the mala from the first day of Vrishchikam as it is understood that Ayyappa was born on the first day of Vrischikam. Like Ayyappan, the devotee is expected to shun all social activities and immerse himself in prayers, poojas, bajans, visits to the temples, cleaning temples, feeding the poor, attending to the poor/sick and listening to spiritual lectures. The devotee is supposed to be strictly celibate, consume only vegetarian food and is forbidden from having intoxicants like alcoholic beverages, drugs and betel leaves, and smoking. No women between the age of 10 and 50 are permitted in the temple.

Taking a bath in the pre-dawn hours, regular application of vibhooti sandalwood paste followed by meditation and singing songs about Ayyappan become part of the devotee's daily routine for 41 days. No shaving is allowed and the devotee prays to Dharma Shastha by chanting his name at least 108 times. He refrains from hurting anybody either physically or verbally and identifies other Ayyappa devotees with the Lord himself. When somebody undertakes the 41-day fast, he must go about it quietly without much ado so as not to cause any inconvenience to his family or community.

The devotees of Ayyappa are mostly from other states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa. Some are from North Indian states also. While all have to walk to the temple for a considerable distance, many devotees come on foot from their places walking for weeks and months.

Ranny, a place between the forest temple and the major rail routes is an *idthavalam*, (resting place) for the pilgrims. Most of the pilgrims coming by vehicles have to park their vehicles near the riverside to take a bath. The locals are benefited by the business opportunities but hard pressed by the problems due to the increasing number of pilgrims year by year.

Emerging issues

The present writer interviewed 50 locals of Ranny. Twenty five of them belonged to the business houses (shops) and other 25 were common people.

The respondents were basically selected from the age group of 15 – 60, and were from different religious communities. The respondents were picked randomly having an equal number of both males and females. The respondents were grouped age wise: the first group was the age group of 15 – 20, mostly students of the schools in the town; the second group of the ages 21 – 30; third group of ages 31– 40; the fourth group of ages 41 – 50; and the last group was from the age group of 51 – 60. Since Kerala has the highest literacy rate (almost 100%) in India, the respondents were not grouped according to their education. Most of the respondents were educated above high school and some were college educated. The data was gathered with the help of a questionnaire prepared for this purpose by personally visiting the place during the month of September. The questions asked were more about the purpose of the visit of pilgrims (what they feel about the pilgrims), increase in the number of people, sanitation facilities by the local government and otherwise, food problems, parking facilities, water and air pollution, traffic problems during the pilgrimage season, deforestation, noise pollution, road condition, law and order situation, increase in the cost of things and the increase in the land price, commercialisation of the Sabarimala pilgrimage by the government and the tour operators.

To the question – `do you like the pilgrimage season' (the locals call it Sabarimala season), all the respondents from the business communities responded positively affirming that they liked it because it brought economic gains, while 60% of the non-business group answered negatively. Among them the student group had sharply negative. The reasons told by the students were interesting – nothing new to see, all the pilgrims come in the same black clothing, the absence of the women in the pilgrim groups was also commented on by the young people. The household people living in the town take this season as an added burden so that 40% of them responded that they have been used to with the season now. No one from the non-business group supported the season wholeheartedly. While the pilgrimage brings income to the state as most of the pilgrims are from outside the state, the locals feel that they have to handle a huge crowd – more than the state's population.

Regarding to the question, `are you happy with the local government arrangements for handling the season', a total of 60% business group responded negatively, while 40% were somewhat positive with comments such as what else can the government do, `we are the government,' `this government cannot do,' `they only promise,' `we will wait for another party

to come to power to see changes...' The answers show the attitude of the people towards the system and structures. However, it is to be noticed that the older generation showed a thorough dissatisfaction towards the governmental systems and the arrangements for the pilgrims that they are the ones who mostly responded negatively. Residents in the town (other than the business group among the respondents) were not happy with the government and the arrangement that 68% responded negatively and only 32% had a positive answer.

The next question was about the increase of pilgrims over the years. `How do you feel about the increase in number?' and `what are the things contributing to the increase in number?' All agreed that year by year, the number was increasing and only 40% agreed with the argument that it is the divine orientation that makes the number to increase. It is seen that this group had affiliation to a particular religion. Some of them (like Prabhakaran aged above 50) was emphasising the divinity and the way people get the things done after having darshan of Ayyappa, while 60% did not agree that

> The state governments and the authorities carry out developmental activities to cater to the pilgrim tourist economy, without taking seriously the problems created by the developments. The pilgrimage tourism locations in developing countries are subjected to extraordinary economic pressures and change. Often being the only remaining open spaces in densely populated urban or rural agricultural landscapes, they are in danger of being overrun, either by surrounding development, or by growing recreational uses. A location faces pressures from pilgrims, international tourists and local day-visitors, all with different goals and needs.

it is the divinity or the god that helps the pilgrims to come. Among the 60% who answered negatively, 36% felt that it was Kerala's beauty that makes the pilgrims to come, and they are more than pilgrims. Though they do not understand the concept of faith tourism, they are sure that the majority of the pilgrims are not simply pilgrims but tourists also. They pointed out that many among the pilgrims visit Kovalam, a beach tourist spot and Kanyakumari, another tourist spot. (It is true that many of the tourists from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh go to such places as a part of

the package or otherwise. I had interviews with the pilgrims and found that many are coming to Sabarimala with the intention to visit many other places.) Thus, the locals feel that it is mostly the tourism and sightseeing intentions that are the driving force behind the Sabarimala pilgrimage. `How do you consider the Sabarimala pilgrims – Tourists, Simple Pilgrims, Sanyasis?' The question was not answered by all because some in the younger group were not able to distinguish between tourism and other travels. However, around 50% saw it as a trip for sightseeing in the name of religion.

To the questions about sanitation facilities arranged by the local bodies for the people from outside: How do you rate and understand the sanitation facilities by the local bodies? Connected with questions like do we have enough bathing facilities, toilets for the increasing number of pilgrims, how does the lack of facilities affect the area? While 86% of the both business and non-business communities agreed that they were not able to provide adequate facilities for the pilgrims, only a small group of 14% were not sure of it. Even the student community was of the opinion that there are not enough facilities. There was an increasing concern from the respondents that the area including the rubber fields, coconut tree gardens were all normally used by the pilgrims to answer the call of nature. As most of the pilgrims came from the other states, the locals feel embarrassed to stop them, but tolerate them. Another concern was that the river bed of Pampa River was widely used by the pilgrims for this purpose. The street corners are at times completely polluted with human urine which is otherwise not a common phenomenon in Kerala. The water level in the river usually is low in the month of December and that leads many pilgrims to use the river areas for answering the call of nature. This is not only the story of Ranny, but also all the places on the way to the mountain shrine. The railway stations, bus stands and even the gardens and estates are not spared by the pilgrims. This causes epidemics, water pollution, and environmental pollution, contributing to unending health hazards to the locals. One comment by a retired school teacher was an eye opener to all – "gods on the hills are not affected by the pollutions here but we are, and the gods are not concerned also". When asked to explain it, he said the political gods and the bureaucratic gods were not concerned about what is happening. Connected to the questions of sanitation were the questions on waste management, such as do the local bodies provide any effective ways for managing the waste; 90% of the total respondents were upset by the accumulated waste from the pilgrims. 10% were not aware of such things. According to 90% of the responses,

the pilgrims never bothered to put their waste in a particular place but threw everywhere. They were asked to identify the sources of waste. According to the responses – many of the pilgrims have the habit of chewing the pan masala, betel leaves, and Gutka and they spit at every corner that makes the corners dirty and causes ill health to the locals. Unused plastic bottles and carry bags are the items identified by the locals as the most hazardous waste. These wastes are thrown into the river and streams across the whole area. Another cause of the waste accumulation was the road side shops and makeshift dhabas. As they work only during the season, they are not convinced of the long term impacts of the waste they produce. They wind up after the season throwing their everyday waste on the road side or nearby areas. Another problem the respondents pointed out was that if the waste is thrown out by the locals they would stop or protest it but when it is done by the pilgrims no one is able to protest, it because it could invite religious issues, and some fundamentalist forces could give it a religious or communal colour to it.

Questions on air pollution and noise pollution were answered by all. 87% of the respondents were not happy with what was happening now. The increase in the number of vehicles cause air pollution, helped by the government not strictly enforcing the pollution check measures during the season. The respondents said the vehicles from the other states come a long way, and many of them after the long travel emit more polluted smoke but the police or the transport authorities turn a blind eye towards the mandatory pollution control norms because the pilgrims are religious groups. Thus, the months of November and December become the most polluted months for the people of Kerala. To questions whether noise pollution increased caused by the increase of vehicles and people, 80% of the respondents answered yes, and only 20% said they did not know. This shows again the people's frustration.

Questions on food, such as whether the increased use of food products leads to scarcity, whether that the food items are adulterated due to the increased demand, were answered by all: both the business and non-business communities feel the pinch of adulteration and scarcity so that 65% of the total respondents felt that as demand increased, food items became costly and scarce. Out of the remaining people 13% were not aware of it and 22% were not bothered about it. 65% pointed to the price increase during the festive season. The residents of the town pointed to the increase of the price of the vegetables during the Sabarimala season. Vegetables are brought

from the neighbouring states for the consumption of Keralites as the state is dominated by the cultivation of rubber and spices. The locals have to pay more as the restaurants and eateries buy most of the vegetables to cater to the needs of the pilgrims. While the business community makes good profit, the common people are not happy with the way things are.

The issue of transportation has been unsolved for many years. To questions related to transportation like, are there enough transportation facilities provided by the government, 65% of the total respondents gave a negative answer that there was not enough parking space available in the town while 20% were happy with the present arrangements, the remaining 15 percent were neither negative nor positive. While asked to elaborate on the parking issue, the business people showed their frustration by blaming the system, narrow roads and the increase in number of vehicles. Earlier, there used to be smaller vehicles and now as the tour operators entered into the fray, big buses with more people became common. As the roads are narrow and there are virtually no stipulated parking slots, the pilgrims park their vehicles wherever they like without bothering about the traffic rules. While explaining the lack of transportation facilities the respondents felt that the government was more inclined to take care of the transportation needs of the pilgrims than the locals. Most of the government buses are reserved for the pilgrims and the locals are left to struggle without proper transportation. The pilgrimage season has become a period of tribulation for the locals. Connected with the transportation, the women folk were more frustrated that their freedom of movement is curtailed during the Sabarimala season. Almost all of the pilgrims are men and as they try to avoid any contact with women, it is difficult for women to move freely. At times all men in a bus and one or two local women getting in the bus looks awkward for the local women. The respondents expressed their concern over such over-domination by men in all areas of life during the pilgrimage season: with millions of men on the road curtailing the movement of the women completely for more than a month.

To the questions about the promotion and governmental agenda behind the Sabarimala pilgrimage such as how does the government help the pilgrimage, an overwhelming 87% of the respondents answered that the government relentlessly promoted the Sabarimala pilgrimage. Every year within a month Kerala gets 3.3 to 4 million outsiders which is more than the total population of Kerala, and the income from the feast is enormous that probably it has become one of the largest income generating phenomena

for the people. The Kerala government is very keen about promoting it with a profit motive, without thinking of the locals. It is not easy for the locals to take the burden of the pilgrimage. The aggressive promotions by the government as well as the corporates have led to the commercialisation of the pilgrimage that, as the locals pointed out, led to the emergence of big hotels and resorts on the way. Land price had sky rocketed in the town areas with the business people purchasing all the land and the common people unable to purchase any land for constructing a house. Ranny has been known as the queen of mountain areas with its rich spices and rubber crops flourishing, always with a fragrance of rich cultural past. But now it is depending upon the outsiders for profit making businesses. The aggressive promotion of the Sabarimala festival by the government through various means gives it a tourist flavour. It has brought up big hotels and lodges in this place, which was unimaginable twenty years ago.

Questioned on the government's attitude towards the environmental pollutions and destruction, and whether government was aware of the negative impacts of Sabarimala pilgrimage on nature, 65% of the respondents said the members of the government were aware of it. While only 20% said no and the other 15% did not know about it. The first group was affirmative because according to them all the members of their government were decently educated and some very highly educated. They should know about the environmental hazards and some were of the opinion that the locals have several times complained to the government for enhancing the amenities for the pilgrims but to no avail. Beautiful forest ranges around Ranny are destroyed by the locals to erect resting places for the pilgrims, small forest animals that live around the human habitats are either destroyed or chased away to the interior forests. Some of the old people pointed to the disappearance of the traditional floras and faunas.

Coming to the tour operators handling the pilgrimage, most of the respondents (72%) were of the opinion that now the tour operators are in the field, they promote the pilgrimage during the pilgrims with sightseeing trips connected to the pilgrimage. Thus, it has become an affair of the rich and no more an event of the poor. The local tradition and local history point out that in the beginning of Ayappa tradition people came on foot from different parts of Travancore, but it has grown to be a multi-state affair in recent years. Who are these people traveling to Kerala from other states? 48% of the respondents felt that Ayyappa pilgrimage tradition had undergone a drastic change as the rich became the major participant of the whole

programme. It is interesting to see that the pilgrims come by first class, second class air conditioned coaches on the train and air conditioned buses from other states. Many even come by air and then travel to Sabarimala by air conditioned coaches. They are ready to spend any amount of money. Who are these travelers – pilgrims? They are rich and the affluent? Many of them are rich and they have enough money to travel. It is more a leisure time for them than a divinely oriented pilgrimage. Therefore, the Sabarimala trip can also be categorised under pilgrimage tourism.

Can we understand them as simple pilgrims? Are they tourists? Probably they are not taking pleasure trips but they are, as any other traveler who seeks pleasure, a part of the cause of damage to the air, water, environment and all the other creation of God. Looking at the damages, looking at the problems created by them to the people of Kerala, I would call them as religious tourists or faith tourists. It is not Ayyappa alone who beckons them to come to Kerala but the rich and beautiful nature, hills, and mountains are also influencing factors behind the increasing numbers of pilgrims.

Reflection

Religion creates sacred spaces and at times gods and godmen who rule over society. But religion appears to have failed in taking care of or in preserving God's creation. Hindu spirituality understands creation as the expansion of Brahman itself (see visista advaita of Ramanuja). And the whole universe is but one family (vasudaiva Kudumakam); a family of God was the noble understanding of ancient sages. To keep up the same understanding, the scriptures promoted the concept of sacred space linking the whole of bharata varsha into a totality of identifying sacred places from Himalayas to Kanyakumari, encouraging men and women to travel and meet each other, blending with one another through the blessings of the rivers, mountains and finally ocean – all sacred for a Hindu. God created the universe and human beings in it, human beings created religions, religions created gods and temples, gods and temples promoted pilgrimages, corporates and tour operators highjacked the pilgrimages to make profit, and finally God's universe and the entire creation are destroyed by unjust use.

How to control or how to manage the increasing influx of pilgrims is the most pertaining question today. What is the role of the church in handling the issue? After casual conversations with the pastors of the area, I received some interesting comments. A simple question was raised: how do you

approach the pilgrims? Some of them are trying to find opportunities to evangelise or influence through literature and good works. Other than that, there is no organisational attempt to manage the problems or tackle the increasing numbers of pilgrims. The Church is not coming out to help the locals to tackle the situation. In such a situation what can be the next thing to do?

I would suggest a public dialogue or a dialogue of the civil society to help the common citizen. The Church can take initiative in bringing together the civil society – people from different walks of life to reflect upon the impending issues and find ways and means to tackle it. It is the role of the Church to educate the civil public to handle the situation. Public dialogue is not religion based but it is issue based and human based. Church may have to leave out the underlying religious bias while engaging in gathering, bringing together all concerned to save the earth and the life on earth. It can be a model of interaction with similar situations everywhere.

What should be our mission to the tourists/pilgrims? It is true that the Church in Kerala has failed in its mission to the people coming from the other states in the form of pilgrims/tourists to Sabarimala. It has left them entirely in the hands of the Hindu organisations to provide the basic needs. They need more sanitation facilities, waste management facilities, health facilities, road safety measures and many other things. Since the Church is not mindful of the needs of the pilgrims, the fundamentalist organisations thrive in using the opportunities for political and fundamentalist propaganda, sometimes even anti-Christian sentiments. The Church is not utilising these fruitful opportunities of interreligious interactions, embracing them by providing resting facilities, toilets, waste management facilities and so on. Ayappa devotees worship and respect all religious shrines and deities, but the Church does not have any respect for them. Most of the Kerala Christians look at them as outsiders, without any respect and we want them to come to Kerala purely for our economic gains. There are no effective campaigns for responsible use of nature and its resources by the Church. Church looks at the Sabarimala season as a burden and tries to avoid all interactions with the pilgrims. If Church can be an active participant in taking care of the Sabarimala devotees, at least in some areas it will be a great blessing for nature and help for the government to handle the most vital every day issues.

The Church can also join hands with other religious groups to bring awareness among the pilgrims about the value of the preservation of God's creation. It can be in the form of literature on nature in different languages

for the pilgrims. No one ventures into educating the pilgrims on the destruction of nature done by the pilgrimage. The incessant plying of vehicles through the forest near Sabarimala have heavily damaged the animal habitat and even the *adivasis* (indigenous people) of the area have had to go into the interiors of the forest for their livelihood. Therefore, the Church may join hands with the other religious and non-religious organisations to bring awareness to the pilgrims to Sabarimala about the damages done by the pilgrimage, and urge pilgrims to preserve God's creation.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing.

1. Pilgrimage sites are highly affected by the increasing number of tourists and the developmental programmes. What could be the measures to save the holy sites from destruction?
2. Faith tourism has become a profitable business for tour agents today. Why and how can we save the pilgrimage from the exploitation of the tour operators?
3. Can there be any alternative for the pilgrimage tourism?

Endnotes

[1] http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/UttarPradesh/Monsoon-fury-in-north-India-131-dead-70-000-stranded-Kedarnath-town-ruined/Article1-1078740.aspx

[2] Shadbolt, Peter (25 June 2013). "Indian floods a man-made disaster, say environmentalists". CNN. Retrieved 26 June 2013.

[3] Sheela Bhatt, It is time to repent for turning Uttarakhand into honeymoon spot' http://www.rediff.com/news/slide-show/slide-show-1-time-to-repent-for-turning-uttarakhand-into-honeymoon-spot/20130622.html

[4] *ibid*

[5] Archana Prasad, "India: Political Ecology of Pilgrimage and Its Hazards" *People's Democracy*, June 30, 2013.

[6] *Ibid*

[7] *ibid*

[8] S. Vijayananad, "Socio-economic Impacts in Pligrimage Tourism," *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* Vol.2, Issue 1, January

2012, ISSN 2231 5780, 331.

[9] Diana Eck, 2012. *India a Sacred Geography*, (Random House Group), New York, 448

[10] S. Vijayanand, `Economic Benefits of Pilgramage Tourism,' in *South Asian Journal of Marketing and Management Research*, Chennai: Himalayan Publishers, 2012. 155.

[11] See Singh, Rana P.B. 2013. *Green Pilgrimage Initiatives; Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage: Sacred Space and System.* Dev Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi. 333

12

Tourism – An Ecumenical Concern:
An Historical Survey of Ecumenical Responses to the Tourism Phenomenon

Roger Gaikwad

Tourism is a worldwide phenomenon enjoying a prominent role in the Global South. Governments, businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and religious bodies are concerned about tourism in different ways. While many ecumenical bodies have been addressing the subject of tourism, this article will focus on the work of one of them, namely, the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), formed in 1982 with the objective of denouncing the paradigm and practices of commercial tourism, and encouraging action to change them. Highlighting tourism within a variety of anti-globalisation and human rights movements, such as those related women, children, dalits, indigenous people, migrants, unorganised labour, small island, mountain and coastal communities, as well as struggles related to land, water and access to natural resources is crucial to sharpen local struggles and community initiatives of those impacted by tourism to ensure justice and fullness of life for all. Globalising forces need to be critiqued and responsibly challenged. ECOT believes that the counter to mass tourism is provided by community-based tourism (CBT), where local communities formulate, direct and share incomes equitably.

Churches and theological institutions need to address tourism within the framework of theology, ethics, social analysis, and as an important missiological concern. This historical look provides a window into the range of concerns mass commercial tourism raises for communities of the South, and consequently for theological study and response by their churches.

Tourism is a worldwide phenomenon. People criss-cross regions, countries, and continents – and some are even planning to travel to planets – to experience and enjoy different geographical formations, climates, peoples, cultures, places and memorials of historical events, institutions of knowledge and expressions of technology, and of course for recreation. Governments, businesses including multinational corporations, non-governmental organisations including religious bodies are all concerned about tourism in different ways. In this article, however, the focus is on those ecumenical bodies[1] which are seriously concerned about the present day commercial, anti-ecological, hedonistic, and politically manipulated tourism which adversely affects people on the margins of patriarchal globalised society be they women, youth, children, indigenous people, dalits, the poor, people with disabilities and of different sexual orientations, and also exploits and harms mother earth. Even among such ecumenical bodies, this paper will focus on the work of the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT). Here too, the writer has depended upon select publications of ECOT which were accessible to him. Elaborating upon the history of ECOT is not the concern of the writer. Only ECOT statements and excerpts are highlighted which will hopefully serve to make the readers aware of the issues related to tourism, and the challenge they pose to churches and in fact to all religious bodies and peoples of the world, the *oikumene*, to make appropriate responses.

The focus being on ecumenical responses, the article as such does not deal with the responses of denominational churches to the phenomenon and problems of tourism. In fact in India, churches in general have been rather passive in their response to this issue. Many middle and upper class Christians themselves are smitten by the travel bug. Even some important church meetings are held in tourist spots and resorts in different parts of the country, at times in foreign countries as well. Some churches have also been encouraging visits to Israel, the "Holy Land", taking advantage of commercial tourism packages. Many Christian individuals and families in India are also desirous of visiting the land where Jesus lived, at least once in their life-time. Infatuated with Zionist perspectives, they are either oblivious to, or justify, the injustices that Israel inflicts on Palestinians living in the region. Bodies like ISEN-P Indian Solidarity Ecumenical Network for Palestine (constituted of NCCI, CBCI, YMCA, YWCA, CISRS, BTESSC, and SCMI) have been trying to sensitise the Indian church and society about the injustices inflicted on Palestinians at the hands of Israel, but much more advocacy and campaigning needs to be done. Moreover many middle and upper class

Christians seem to be impressed by the so-called economic development that the tourism industry facilitates in India. People have been brainwashed into believing that tourism is a new form of liberation for the peoples of the South assuming without questioning that it provides jobs; it brings foreign exchange; it is a green, non-polluting industry. Further, tourism claims to help foster understanding between peoples and cultures, thus promoting peace.

The Impinging Phenomenon of Tourism[2]

The dynamic expansion of the tourism sector has resulted in tourism becoming the fastest growing industry in the world with an average annual growth rate of 4.2% between 1990 and 2004 (UN World Tourism Organisation statistics). At the start of the 21st century, about 700 million international arrivals were registered worldwide ... The number of travelling people was 760 million in 2004 ... The WTO forecasts that the number of arrivals will reach 1.56 billion by 2020. However it is important to keep in mind that only about three to five percent of the world's population is able to travel abroad, and these are primarily people from rich industrial countries, and from the narrow band of upper middle classes in the Global South.

Tourism was considered a "white industry" for a long time, meaning it was thought that there is no need to measure its (negative) environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts. In the 60s and early 70s, tourism was praised as an engine for economic development, and an effective tool to promote understanding between nations and cultures, therefore many countries invested serious efforts to increase tourist arrivals and develop the necessary infrastructure. It was only in the mid 1970s that critical voices were raised concerning the impact of tourism on the ecological, economic and socio-cultural environment (which will be highlighted subsequently).

The Beginnings of Ecumenical Responses to Tourism[3]

It was in 1969 that the World Council of Churches first convened a World Consultation on Tourism. Professor James Glasse, a principal speaker at the meeting, raised issues of tourism within the frameworks of theology, pastoral care, and as an ecclesiastical concern. He posed the challenge of evolving an 'ethics of leisure' and underlined how it was pertinent to draw up the parameters of a 'leisure ethic' just as much as there is the demand for a 'work ethic.' Another major preoccupation that emerged at the discussions was around the affirmation that all human energies exist to

serve God and celebrate God's gifts of life to humankind. Leisure activities including tourism must similarly be subject to God's rules and ways.

It was nearly a decade later when another major workshop took place in Manila, Philippines in 1980 on the question of tourism. By then the understanding of issues pertaining to tourism had significantly advanced. Justice had emerged as a central concern. The conclusion of their experience was summed up in the closing statement of the conference which said that "tourism wreaked more havoc than it brought benefits to Third World countries".[4] This fundamental critique ... unmasked the fact that the promises made by the national and international tourism industry were simply myths. The money did not really go to the poor, but rather ended up in the hands of the rich represented by the large hotel chains, travel agencies and airlines. Tourism has not only created very few jobs but the jobs turned out to be mainly for unskilled workers and paid low wages. Above all, in many parts of the world they were restricted to seasonal employment, and thus did not provide stable employment. Even as a promoter of cultural exchange, tourism did not function well, since the encounters involved took place only on a very superficial level. As a result, in many cases tourism has in fact endangered and exploited national, regional, and local culture rather than enhanced them.[5]

One year later, European churches organised a follow-up conference in Stockholm to reinforce the findings of the Asian conference.[6]

The Formation of Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT)

The 1980 Manila Workshop gave birth to ECOT, then known as the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT). The Christian Conference of Asia, the Pacific Conference of Churches, and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences jointly launched it and defined its ends and priorities. Later, the All Africa Conference of Churches, Caribbean Conference of Churches, Latin American Council of Churches, and the Middle East Conference of Churches also joined it.[7]

This Ecumenical Coalition has been based on the following principle aims[8], namely, to

1. Focus on tourism and the effect it has on the lives of the people of the Third World and the environment.
2. Provide opportunities for local people affected by tourism to express their views and concerns.

3. Denounce unfair practices in tourism and encourage action to change them.
4. Work for gender justice and child protection in tourism.
5. Protect the rights of workers in the formal and informal sectors of the industry.
6. Promote a good quality of tourist activity that is appropriate to the quest for a just, participatory and sustainable society.
7. Empower indigenous people and support them in their attempts to get a fair price for their exposure to tourism.
8. Lobby against violation of Human Rights related to tourism development projects at national and international level.
9. Provide research and information on the impact of tourism.
10. Engage in analytical study on the implications of globalisation on the tourist trade and offer alternative paradigms for justice.
11. Advocate for just practices in the tourist trade and to ensure that international trade mechanisms are in line with values of justice for the host communities.

Observance of World Tourism Day: Initial Ecumenical Responses

About the same time as the 1980 Manila Workshop, another group of people in Europe were meeting to discuss tourism, but their perspective was quite the opposite to that of the Manila and Stockholm conferences. These were the tourism industry leaders who had a business interest in the growth and development of international tourism. Not surprisingly they were delighted at the growth in tourism and saw themselves riding the crest of a new economic wave. To celebrate this development they decided to have an annual celebration of their work, and so the World Tourism Day was born.[9]

Since 1980, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has celebrated World Tourism Day on September 27. This date was chosen as on that day in 1970, the Statutes of the UNWTO were adopted. The adoption of these Statutes is considered a milestone in global tourism. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness on the role of tourism within the international community and to demonstrate how it affects social, cultural, political and economic values worldwide. Many tourism enterprises and organisations, as well as government agencies with a special interest in tourism, celebrate the event with various special events and festivities.[10]

World Tourism Day has largely remained an in-house event where tourism leaders sing songs in their own praise. One world figure who did take World Tourism Day seriously, and who did use the occasion to say something significant was Pope John Paul II who was an enthusiastic traveller, and when he travelled he did not like some of the things he saw. Over several years, the Pope delivered a message on World Tourism Day that was always a challenge to the tourism industry to act more responsibly. Between 2001 and 2003 he shared insights into tourism that remain a challenge to any person working on tourism issues:

On *Tourism and Development* – "It is time to reaffirm a principle which is self-evident yet often ignored: our goal should not be the benefit of a privileged few, but rather the improvement of the living conditions of all. Only on this foundation can we build that international order truly marked by justice and solidarity which is the hope of everyone."

On *the exploitation of people* – "In some places, mass tourism has produced a kind of sub-culture that degrades both the tourists and the host community: it tends to exploit for commercial purposes the traces of 'primitive civilisations' and 'initiation rites still practiced' in some traditional societies." "Solidarity is expressed above all in respect for the personal dignity of the local people, their culture and their customs, in a willingness to get to know them through dialogue, aimed at promoting the integral development of each one."

And on *the tourists*: "Tourists must not only resist the temptation to retreat into a sort of 'happy cocoon', distancing themselves from the social context; rather, they should refrain from profiting from their own privileged position to exploit the 'needs' of the locals."[11]

One of the challenges that led to the birth of the ECTWT in 1982 was the question of what is the Church´s mission toward the negative impact of tourism on the environment and peoples, especially indigenous minorities, women and children. Consequently, various responses were made through the years since the first consultation on mission perspectives in tourism in Khonkaen, Thailand, 1985.[12]

We affirm the *apriori* rights of Indigenous Peoples to their traditional lands, territories, and resources, the integrity of which has been sustained for by generations through their traditional way of life in harmony with nature.

A conference entitled, "Caught in Modern Slavery: Tourism and Child Prostitution in Asia," organised by the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT), and partnered by the Christian Conference of Asia, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and other ecumenical bodies from Europe and America, gave rise to the formation of ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism) in May 1990 at Chiang Mai, Thailand.[13] A study of the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand, presented during the Chiang Mai conference, showed clear links between the rapid increase in tourists and an increase in child prostitution.

Conference of the Ecumenical Coalition On Third World Tourism (ECTWT) on "Mission Perspective in Tourism", Penang/Malaysia, February 12-15, 2001[14]

The Conference of the ECTWT on "Mission Perspective in Tourism" (involving 27 participants from 12 countries, five continents and included Buddhists, Hindus, Protestants and Catholics) which was held in Penang/ Malaysia during 12-15 February 2001, asserted:

"The guiding principle should no longer be the mere `maximization of profits' and an `exaggerated materialism,' but rather the right of all people for genuine human development. Hence, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and `all people of good will' are once again reminded of our responsibility to support all efforts for a more human international tourism. A small step of this is the decision by the WTO in September 1999 to adopt the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. We therefore call for an intensive dialogue of the World Tourism Organisation with all stakeholders to improve the scope of the code and to work together on an acceptable strategy for implementation.

Tourism is still basically involved with serving the rich and this can be a demeaning experience for those whose culture is displayed as a tourist attraction. The mission perspective should be towards the fullness of life which is central to the *Missio Dei*. The church can still play a major role in exposing and challenging the aspects that negate life. The churches have a responsibility towards identifying and then advocating on behalf of the victims of tourism. Acceptable tourism is based on the interests and needs of the local people especially in the process of planning and implementation. We consider information, public debates and discussions to be an integral part of this process ... the term `sustainable tourism' gives undue attention to

tourism and implies that tourism should be made sustainable. It is better to limit tourism to the part it can play towards the sustainable development of local communities."

Indigenous Peoples' Interfaith Dialogue on Globalisation and Tourism[15]

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT)/Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) organised this dialogue in Chiang Rai, Thailand during January 14 -18, 2002. Delegates coming from Bangladesh, Bolivia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand shared their collective experiences, and deliberated on the consequences of tourism under the strong influence of globalisation on Indigenous Communities.

The Joint Statement was mainly focused on international processes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 (IYE-2002). The CBD was questioned because its guidelines had serious implications for the lives and livelihoods of indigenous peoples, but the latter were not given the time or the platform to present their considered opinion on the guidelines. Regarding IYE, it was asserted:

"We see the IYE-2002 initiative as part of the dispossession process through increased privatisation and globalisation ... Tourism in the context of globalisation brings in market competition, appropriates lands and resources of indigenous communities, and forces Indigenous Peoples to become showcases and "human museum exhibits". Indigenous Peoples are becoming increasingly vulnerable to exploitation by bioprospectors and biopirates, where traditional wisdom and knowledge and natural resources have been expropriated for business interests.

We affirm the *apriori* rights of Indigenous Peoples to their traditional lands, territories, and resources, the integrity of which has been sustained for by generations through their traditional way of life in harmony with nature.

We uphold that *the traditional values and very fabric of Indigenous Peoples systems*, which include social, cultural, resource management, belief, education, agricultural, technological, political, judicial, health, and economic systems, *can contribute alternatives to our current human, economic and environmental crises."* (italics mine)

Consultation in Bangkok on Tourism, Traditions and Terrorism, 2003[16]

During April 28 - May 1, 2003, ECOT and CCA organised a consultation in Bangkok on Tourism, Traditions and Terrorism. Representatives of civil society, academe and religious bodies from Australia, Bangladesh, Burma, France, Germany, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand participated. The consultation came out with a declaration which highlighted the following concerns:

"Tourism and the new world order

The vocabulary of the new tourism world order includes words like sustainability, empowerment, participation, partnership, peace, good governance etc. which indicate the globalisation of the tourism discourse. We believe crisis management is not the key to the future of tourism; rather people-centred concerns should become the core of our approach.

We deliberated the burning issues of our regions such as the attempt to lease the Andaman and Nicobar Island to foreign corporations in India, the corporate takeover and environmental degradation of Koh Chang island in Thailand, reclamation of Yung Shue Wan Harbour for large chain of stores and restaurants in the Lamma Island in Hong Kong, displacement of the people in round houses in Fujian in China, the use of forced and prison labour for tourism infrastructure in Burma, alienation of the communities in Bali, the increasing sex tourism, trafficking and child pornography often supported by tourists, all of which indicated that besides being a high risk business, tourism impacts on destinations have consequences for communities around the world.

The debate on sustainable tourism must give due importance and consideration to the issues that concern human dignity and protection of nature. We also appeal to the World Heritage Movement, to ensure that there is no displacement of people at designated sites.

Tourism services negotiations are being used to increase pressure on governments to open-up to transnational corporations. We condemn the aggressive and unfair tactics of the European Union and the US in forcing developing countries into submission. The most critical area is the privatisation of basic services whilst taking extremely protectionist positions to safeguard their own interests.

Tourism and Development

All tourist destinations are driven by money and over-commercialization has made the economic benefits of tourism more important than any other. Tourism statistics give us an illusionary view of the contribution of tourism particularly to least developed countries and developing countries which are not based on any criteria of validity. The data are frequently used to justify distorted infrastructure development based on external borrowing leading to debt-trap for nations. Therefore, we believe any form or type of tourism has to be developed on the basis of local needs, motivations and paths.

Like terrorism, tourism in the contemporary world is often a form of aggression on unsuspecting communities, cultures and the environment. We believe that the demand for peace and justice in *our* new world order requires the UN as an international body to stand firm on the basis of international law. The UN should accord priority to these concerns of all its member countries represented in the General Assembly instead of giving post legitimation for any unilateral action anywhere in the world.

Tourism, Traditions and Religion

We believe that tourism as a vehicle, and the tourist as a pilgrim of peace and justice cannot be realized as long as commodification and conspicuous consumption, unsustainable uses of natural resources like land, water, energy, forests and oceans as well as unfair labour and trade practices are the norm in tourism. Resistance to such aggression requires peoples' movements and faith communities that draw their inspiration from vibrant histories, spirituality, cultures and traditions that still remain alive across large regions of the world to fight barriers to the free movement of peoples."

From Mumbai to Porto Alegre: Statement of Concern of the Tourism Interventions Group at the 4th World Social Forum, 16-21 January 2004[17]

At the 4th World Social Forum (WSF) in Mumbai (16-21 Jan. 2004), the Tourism Interventions Group, in which ECOT played an important role, declared its commitment to change the character of global tourism towards a tourism that is just and equitable for people in destinations.

A primary concern was the undemocratic nature of the ongoing negotiations in the World Trade Organisation's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) that were slated to end by January 2005. The Tourism Interventions Group stressed the urgent need to bring in experiences from

the grassroots on the environmental and social costs of tourism to inform the negotiating positions of governments and underline the need for a rollback in the negotiations.

Highlighting tourism issues within a multitude of anti-globalisation and human rights movements such as those related to women, children, dalits, indigenous people, migrants, unorganised labour, small island, mountain and coastal communities, as well as struggles related to land, water and access to natural resources, was crucial to sharpen local struggles and community initiatives of those impacted by tourism.

From experiences of working on tourism issues the Tourism Interventions Group was extremely sceptical about the claims of tourism being a provider of jobs and earner of foreign exchange. The actual benefits that finally reach people in destinations are negligible compared to the profits of transnational tourism corporations. Leakages constitute a major loss of income for host communities and countries. At the same time it is local communities who bear the costs of tourism development in terms of social, cultural and environmental impacts.

Ecumenical Voices on World Tourism during 2005-2007

Christian Conference of Asia

In the spirit of the movement of ECOT, Prawate Khid-arn, General Secretary, the Christian Conference of Asia made the following statement on 27th September 2005[18]:

"We in Asia are asked to believe in the 'mantra of tourism'- that when investment in tourism grows, our economies will expand, and wealth will spread. The scales of profits from the industry make it tempting to believe that. The facts-on-the-ground are in stark variance with that claim. The phenomenon of leakages of tourism income quite often means that something like 30% remains in the countries of origin of the tourist. All inclusive packages make certain that most of the income stays back in the country of origin- and the receiving country is compelled to accept packages which leave them disadvantaged. Meanwhile, the investments made in the tourism industry are heavily exempted from conditions normally imposed on local business enterprises.

This is why we are prompted to ask the question: Who benefits from tourism? Certainly, not the people. The challenge that follows then is to focus our attentions in the task of democratising tourism- putting in the

hands of the people so that they will benefit in economic terms. Above even that, the people must have the right to protect themselves and draw the lines beyond which a tourist cannot cross. It is not the right of a tourist to have on demand a 'sex partner' who he/she can buy off just to satisfy their sexual whims and fancies, to abuse a child who is vulnerable, to disregard and abuse the local cultures of people, to wantonly destroy nature, disturb the normal patterns of wild life, or violate the fragile eco-systems of coastal communities and small islands."

Churches have yet to come out with strong voices against commercial tourism and with proposals for alternative tourism. In the name of development and prosperity let not the Church be the proverbial wood-cutter chopping off the very branch on which it is seated

Another Tourism is Possible

In September 2005, Shirley Susan, then Coordinator – Programme and Communications, Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) presented a paper entitled "Another Tourism is Possible", in which among several things she emphasised:

"Tourism in general brings to one's mind, pictures of clear blue seas and skies, natural forests, wildlife and other attractions in colourful brochures, posters and picture postcards. This is primarily mooted by vigorous advertising campaigns by tour operators, airlines, hotel industry and travel agencies with lucrative offers, deals and packages in both developing and developed countries which has only increased several fold. Additionally, opening up of new routes by airlines and lesser restrictions to length of stay have further enhanced the capacity to travel. The governments have complimented the promotional drive of the tourism industry by opening up their coastlines, backwater and pristine natural zones for the rigorous development of tourism. Subsidies and tax holidays have followed thereby attracting both national and international investments for infrastructure development.

The tourism turnover projections have always hidden the return of profit drained to the developed countries. Experiences of tourism in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives have shown that even the little gained in tourism has not percolated to the advantage of the local communities... While at the same time, tourism in local tourist centres has destroyed primary production economies – agriculture, fishing and related industries while giving rise to drug abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and children.

Today, there are very few places in the world that are immune from sex tourism and new places emerge yearly. Countries that have been identified for sex tourists include Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka in South and Southeast Asia. Other countries in the west include Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Netherlands and certain parts of Africa are now being frequented by "sex tourists" looking for minors as a result of a shift in the business from Asia following police crackdowns. With the collapse of the Soviet block, several countries such as Russia, Hungary and the Czech Republic have become popular centres for sex tourists too. In the post-Tsunami situation, several of the sex tourists have been on the prowl to lay their hands on children whose lives are at increased risk in the Tsunami affected countries of Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand."

Tourism: Opens Doors for Women?

Questioning the theme of World Tourism Day in 2007, "Tourism opens Doors for Women," Caesar D'Mello of ECOT stated: "While ECOT acknowledges instances when women do benefit from tourism, this unfortunately does not apply to the majority of women involved in the world of tourism. There is a plethora of statistics and reports around the world that bear this out. ECOT strongly believes that a Tourism that is associated with prostitution and the human trafficking that accompanies it increasingly, in no way 'opens doors for women'.

A tourism that is propped up by images of women and the lure of sexual pleasures is not one that liberates women. Yes, handicrafts and other items produced by women do attract the tourist dollar. But is the price paid for these products just? Are the wages of women in these enterprises fair? Is the trivialisation of culture that occurs in various tourist destinations when women are dressed in indigenous dress as if in a costume to attract the tourist camera the way to open doors for women? Do women have a voice in the decision making that determines the nature of tourism in their environment? Would it be more appropriate to conclude that 'tourism closes doors for women'?

The UN has given the world a set of goals known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the hope that world poverty will be halved by 2015. Any real progress towards such an outcome would truly open doors and opportunities for women. The UNWTO is 'committed to Tourism, Travel and the MDGs'. ECOT calls on the UNWTO to reflect the perspective of women who are disadvantaged and discriminated by tourism."

Corporate Social Responsibility and Tourism

The ITB Berlin (Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin) Convention[19] is the world's largest annual tourism trade fair which had its beginnings in the 1960s. The companies represented at the fair include hotels, tourist boards, tour operators, system providers, airlines and car rental companies. The thematically ordered market segments help visitors and exhibitors to quickly find their way through the wide product range of IBT Berlin: Book World, Business Travel Days, Cruises, Cultural Tourism, Economy Accommodation, eTravel World, Adventure & Responsible Tourism, Gay & Lesbian Travel, ITB Mobile Travel Services, Training and Employment (Career Centre), Travel Technology, Trends & Events, Wellness, Youth Travel.

Corporate Social Responsibility has been one of the important concerns of the IBT Convention particularly from 2009. Corporate Social Responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.[20] In other words, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. CSR is a process with the aim to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere who may also be considered as stakeholders.[21]

Responding to the decision of the IBT Convention to set aside one day for addressing the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility, ECOT articulated its concern on the matter[22]:

> "The Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism acknowledges that a growing awareness of CSR has taken place at some levels in the tourism industry within recent years. The inclusion of Corporate Social Responsibility Day in the 2009 ITB Convention program attests to this. This is welcome. Some good practices have emerged in this area... And such an image is attractive in the market where increasingly people are concerned about the state of our planet – socially, economically and ecologically.
>
> It is one thing, however, to display a CSR reference on one's website, letterhead or in advertising or statutory documents. As the saying goes, the proof of the pudding is in the eating! Does the operation of CSR in tourism have a real beneficial impact on the ground? A CSR that does not make any difference to the sharp edge of reality remains

> at best a theoretical exercise despite the good intentions.
>
> The tourism industry operates in a world which faces social, economic and ecological challenges, and in such a world does have the responsibility to act as an accountable global citizen... The costs involved in implementing CSR guidelines that are truly effective are an investment in the development of a positive image which assists marketing to the clientele. Or will the current global economic crisis be an excuse to shy away from the path of such CSR?
>
> It may be argued that achieving a high quality of CSR will take time and cannot happen overnight. What such argumentation loses sight of is that the impact of tourism is to be measured in real time and we are running out of time. A case in point is the phenomenon of climate change…Given that various aspects of tourism (air travel, energy rich consumption patterns involved in high end tourism facilities such as hotels and resorts, etc) contribute to climate change, the tourism industry does not have much time to make real efforts to become more sustainable."

Climate Justice and Tourism

As mentioned above, ECOT expressed concern about the impact of tourism on climate change. In a separate document, ECOT made the following comments[23]:

"As with the overall model of development, climate change illustrates the growing urgency for paradigm shift in the tourism industry, a sprawling industry ever in search of new destinations, including some to replace those threatened or disappearing due to global warming! In order to meet the challenge of ensuring that global warming remains below the dangerous threshold of 2 degrees Centigrade, every nation, every industry sector and every human being is called to take on a fair share of the mitigation burden. This call is directed to the tourism industry too.

Greenhouse gas emissions – contributions from tourism

The global tourism industry is a significant contributor to climate change. However, it should be noted that just 2% of the world's population actively takes part in air passenger transport, contributing to tourism's share of global warming which is up to 12.5% (if non-CO2 effects are taken into account). Aviation alone contributes 4.9% of this.

Alarmingly, it is forecast that carbon emissions from tourism will grow by 162% in the period 2005-2035. This is only to be expected as massive

expansion of airports and increase in low-cost carriers pave the way for such growth in emissions. Moreover, the tourism industry is notorious for higher per capita consumption of water, poor energy efficiency, waste management issues, which leads to serious negative environmental and social impacts.

The kind of issues the world community will face arising from the effects of climate change and its link to tourism is provided by the Maldives in Asia. It is now well accepted that the sea level rise due to global warming threatens to fully submerge the islands in the coming years, a point dramatically made recently by the Maldivian government holding its Cabinet meeting underwater! What will be the fate of the Maldivian citizens who will be forced to become refugees from climate change when their home is submerged, as is plausible if global warming continues apace? And yet tourists, whose emissions are contributing to such a situation, are still encouraged to go to the Maldives, perhaps to enjoy a last 'before it is too late' experience. The Pacific is another region where the islands are under threat from global warming.

Sustainable mitigation needed – Biofuels a false hope

Sensitive to the charge that they are unconcerned about the climate change impact of flying but still adhering to the growth path, the aviation industry and the tourism sector have recently been hailing the development of "sustainably grown biofuels". The United Nations World Tourist Organisation (UNWTO) is also waiting "for the earliest possible global introduction of sustainable aviation biofuels." These so-called sustainable biofuels constitute a panacea so that the 'business-as-usual' mode can continue.

Are biofuels the answers? Environmental and development organisations claim that these alleged "sustainable biofuels" lack appropriate safeguards. Using them on high commercial levels simply cannot be sustainable. Massive land, resources and energy will be needed, so that the outcome cannot really contribute to reduce global warming. Using agrofuels for commercial aviation will only shift climate problems to other areas such as environmental or social concerns including fresh water shortages, soil run-off and erosion, deforestation, space use, endangered food security. Food shortages and the consequent community anger have the potential in some countries to endanger national security.

Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM)

Alarmingly, the UNTWO put up for discussion the proposition that "some

Clean Development Mechanism and Emission Trading projects and trading revenues be earmarked for specific allotment to related aviation and tourism projects..." The experience suggests that while on the one hand, CDM projects from big enterprises might be able to create employment and reduce emissions, on the other hand, CDM was misused greatly by Western companies to offset emissions in the South instead of the North, therefore not tackling the problem at its roots.CDM has become a money-making tool, and even though its basic requirement is to finance climate friendly projects, research done by independent NGOs such as International River Organisation or CDM-Watch show the opposite. Many 'business-as-usual' projects were financed by CDM."[24]

Tourism and Bio-Diversity

When in 2009 and 2010 the themes of World Tourism Day focused on diversity and bio-diversity, ECOT once again articulated sobering cautions before the people:

2009[25]

Globalisation or 'Clonalisation'

Tourism is supposed to widen our understanding and appreciation of other cultures and ways of life. But nowadays the tourism experience can be very similar whether one is travelling to India, Thailand or Latin America. Differences in language, in people's appearance and in local architecture provide the illusion of a change of scene, but many aspects have become universal: the cell phones, the branded clothing, fast-food restaurants, the shopping malls, the 'muzak', and so on. The hotels have become standardized, and some tourists demand this: to be surrounded by known systems of reference in the comfort zone of a hotel cocoon in a foreign place, which presumably is being visited for a widening of one's education! The 'demonstration effect' of tourism – the desire of host communities, especially younger generations, for the gadgetry and clothing displayed by tourists so as to look like them, and hence tempted to sell their culture in order to afford these items – is another factor to consider. Is such 'diversity' to be celebrated?

On the other hand, however, tourism, as the epitome of globalisation, offers an interesting paradox. While globalised tourism can be seen as contributing to the homogenisation of cultures, it offers tourists experiences of 'authenticity' witnessed in tourism destinations. Some indigenous traditions

now forgotten are sometimes revived and performed for the sake of tourists in the quest for a good photograph.

Some indigenous peoples have acknowledged that some of their 'representations' have been fake. In such situations one can wonder if tourism is actually celebrating diversity or simply being an agent for the commodification and folklorisation of cultures.

Consider again the fragile nature of sites like Machu Pichu or the Great Barrier Reef which are now threatened through high volume tourist traffic. It seems legitimate to wonder whether tourism really contributes to preserving biodiversity. While climate change is already taking its toll on the most touristic destinations on the planet, the industry sells 'last visits before disappearance' packages to those doomed places.

ECOT believes that the counter to mass tourism is provided by community-based tourism (CBT), where local communities manage the projects, keep them on a small scale and share the profits on an equitable basis. While we should be wary of CBT too being subsumed in the jargon of tourism industry advertising, let us keep in mind that its ethos is the best suited to developing a tourism respecting and celebrating diversity."(*italics mine*)

2010[26]

"A close relationship between *Tourism and Biodiversity* is asserted when the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) term them as 'the natural allies'. But are they really? 'Allies' connote support for one another. Can the tourism sector say that its operations have been beneficial to supporting, nurturing and enhancing biodiversity, and to the local and indigenous communities around the world whose lives and culture are linked with it?

Tourism has turned biodiversity into one of its most marketable assets. Images of the natural environment, unspoiled rainforests, crystal clear waters, wild life in their natural habitat are a standard fare in the myriad tourism advertising programmes such as *Incredible India* and *Amazing Thailand,* drawing visitors to all parts of the world.

Biodiversity works like a magnet for tourism. Yet, ironically, it is also one of its greatest victims. Saturation mass tourism with its impact on the environment does not help biodiversity, contributing to the disruption of the delicate balance within ecosystems and in turn to the irreversible loss of

forms of life. It is a paradox that while needing biodiversity to flourish, tourism allows its degradation.

It is estimated that, as a result of unsustainable human actions – mass tourism being one of them – biological species have been disappearing at 50-100 times the natural rate and an estimated 34,000 plant and 5,200 animal species face extinction in the near future."

Theological and Ecological ECOT Voices from India

During 2011 ECOT organised two important consultations in India. Extracts from statements of those two consultations are presented below[27]:

Chennai 2011[28]

A theological perspective on tourism

Mass commercial tourism objectifies the other for hedonistic satisfaction. Women are reduced as objects for satisfying sensual pleasures. Children become victims of paedophiles roaming different Asian and other countries. People from the local communities serve as cooks, cleaners, life guards on the beaches and so on for a pittance with no job guarantee or satisfaction, but alienation. To satisfy the tourists' gaze, nature has been reduced as scenic objects and culture is recycled and presented. Objectification of the other is the main foundation on which mass commercial tourism operates.

Tourism promotes the wrong assumption that people have the ability to gain fulfilment through interaction with objects, like nature, beaches or objectified humans, like prostitutes, and that a subject gains subjecthood by relating with an object. In the absence of a subject to subject relationship, people are deprived of their human dignity. Interaction with objectified people or nature leads to the erosion of peopleness. All forms of objectifications are anathema to God in whose image we are created.

The churches and theological colleges have not addressed tourism within the framework of theology, ethics, social analysis, and as an important missiological concern. Mass tourism thrives by marketing the sun, sea, mountains, rivers, landscapes, and nature in a way that is an affront to the creation of God, which is a gift to be shared by all. Mass tourism does not respect life, culture and environment because it has its roots in profit making, pleasure and enjoyment. Mass tourism brings destruction to God's creation and thus it is an ethical, theological and missiological concern. Tourism denies the right to live in dignity especially to the poor and the marginalized people. It exploits, abuses and misuses people at the margin. It also sees environment

merely from an utilitarian perspective denying its integrity and wholeness. It breeds injustice and thus contradicts the testimonies of the Bible. It has become a theological and ethical imperative to challenge and critique the present paradigm of tourism, and search for an alternative."

Shillong[29]

"When the mountains disappear, what will be our identity?"

There is a dominant view that tourism can 'boost' development in the society. In a world driven by neo-liberal economic philosophy, tourism is seen as a major player for economic growth. This is not the kind of tourism that we envisage for a region like the North East India. What we want to promote is a kind of tourism that is fair, sustainable, and community-based. We believe that the development – of which tourism is seen as an integral part – that is being imposed on the people of this region will undermine the traditional productive and natural systems, and increase the gulf between the rich and the poor. It is often associated with much displacement and uprooting of people and terrain, prompting a participant in the light of his experience to exclaim: "When the mountain disappears, what will be our identity?"

As responsible people grounded in the call of the gospel and its values, we reject the kind of development that is being touted as good for the people of this region. Many churches in the region seem to follow the various forms of prosperity theologies which promote the belief that money is the indicator of prosperity, and God is blessing them with such prosperity. We call the churches in the region, which has a Christian population of some 4 million, to address in response of tourism their theology of development and the Christian basis for it. Tourism growth in North East India is in its early stages, and hence there is a God-given opportunity to look ahead and consider the kind of tourism that will come to the region if unchecked.

Does the operation of Community Social Responsibility in tourism have a real beneficial impact on the ground? A CSR that does not make any difference to the sharp edge of reality remains at best a theoretical exercise despite the good intentions.

We express our concern over the possible exploitation and commoditization of indigenous people and their culture arising out of the introduction of the so called development and mass tourism enterprises... We also urge the churches to make their members realize that

critiquing and campaigning on issues like development and tourism is part of their Christian duty and mission and not to be treated simply as worldly matters.

We acknowledge that responsible and community based tourism will help ensure that the local environment, culture, values, ethos and heritage are not adversely affected, and the local communities, invariably poor, are economically benefited. We call upon the churches in the region and outside, human rights organizations, and the civil society movements to work for a tourism model which is based on ethics, human rights, community and sustainability."

Tourism - Indeed an Ecumenical Concern!

Business corporates are the main promoters of commercial tourism within the globalisation paradigm. Governments are lured or forced into embracing commercial tourism. Middle and upper class people who benefit from the loaves or crumbs that fall from the table of the tourism industry are enamoured of tourism. It is however the people on the margins and mute creation (which does not speak human language) that suffer the tortures of tourism.

Tourism is indeed an ecumenical concern because people, groups, and all of creation across the globe are feeling its impact. While many ecumenical bodies, particularly NGOs, are raising their voices and calling for a paradigm change in tourism[30] so that it becomes a people-centred and eco-friendly tourism, churches have yet to come out with strong voices against commercial tourism and with proposals for alternative tourism. In the name of development and prosperity let not the Church be the proverbial wood-cutter chopping off the very branch on which it is seated using the saw of tourism!

One important issue which the churches would have to address in response to tourism is their theology of development. 'Development' is a term given to us by the powers that be. It is based on an ideology of exploitation of resources (including human resources) and a success-driven goal (which is measured in terms of monetary profits and material possessions). However, churches need to cultivate a Biblical, indigenous, ecological perspective of growth (not development) and fruitfulness (not success). Growth takes place in integral relationship with all of creation (and not through exploitation), and fruitfulness is the ongoing all-round spirit of growth (not measured in monetary terms).

The word 'tourism' itself needs to be critically examined. Implied in this

term is the popular ideology of 'seeing', 'viewing', or exploring' something, the attainment of pleasure for the tourist and his/her satisfaction on getting the worth of the money spent on the touring enterprise. The tourist becomes the 'subject', and the place, people, culture, etc., being toured become the 'object'. Tourism primarily provides sensual pleasure to the subject. Tourism often plays on the emotions and sentiments of people, like the tours to the Holy Land (Israel). Then again tourism romanticises indigenous people and their culture, converting them into museum pieces. The term tourism needs to be substituted by suitable terms, such as 'mutually edifying pilgrimage', 'solidarity visit', 'reciprocal sharing experiences', etc. Churches need to lead the way in this direction. Such programmes would still have to be community based offerings.

Another important response that churches could make is that of playing the role of a responsible critic of the development and tourism policies and programmes of governments and commercial companies. Many churches have their Mission Departments, Social Fronts, etc. which could help the laity by critiquing the programmes of governments and commercial enterprises, thereby highlighting their impact on all dimensions of the lives of the people and the future of the society, by studying the bills that are to be placed in the legislative assemblies and parliaments and encouraging the churches to make their views heard by the assemblies and the parliament, by advocating and lobbying for eco-human centred just policies and programmes, etc. The majority of the church members need to be made to realise that critiquing and campaigning is part of their spiritual Christian duty and mission.

A fourth important response of the churches ought to be in protecting and empowering people who are victims of development and tourism. The criminal enterprises of child and women trafficking have to be halted. People and groups, who are displaced and forced to migrate (being sacrificed for the cause of the larger good of the middle and upper class nation), need to be protected and empowered in their struggle for their homeland and their livelihood.

The tourism industry is big and powerful. Therefore churches need to nurture and maintain ecumenical oneness. Only if churches of different traditions come together and resist commercial tourism while at the same time advocating and promoting alternative tourism, will they become effective in facilitating transformation. Remember the adage: United we stand, divided we fall!

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1. Consider a case study assessing any ecumenical bodies (church councils, inter-religious bodies, NGOs, etc.) or a denominational entity responding to tourism. What are their programmatic activities? Do their emphases and framework reflect the perspective of a 'preferential option for the poor', contextual theology?
2. Articulate an Ecumenical Theology of Alternative Tourism. What would be your theological, ethical and missiological emphases?
3. What should churches do collectively in addressing the challenges/ problems posed by commercial tourism? How can they be equipped to understand and respond to the issues? What are the difficulties and impediments?

Endnotes

[1] There are several ecumenical and ecumenically minded bodied bodies such as World Council of Churches; Pacific Conference of Churches; the United Church of Canada; National Council of Churches in India; Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs; Peace for Life; ECOT; ECPAT; Bread for the World; Acción por un Turismo Responsible; Tourism Concern, UK; Andaman Discoveries and the North Andaman Community Tourism Network; Community Tourism Council of Prainha do Canto Verde, Ceará, Brazil; Alternative Tourism Group, Palestine; TOURISM Watch, Germany; CETRI - Centre tricontinental, Belgium; Coastal Development Partnership, Bangladesh; ALBA SUD, Spain; FASTENOPFER, Switzerland; Foro de Turismo Responsable– FTR, Spain; SWISSAID; Swiss Foundation for Development Cooperation; Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research, South Africa; Asia Pacific Ecumenical News; ATE Swiss Association for transport and environment; VCD - Verkehrsclub Deutschland (Transportation Club Germany); Equations, India, etc

[2] Anna Ivanyi, *Linkages between Bio-Diversity and Tourism: An Introduction*, Published by Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity, p.6.

[3] Ranjan Solomon," Tourism at the Service of Bringing People together", *People on the Move*, No. 96 (Suppl.), December 2004, http://www.vatican.va/ roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/pom2004_96-suppl/ rc_pc_migrants_pom96 suppl_solomon.html (downloaded on 11th November 2013)

[4] Ron O' Grady, "Thirty Years on", *Contours*, Vol.19 No.3, August-September 2009, p.18.

[5] http://www.tourism-watch.de/content/open-letter-conference-ecumenical-coalition-third-world- tourism-ectwt-mission-perspective (downloaded on 11th November 2013)

[6] Ron O' Grady, "Thirty Years on" *Contours*, p.18.

[7] http://www.tourism-watch.de/content/open-letter-conference-ecumenical-coalition-third-world-tourism-_ectwtmissionperspective_(downloaded on 11th November 2013)

[8] http://mangroveactionproject.org/issues/tourism/ecumenical-coalition-on-tourism-ecot-principal-aims (downloaded on 11th November 2013)

[9] Ron O' Grady, "Thirty Years on" *Contours*, p.18.

[10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Tourism_Day (downloaded on 12th November 2013). The themes of World Tourism Day over the years have been the following: 1980: Tourism's contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage and to peace and mutual understanding; 1981: Tourism and the quality of life; 1982: Pride in travel: good guests and good hosts;1983: Travel and holidays are a right but also a responsibility for all; 1984: Tourism for international understanding, peace and cooperation;1985: Youth Tourism: cultural and historical heritage for peace and friendship; 1986: Tourism: a vital force for world peace;1987: Tourism for development; 1988: Tourism: education for all; 1989: The free movement of tourists creates one world; 1990: Tourism: an unrecognized industry, a service to be released ("The Hague Declaration on Tourism"); 1991: Communication, information and education: powerlines of tourism development; 1992: Tourism: a factor of growing social and economic solidarity and of encounter between people; 1993: Tourism development and environmental protection: towards a lasting harmony; 1994: Quality staff, quality tourism;1995: WTO: serving world tourism for twenty years; 1996: Tourism: a factor of tolerance and peace; 1997: Tourism: a leading activity of the twenty-first century for job creation and environmental protection; 1998: Public-private sector partnership: the key to tourism development and promotion (Host: Mexico); 1999: Tourism: preserving world heritage for the new millennium (Host: Chile); 2000: Technology and nature: two challenges for tourism at the dawn of the twenty-first century (Host: Germany); 2001: Tourism: a toll for peace and dialogue among civilizations (Host: Iran); 2002: Ecotourism, the key to sustainable development (Host: Costa Rica); 2003: Tourism: a driving force for poverty alleviation, job creation and social harmony (Host: Algeria); 2004: Sport and tourism: two living forces for mutual understanding, culture and the development of societies (Host: Malaysia); 2005: Travel and transport: from imaginary of Jules Verne to the reality of the 21st century (Host: Qatar); 2006: Tourism Enriches (Host: Portugal); 2007: Tourism opens doors for women (Host: Sri Lanka);2008: Tourism Responding to the Challenge of Climate Change

and global warming (Host:India); 2009: Tourism - Celebrating Diversity (Host: Africa.); 2010: Tourism & Biodiversity (Host: China); 2011: Tourism Linking Cultures (Host: Egypt.); 2012: Tourism and Energetic Sustainability (Maspalomas, Gran Canaria); 2013: Tourism and Water: Protecting our Common Future(Host : Malaysia).

11 Ron O' Grady, "Thirty Years on" *Contours*, p.18.

12 It should be noted that a conference on "Third World People and Tourism" was held in 1986 in Bad Boll, West Germany. It brought together both government and private executives of the tourist industry, victims of tourism, social scientists, representatives of funding agencies, educators and official Church representatives. Providing a venue for honest exchange, the meeting gave the victims an opportunity to speak directly to policy makers. The tourism industry could present its side of the story. The Bad Boll conference statement makes a forceful plea: "We know we must ... look at Third World Tourism from the actual experiences of people affected by it... "We make a special appeal to Churches in tourists generating countries ... to listen to the cries of the people. There is an urgent need ... to pay attention to the Third World. Especially when you are bringing dehumanizing effects on the people of Third World communities. "The world is one; when some are dehumanized, all are dehumanized; human persons cannot be ´developed´ at the expense of the underdevelopment of other human persons." Cf. http://www.ucanews.com/storyarchive/?post_name=/1987/07/29/ucan-feature-third-world-churches-react-to-tourism malpractices&post_id=35551 (downloaded on November 11, 2013)

13 http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/1992/04/02/conference-to-end-child-prostitution-in- tourismheld-in bangkok & post_ id= 41011 (downloaded on November 11, 2013)

14 http://www.tourism-watch.de/content/open-letter-conference-ecumenical-coalition-third-world-tourism- ectwtmissionperspective (downloaded on 11th November 2013)

15 http://www.tourism-watch.de/content/joint-statement-indigenous-peoples-interfaith-dialogue-globalisation-and-tourist (downloaded on 11th November 2013)

16 http://www.tourism-watch.de/en/node/1059 (downloaded on 11th November 2013)

17 www.e-alliance.ch/media/media-4589.doc *(downloaded on 11th November 2013)*

18 http://cca.org.hk/home/world-tourism-day-2005/(downloaded on 11th November 2013)

19 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ITB_Berlin (downloaded on November 11, 2013) ; see also http://www.itbberlin.de/en/AboutITBBerlin/ITBAtAGlance/History/History_1.html#skiplinks (downloaded on November 11, 2013)

20 http://www.mallenbaker.net/csr/definition.php (downloaded on November 11, 2013)

[21] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility (downloaded on November 11, 2013)

[22] Cf. http://www.apenews.org/newsread.asp?nid=201(downloaded on November 11, 2013)

[23] http://www.albasud.org/downloads/52.pdf (Downloaded on November 11, 2013)

[24] Concerns about Climate Justice and Tourism were reaffirmed in the "Last Call" made by ecumenical bodies, including ECOT, to the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Durban 2011. Refer http://www.fairtradetourism.org.za/uploads/files/24_Nov_LAST_CALL_TO_DURBAN_COP_17_position_paper_climate_justice_tourism.pdf

[25] http://www.fairunterwegs.org/fileadmin/ContentGlobal/PDF/ECOT_WTD_2009_Statement.pdf (Downloaded on November 11, 2013)

[26] http://www.keralatourismwatch.org/node/142 (Downloaded on November 11, 2013)

[27] Also refer, Wati Longchar, " Commercial Tourism: An Agenda for Theological Curriculum Development" http://ptcaweb.blogspot.in/2012/12/commercial-tourism-agenda-for.html

[28] http://ecumenism.net/2011/03 chennai _ statement _ on _ the _ theology _ of _tourism.htm (Downloaded on November 11, 2013) tourism; http://pciga.org/sub.php? sub=SD.php (Downloaded on November 11, 2013)

[29] http://www.tourism-watch.de/content/joint-statement-indigenous-peoples-interfaith-dialogue-globalisation

[30] Cf. Wati Longchar, "Commercial Tourism: An agenda for Theological Curriculum Development", http://ptcaweb.blogspot.in/2012/12/commercial-tourism-agenda-for.html (downloaded on 11th November 2013)

13

Gobalized Free Market Tourism:
Questions for Theology from the Household of God

Huang Po Ho

One of the pervasive features of most of the Global South is the presence of mass commercial tourism. It is vigorously argued for and promoted as 'a motor for development' and poverty alleviation in developing countries. Such tourism depends on the attractions of land, water, mountains, nature and biodiversity of God's creation. These have become gifts to the tourism industry to promote its brand of 'sun, sand and sex tourism', gifts that it does not own but belong to all humanity, to all people. Yet they are strategically and effectively exploited globally by a few to bring in great profit to the investors at the expense of the degradation of nature and biodiversity, displacement of people, loss of livelihoods, denigration of culture. What has to be realised is that the formula of contemporary mass commercial tourism is grounded in the philosophy of the primacy of the neo-liberal free market, otherwise known as capitalism, that both in theory and practice posit minimal control and regulation of the operations of the marketplace. Given the impact of a globalised tourism so influenced on human beings who are disadvantaged and marginalised, serious issues arise for the church. If it is to realise its call to be a genuine expression of the `populus dei' and gospel values in the world, what does it have to say on the human issues imposed by mass tourism from the perspective of justice, ethics, reconciliation and mission? What configurations of tourism are evolving in various parts of the Global South where many of the readers of this anthology are, and how can and does the church engage in their context? Clearly, tourism throws up a slate of human concerns that do require theological analysis, reading, and response if a church and its institutions are to be community focused.

Introduction

Tourism has been defined and seen differently by concerned people. No consensus has been reached about the definition. However, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has a definition which is widely adopted. It states: "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes."[1]

Generally, tourism involves industries of transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking, retail shops, entertainment businesses and other hospitality services. There are attempts to distinguish tourism from travel. However no significant distinctions have been reached. Semantically, all tourists are travellers, but not all travellers are tourists. But travellers are seldom separated from the category of tourism. Therefore, attempts to distinguish the two do not make much sense to the discourses.

Nevertheless, following the neo-liberal free market-oriented economic development, tourism activities have been commercially organised to become a collective business industry. It has initiated strategic promotions to encourage and gather great numbers of tourists and tourist groups, and to increase their frequencies of trips, and thus altering the nature of tourism. Such a mass commercial tourism industry, influenced by the free market orientation has created different negative effects related to the exploitation of nature (creation) and distortion of human relationships. It is this sort of negative commercial tourism industry that invites our attention to reflect upon it theologically and to call for repentance and transformation.

Tourism and religious pilgrimages

Healthy tourism puts people in contact with other cultures, lifestyles, other religions, other ways of seeing the world and its history. There are many sub-sets of people participating in tourism. One such group of people are those linked with tourism-related religious activities. Since the ancient times, there has been an enticing and interesting linkage between religion and tourism. Tourism and related activities interact with religious life almost in every corner of the world: "From Amish communities of rural Pennsylvania to the snowy summits of Mount Fuji in Japan, from the mysterious ruins of Machu Picchu in the Peruvian Andes to the monumental pyramids of Giza in Egypt, from Chartres in France to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, millions of tourists seek out places of religion every year."[2]

From a Christian perspective, ecumenism is a trend that is being increasingly associated with religious tourism. The other trend that favours knowledge of other religions and cultures is that which is known as spiritual or spirituality tourism. Tourism destinations are conducive to interfaith and intercultural encounters and dialogue.[3] Pilgrimages are undoubtedly the most common form of religious and spiritual tourism. Some religions incorporate pilgrimages in their practice, as is the case for Buddhists, Catholics and Orthodox Christians, Hindus, Muslims, or Shintoists. In others, this practice does not exist, but their followers still travel to visit the sites that mark the history of their co-religionists.[4] Though there is no specific terminology of "pilgrimage" in the Bible, the concept of pilgrimage as a religious journey to pay a visit to the sacred sites is known from remote antiquity. The story about Abraham's visit to Mount Moria (Gen. 22.2) has been a well known passage to many of the readers and followers of the Bible.

According to the expository studies of Biblical terminologies, the Latin "Peregrinus'' stems from the Biblical Hebrew and Greek. Two pairs of words are used to denote the pilgrim: the Hebrew speaks of *ger* while the Greek uses *paroikos*. *Ger* or *Gur* is used eighty-eight times in the Old Testament.[5] It means "to abide, be gathered, be a stranger, dwell (in/with), sojourn."[6] This terminology means to live among those who are not relatives. A *ger* is non-citizen of the community and is thus excluded from the rights and privileges of the community membership.[7] The Old Testament patriarchs such as Abraham (Gen. 12.10), Jacob (47.4) and Isaac (Gen. 26.3) experienced travelling outside the Promised Land in Egypt and Gerar. Even in the land of Canaan which they were promised to be given, they were always considered as sojourners. (Exd. 6.4). The Greek word of *paroikos* on the other hand, contains rich meaning. Its secular meaning has to do with "neighbour", "non-citizen" or "resident alien". In the New Testament *paroikos* occurs only four times and usually in a quotation or allusion from the Old Testament to refer to the patriarchs and the physical descendants of Israel.[8]

Theologically, the wandering nature of the elected people of God in the Old Testament was considered in a state of intimate relations with God (Jr. 2.2; Ho. 2.14). Religious pilgrimage thus has its profundity in spiritual meaning. Today, nearly all religious communities are in favour of tourism, because it is a means to generate income in order to sustain their members, to better inform their faithful and the public, to maintain and preserve sanctuaries and monuments, as well as their natural environment.

Commercial tourism: Saviour or devastator?

Globalisation has opened up the tourism industry, including religious tourism, to a process of commercialisation, transforming it into a "marketable product," which it was not in its beginning. For instance, pilgrims in the olden days were exempted from taxes and toll levies. It was not necessary to pay to enter the "houses of God". This market-oriented tourism also involves overlapping markets that include: spirituality, physical and mental health, leisure activities, culture, short stays and city-breaks. Its demographic base is considerable. This realisation of the potential of religious tourism is recent, as is its "launching into the market". The tourism industry sees enormous possibilities of growth open to them.[9]

Today, commercial tourism stands out as one of the largest industries in the world, and is globally pervasive, including in the Global South. Its financial resources and economic power are in the hands of a few, but its negative impact is felt by many human beings even as the industry is promoted with enticing strategies and slogans. A structural analysis of the industry should hence become a focus for theology.

Tourism is considered by most governments, whether of developed or developing countries, as an effective and 'must have' programme for national economic development. The arguments often given by the governments and industry are that, tourism is the best cost effective way to liberate the poor, brings foreign exchange and employment, and fosters mutual understanding between peoples. For instance, though Taiwan has diplomatic relations with only 23 countries in the world, its passport has been granted a waiving of the visa by more than hundred countries. The most recent offer from the United States of America of waiving the visa to the people of Taiwan is an obvious indication of tourism's economic attractions for the US (though not part of the Global South).[10]

While not denying some positive outcomes of tourism, including religious pilgrimages, nevertheless human societies are today confronted with serious threats from contemporary commercial tourism created by the neo-liberal market economic system. Unfortunately, with forceful mass media propaganda, which is manipulated for the economic interests of individual companies, and the political interests underlying state policies, the commercial tourism industry has been superficially constructed on a solemn promise of economic development.

Is tourism an economic saviour or a destroyer of the household of God?

Impacts of commercial tourism on the household of God

The modern commercial tourism that moulds all its activities and programmes as purchasable commodities has become a major force of destruction to human spirituality, to the relationship with community and also to the integrity of creation. The weak are victimised the most.

While it is not possible to list all the negative impacts with which commercial tourism affects creation and the lives of people on earth, some significant issues related to it are discussed here.

1. *The manipulation of resource distribution:* Without exception, state policy has its influence on direct national resource distribution regardless of political systems. Once a government makes policies to emphasise tourism development for national economic growth, the distribution of natural resources, including through massive land alienation, and social and economic resources are inevitably affected. Resources such as land, forest, water, electricity, national budgets and human resource plans are drawn to this purpose. The development of eco-tourism parks, golf courses and so on require huge amounts of land, and indigenous people are forcibly evicted for the purpose. Governments sometimes brutally take away pieces of agricultural land from poor indigenous people and farmers on which they depend for their sustenance. Other life sustaining resources such as water and electricity already in short supply are further manipulated for tourism's sake. The poor farmers and indigenous people are most exploited as their limited living sustenance is transferred to the hands of the few privileged.

Tourism, though not to be totally denied or rejected, has to be called to examination under the Christian principle of love and concern for justice - justice about the relationship between tourists and hosts, justice about interaction between visitors and other God's living creatures beside humans, and justice about resources and profits distribution related to the tourism industry.

2.The jeopardy of the traditional ecosystem and social structure: In order to attract tourists, infrastructure for transportation, accommodations and leisure becomes an essential part of the industry. Construction and maintenance of airports, domestic transportation system, hotels,

resorts, amusement park and casinos not only take over the agriculture farms and indigenous people's forests and lands, but also destroy the traditional ecosystem and social structure. This creates an identity crisis and cultural challenges among the indigenous people.

3. *Commodification of human values:* A commercialised tourism inevitably shapes a hunter's mindset in the tourists, which tends to commodify the tourism activities. Everything the tourists encounter through their tourism programmes are objectified for mere enjoyment. People's cultures, traditions, customs and arts products, even their religious rituals, sacred places and identities, particularly those of indigenous people are denigrated as a purchasable commodity. A dehumanisation process takes place in the name of a "smokeless industry" of economic development. Add to this the sex tourism that causes the trafficking and humiliation of millions of women and children in the tourist receiving countries.
4. *Threats to the whole creation:* Ecological damage created by commercial tourism affects not only the ecosystem that causes the disappearance of bio-diversity. The pollution to the land, water and air threatens the life-space (*oikozoe*) for living creatures and contributes to the climate change that threatens the ecosystem and all lives on earth. The frequent migrant activities promoted by tourism also contribute to the infection and spread of the epidemic diseases such as HIV.

The negative impacts of commercial tourism to the ecosystem and human communities are particularly obvious in Global South.

Commercial tourism and poverty alleviation

As mentioned above, all governments today regardless of whether of developed or developing countries, consider tourism an effective way to enhance national financial income. It is argued that it will alleviate poverty in developing countries. The evidence however is that commercial tourism does not bring poverty alleviation to the poor people in developing countries. Instead, it has created wider gaps between the privileged and the poor.

The commercial tourism industry which is operated under the globalised neo-liberal market system is run by businesses owned by transnational corporations or domestic business consortia, which have monopolised different sectors of the tourism industry, such as airlines, cruise companies, hotel and resort chains, amusement and casino parks, food and drink

> Whether the tourist behaviours bring peace and rest to the earth, and enhance shalom through all these relationships are part of theological tasks and concerns. A theology of tourism must make sure that this human activity is guided and directed to the reconciliation of the human and the divine, people and people, and human with other living creatures and God's creation.

exporters and so on. The major portion of the income generated from the tourism industry, despite its social cost and expenses, and the sacrifice of the weaker sections of the society, flows into the hands of the wealthy investors, but not to the needy poor and the vulnerable communities.

Some superficially attractive arguments to support commercial tourism are based upon the wrong understanding that it creates job opportunities for the workers. It is true that tourism industry creates considerable amounts of low paid jobs for the tourist receiving countries. These jobs generated by the tourism industry include employment such as: tourist guides and related travel services; gardeners, guards and receptionists; hotels, restaurants and their attendants, and other similar positions. These are mostly jobs with long working hours, but low paying. These grassroots workers are drawn to these tourism related labour markets because of their traditional dependence for livelihood on land, forest, farm and fisheries, which are taken away for tourism purposes, or are being diverted from their local productive living skills. In either case, traditional ways of life and sense of community are abandoned. Even artistic skills to present their spirituality and tribal soul are commodified to be sold on the streets and in the roadsides.

In the final analysis, the modern neo-liberal tourism industry has been reduced to purely commercial activities which primarily trade on nature driven by the philosophy of market primacy. The market principle of "the privileged gain more and the winner gains the whole" is the best description to the reality seen from the experience of the grassroots and its workers. Does commercial tourism alleviate poverty? The answer is thus obviously in the negative. It may create huge profits to the few privileged, but is creating a new class of poor in the midst of ostentatious prosperity.

Theology of tourism and ethical concerns of missiology

With the rapid development of the commercial tourism industry, it has become

increasingly common to read of tourism and travel in the modern world as a form of religion, a new opiate of the masses. Are those involved in Church and theology engaged in religious forms of tourism and travel? Discussions of location, identity and the self-hood have increasingly made use of religious texts, ideas and metaphors. Tourism is, thus, providing resources for theological reflection.

Tourism as a social activity affects almost every aspect of human life in favour of the privileged, but unfavourably to the vulnerable classes. It cannot be overlooked as an issue of theological concern, particularly in a contextual theology discourse. It has, however, unlike other issues such as gender oppression, racial discrimination and economic exploitation, drawn less attention as a crucial issue for theological discourse and ecumenical response. The impacts of commercial tourism involves issues about national resources distribution, gender and ecological justice, and commodification of cultures and human rights, concerns which are all very much and should be at the centre of theological concerns and responsibility.

The Chennai Statement on the Theology of Tourism, which was issued by the participants of an "Ecumenical Theological Consultation on Tourism" organised by the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT), Thailand, and the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), in Chennai, India in 2011, made the following appeal to the churches and theological colleges:

> The churches and theological colleges have not addressed tourism within the framework of theology, ethics, social analysis, and as an important missiological concern. Mass tourism thrives by marketing the sun, sea, mountains, rivers, landscapes, and nature in a way that is an affront to the creation of God, which is a gift to be shared by all. Mass tourism does not respect life, culture and environment because it has its roots in profit making, pleasure and enjoyment. Mass tourism brings destruction to God's creation and thus it is an ethical, theological and missiological concern. Tourism denies the right to live in dignity especially to the poor and the marginalized people. It exploits, abuses and misuses people at the margin. It also sees environment merely from a utilitarian perspective denying its integrity and wholeness. It breeds injustice and thus contradicts the testimonies of the Bible. It has become a theological and ethical imperative to challenge and critique the present paradigm of tourism, and search for an alternative.[11]

Motivated and inspired by the Kingdom values and Gospel's teachings that Jesus proclaimed and lived out through his suffering, death and resurrection,

Christian theology by nature has to confront issues of redemption (justice), reconciliation (peace) and ethics in mission (missiological reflection). Therefore, tourism activities need to be carefully analysed under these three categories of Justice, Peace and their implementation.

1. **Redemption:** Theologically, redemption is an element of salvation which expresses human deliverance from sin. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "the word *redemptio* is the Latin Vulgate rendering of Hebrew *Kopher* and Greek *Lytron* which, in the Old Testament means generally a ransom-price. In the New Testament, it is the classic term designating the "great price" (I Cor. 6.20) which the Redeemer paid for our liberation."[12] Regardless of different theological trends of arguments on Christian salvation, a ransom price that paid for one's liberation has a religious implication to satisfy the demands of "justice". The *Catholic Encyclopedia* further explains:

> Redemption presupposes the original elevation of man to a supernatural state and his downfall from it through sin; and in as much as sin calls down the wrath of God and produces man's servitude under evil and Satan, Redemption has reference to both God and man. On God's part, it is the acceptation of satisfactory amends whereby the Divine honour is repaired and the Divine wrath appeased. On man's part, it is both a deliverance from the slavery of sin and a restoration to the former Divine adoption, and this includes the whole process of supernatural life from the first reconciliation to the final salvation. That double result, namely God's satisfaction and man's restoration, is brought about by Christ's vicarious office working through satisfactory and meritorious actions performed in our behalf.[13]

In other words, elements for redemption are ransoms to satisfy a just order and relationship. It involves the Christian social ethic of "justice" based upon a "loving care" purpose. Tourism, though not to be totally denied or rejected, has to be called to examination under the Christian principle of love and concern for justice – justice about the relationship between tourists and hosts, justice about interaction between visitors and other God's living creatures beside humans, and justice about resources and profits distribution related to the tourism industry. A question about whether tourism activity contributes, or how it can, to the redemption of this value of relationships should be considered for theological reflection.

2. **Reconciliation:** According to Christian theological understanding, reconciliation is an element of salvation that refers to the results of atonement.

Reconciliation is the end of the estrangement, caused by original sin, between God and humanity.[14] John Calvin describes reconciliation as the peace between humanity and God that results from the expiation of religious sin and the propitiation of God's wrath.[15] Therefore, there is a conceptual link between the Greek word of reconciliation *katallage* (or *katallasso*) and the Hebrew word of *shalom*, which is generally translated as peace.[16]

This Hebrew word of *Shalom*, though, is roughly translated as peace in different languages. When it is translated to the Latin *pax*, its meaning of peace is also used to mean truce and treaty, which has its implication of personal, social and political relationship, as well denoting a state of mind and affairs. The New Testament Greek word peace "*ειρήνη*" also means quietness and rest.[17] Tourism activities involve interactions between people of different genders, races, classes, religions, ethnicity and cultures. It also involves relationship between human beings with the rest of the creatures and also with the earth as nature. Whether the tourist behaviours bring peace and rest to the earth, and enhance shalom through all these relationships are part of theological tasks and concerns. A theology of tourism must make sure that this human activity is guided and directed to the reconciliation of the human and the divine, people and people, and human with other living creatures and God's creation.

3. **Ethics in mission:** Christian missiology is the area of discipline that concerns practical aspects of faith activities. It investigates the theory, mandate and strategies of churches and individual Christians to do Christian mission based upon their faith confession and theological understanding. Tasks of missiology, thus, have to do with the "principles of right and wrong in behaviour; ethical moral judgments; expressing or teaching a conception of right behaviour; conforming to a standard of right behaviour; sanctioned or operated by one's conscience or ethical judgment (a moral obligation; capable of right and wrong action (a moral agent)."[18] Its relation to morality could thus be seen as a 'system of moral conduct', which presupposes not only rules and regulations of what is right and wrong, but also the underlining and implicit change of identity that occur in the process of mission and the ethos or lifestyle that flows from that.[19]

In the process of mission endeavours from the developed world, it is often seen that the ethical values of the developed world are being imposed on indigenous people.[20] The social values of the developed world were seen as 'gospel', and in the process, missionaries have not always been sensitive

to the social ethics of indigenous cultures as Dana L. Robert expresses it well:

> Mission at its worst ran the danger of cultural imperialism, of imposing western lifestyles and values to the destruction of indigenous ones. Critics have charged that the modern missional movement was little more than a sustained attempt to impose Euro-American culture on the peoples who came under its sway. To be sure, the missionary drama was played out on the same stage as the powerful political and economic developments of the period; missions were stained by its association with western imperialism. By virtue of its global reach the movement became a primary carrier of modernity and the artifacts and institutions associated with modernity early became hallmarks of missions.[21]

We need to learn from the mistakes made in the past, but also need to keep on learning and exploring new horizons of mission. The church and Christian attitudes and mission position toward the tourism industry can be seen as a touchstone to examine this hidden missiological ethics of a church, and thus, call for theological reflection and reconstruction.

Alternative tourism that promotes sustainability and community well being

How then, can tourism and religious pilgrimages be characterised as healthy and sustainable? Alternative tourism acknowledges the worth of creation, and inclusion of the environment as an aspect of the common good. Alternative tourism discourse stresses Community Based Tourism.[22] Community based tourism is considered comparatively fair, sustainable, and respectful to the environment through conserving resources and using energy carefully. It is owned, managed, and evaluated by the community with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community. This ensures interaction between tourists and the local people, and helps the visitor to discover local habitats and wildlife, and celebrate and respect traditional cultures, rituals and wisdom.[23] This form of tourism creates greater economic benefits for the local communities, enhances their quality of living, and builds local capacity as they engage in collaborative decision making.

But is this form of tourism compatible with and acceptable to mass commercial tourism? Here come the tasks and responsibility of Christian mission. Tourism, as a dominant industry in today's world, has to be exposed prophetically to learn that the earth belongs to all, not just to those with

financial resources to invest. Christian mission has the task to provide leadership with Gospel value oriented ideas and practice.[24] Therefore we are obliged to foster the emergence of a virtuous cycle of local development in economic, environmental, social, cultural and ethical terms. It must participate in the preservation of local natural and cultural assets. It should not have negative impacts on environment – which means using renewable energy as best and as economically as possible avoiding pollution of the atmosphere.[25]

Based upon this concept of sustainability and community based tourism, the UNWTO has developed a series of objectives in favour of sustainable tourism, among which the following can be emphasised:

1) Economic viability
2) Local prosperity
3) Employment quality
4) Social equity
5) Visitor fulfillment
6) Local control
7) Community wellbeing
8) Cultural richness
9) Physical integrity
10) Resource efficiency
11) Environmental purity [26]

Responses from Christian theology and theological education

The challenges of commercial tourism to the Christian mission and its Gospel ethics make them a responsibility for Christian theology and theological education. Based upon the theological principle of 'option for the poor' which most third world theologies uphold, the following suggestions can be made for theological reflection and theological curriculum development on just tourism:

1 Critically examine the tourism industry, its structure and practice under the spotlight of the Christian value of justice informed by the biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God. By doing this, Churches and individual Christians in their concern for mission have to be with the weaker sections of society, such as the minority indigenous people, the

displaced and marginalised women and children, and others disadvantaged.

2 Attention must be paid to just economic distribution and resources allocations made by the governmental policies, and the just distribution of the profits generated from tourism industry. Critiques need to be made also on the distortion of a tourism fashioned within the neo-liberal globalisation and market systems that take the structure of sin as a point of reference for evaluation of the activities of commercial tourism.

3 Explore the potential connection of tourism with pilgrimage as alternative tourism to stimulate ethical engagement for mutuality, solidarity, and a healthy human community. particularly taking into consideration inter-faith relations.

4 Study the problematic issues created by the modern commercial tourism such as: displacement created by tourism, misleading advertisement for tourism industry, commodification of human relation and cultural-spiritual objects.

5 Critically investigate the impact of commercial tourism on the household of God, how it affects ecosystems, the climate change and how it undermines the eco-justice.

6 Construct a Christian understanding of missiology of tourism to advocate a community based tourism.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

Using your own specific context as a point of reference, or even specific situations from within your context, how should the structure and practice of the tourism industry be evaluated in light of Christian values of justice and the biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God? Does the Church's concern for mission point to ways of responding from the perspective of the tourism-disadvantaged in your region? Who are these groups?

Can the 'structure of sin' be used as a basis for theological introspection into the nature of free market-oriented tourism with regard to infrastructure, material and financial resources allocations, the just distribution of profits generated from the tourism industry, the workers' conditions, and other related dimensions?

Explore the potential connection of tourism with pilgrimage as alternative tourism to stimulate ethical engagement for mutuality, solidarity, and a healthy human community, particularly taking into consideration inter-faith relations. Can pilgrimages also impact negatively on communities?

Study the problematic issues created by the modern commercial tourism such as: displacement created by tourism, trafficking of women and children and sex tourism, misleading advertisement for the tourism industry, commodification of human relations and cultural-spiritual objects.

Investigate the impact of commercial tourism on the household of God, how it affects ecosystems, contributes to climate change and how it undermines the eco-justice.

Construct a Christian understanding of missiology of tourism and apply it to community based tourism.

Endnotes

1 "UNWTO technical manual: Collection of Tourism Expenditure Statistics". World Tourism Organization, 1995. http://torc.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/WTOdefinitiontourism.pdf retrieved Oct. 11 2012

2 Tourism and Religion, Encyclopedia of Religion see: http://www.encyclopedia.com/article- 1G2-3424503147 tourism-and-religion.html. retrieved at Oct. 22,2012

3 Tourism and Religions: A Contribution to the Dialogue Among Religions,– Summary of the Report, See: http://sdt. unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/summary_en.pdf, p. 2, retrieved at Oct. 22,2012

4 ibid., p. 3

5 Lawrence O. Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids Ml: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), s.v. "alien/aliens."

6 R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., & Bruce Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Two Volumes) (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), s.v. "ger.'

7 Richards, Expository Dictionary, s.v. "alien/aliens."

8 ibid.,

9 Tourism and Religions: A Contribution to the Dialogue Among Religions, – Summary of the Report, ibid., p. 4

10 The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) is for the first time in the history to set up stands in the night market of different cities of Taiwan to promote tourism to US after the announcement of this visa waiving policy.

11 Chennai Statement on Theology of Tourism, see: http://ecumenism.net/archive/

2011/03/chennai_statement_ on_the_theology_of_tourism.htm, retrieved at Nov. 6, 2012

[12] See Catholic Encyclopedia, entry of Redemption: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12677d.htm

[13] ibid.,

[14] see Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Reconciliation: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconciliation_(theology), retrieved at Nov. 7,2012

[15] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (II.16.2).

[16] Wikipedia, Reconciliation, ibid.,

[17] Wikipedia, Shalom, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalom retrieved at Nov. 8, 2012.

[18] Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, (Merriam-Webster, Springfield, 2003), p. 341 see: Mission and Ethics in Galatians, http://www.ajol.info/index.php/hts/article/viewFile/70885/59842

[19] ibid.,

[20] Nissen, J., *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives*, Peter Lang GMBH, Frankfurt. (2007). see Mission and Ethics in Galatians, ibid.,

[21] Robert, D.L., *American woman in mission: A social history of their thought and practice*, (Mercer University Press, Mercer. 2005: 412), ibid.,

[22] What is community based tourism, see, http://www.responsibletravel.com/copy/what-is-community-based- tourism, retrieved at Nov. 9,2012

[23] ibid.,

[24] Tourism and Religions: A Contribution to the Dialogue Among Religions, – Summary of the Report, , ibid., pp 5-6

[25] ibid.,

[26] quoted from Tourism and Religions: A Contribution to the Dialogue Among Religions, – Summary of the Report, ibid., p. 5-6

14

Engaging Students of Theology on Tourism: A Proposal for a Curriculum

Victor Ferrao

A quick examination of the theological landscape reveals that tourism studies do not yet occupy the concerns of theologians, and of theological institutions. This is a serious oversight from the perspective of the "populus dei" given tourism's reach as one of the largest industries on earth, and its impact in the Global South, as in Goa. Such communities cannot afford to marginalise the phenomenon of tourism, and are called to scrutinise it in the light of post-colonial studies and the Christian faith. Tourism is founded on a construction of exotic geography as well as anthropology. Hence, the light of Christian faith will help in responding creatively and responsibly to its challenges. The first part of this paper deals with the enunciative power of tourism, and demonstrates how tourism is a construct by the centres or sites of power. The perspective of the host community and the travelling tourist will assist in stressing the urgency of responding to it theologically. Following a discussion on the theologisation of tourism, a syllabus is proposed based on the writer's experience with students of theology. A focus is placed on the silence of the Christian/Church leadership in the context of tourism, and on the need to be sensitive to its issues and develop pastoral and faith approaches to it.

The theological discourse in this article, and especially the syllabus proposed, offer a framework that can be modified and applied in light of specific tourism contexts faced by other institutions and institutes of theology in the Global South, and included in their curricula for theological education.

Introduction

It is a great challenge to bring a theological reflection on tourism in our Theological Institutes and Seminaries. A quick examination of the theological landscape will reveal that tourism studies have not yet come to occupy the concerns of theologians. Yet places like Goa, where I live my Christian faith, cannot marginalise the phenomenon of tourism. Goa has a colonial history and has emerged as a tourism destination in the Post-colonial era. We are therefore challenged to scrutinise tourism in the light of Post-colonial studies. Tourism is founded on a construction of exotic geography as well as anthropology. Hence, the light of Christian faith will certainly help us to understand and to respond creatively and responsibly to the challenges that it poses. Indeed, this theological introspection into tourism can interrogate the hegemony of theological methods and pedagogies that are reigning in our Theological Institutes and Seminaries today. For many people the otherness of a destination is what makes it worthy of consumption. Hence, a reflection on tourism becomes certainly a reflexive action that would destabilise many of the established boundaries, presumptions and myths that underpin our views about otherness that inform our attitude to Christology, Feminist Theology, and Missiology in particular. In the first part of this paper, I shall deal with the enunciative power of tourism, and demonstrate how tourism is a product constructed by the centres or sites of power. This analysis being done from the perspective of the host community and the travelling tourist, I believe, will assist us to understand the urgency of responding theologically to the phenomenon of tourism. Next, I shall deal with the theologisation of tourism, and make a proposal for a syllabus that could be used with students of theology. Then I examine the reflexive power of tourism to theological studies in our Seminaries and Theological Institutes. The theology of tourism that we are trying to evolve aims to deconstruct the existing exploitative model of tourism. Transformation of the reigning regime of tourism is the ultimate goal of a theology of tourism. The other consequence of such theologising is a critique of the Christian community or the Church itself. It will bring into the open the silence of the Christian/ Church leadership in the context of tourism, and would challenge them to be sensitive to its issues and develop pastoral and faith approaches to it.

Enunciative Power in Tourism

Tourism is necessarily narratively constructed. The study of power of representation in tourism has gained currency in tourism studies. The tourism

discourse is regularly engaged by various players/bodies/institutions to articulate preferred meanings of a 'locale'/place that is exoticised as a tourist location. The travel trade depends on the myths, narratives, interpretations and storylines that are routinely promoted and heavily internalised and normalised to suit the needs of the tourism industry. Tourism industry has built an ideological apparatus that disseminates these storylines and representations that collectively and discursively produce tourism as an Industry. These narratives control the imagination of the travellers and shape their gaze which becomes the lens through which they experience tourism. These narratives construct the tourist areas as innocent and original, and attempt to trigger the imagination of the prospective travellers and thus exploit these spaces for profit. This means socially constructed and projected 'madeness and hereness' often comprise a neat but a totalised mask of truth. Such a representation of difference that assists commodification of a site cannot be taken to be accepted as a given ethnic or cultural trait set in a fixed tablet of tradition. This articulation and the use of the otherness of the place and its people are essentially put into use by the market forces to mobilise as well as manufacture the gaze of the traveller. These enunciations exclude, objectify and museumise the host community, its land and other cultural resources. There are many good dimensions of tourism, such as a cultural exchange among peoples. But the way mass tourism is constructed and managed by the tourism industry, the host as well as the tourist have both become victims. The host is at the mercy of market forces, and with the role of the host community bypassed, authentic culture of the people is hybridised and is fed to the tourist.

The Unhome and Homeless Character of Tourism Discourse

The tourism discourse leaves the host and the tourist in the liminal space of 'in-betweenness'. The representational technologies employed by the market forces governing the tourism industry bestow an unhomely character on the host community, and capitalise on the sense of not being 'at home' of the tourists. The host communities experience an invasion of their space and often feel exiled in their own lands. To be 'unhomed' is not to be homeless. It is an experience of being de-territorialised and displaced in one's own native place. The objectified subject position given to the host communities museumise them and is highly disorienting. But this is not the end of the road. There are multiple options available for creative and dynamic responses to the host communities. The host communities can find ways by

which they can refuse to be fixed and pinned down by the discourse of the makers of the tourism industry.

The discourse of tourism being the discourse of the other has its strangulating power over the host and the travellers in the Lacanian sense, for it produces their selves as lacking self.[1] Hence, this lack draws both the tourists as well as the host community to fulfill their desire through the symbolic order of the discourse of tourism. Yet there is still room for resistance. This resistance is resistance through mimicry. They can seize the objectified subject position given by the discourse of tourism and wrestle it from within. This play with mimesis can become a space from where both the host communities and the travelling tourists can escape the reductionist subject position offered by the discourse shaped by the tourism industry. Besides these lines of resistance[2], there are countless lines of flight for both the tourists and their hosts. All this depends on how much both these victimised groups are aware of their plight; otherwise they will continue to be in the Ship of fools theorised by Michael Foucault in search of their self.[3] Indeed, they can trace a way of inventing a hybridised response to their situation.

Gaze of the Tourist

The host destinations and the communities are subjected to the gaze of the tourist. This gaze is constructed by the professional experts and is justified, naturalised, reinforced and normalised by the relevant institutions of the tourism industry. The gaze is produced on the basis of difference. It stands in opposition to non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness. The gaze works on social activities and signs which locate particular tourist activities by contrasting them with non-tourist social practices. Tourism experience being necessarily a break from the routines and practices of everyday life requires to be in contrast with the everyday regime to allow a set of stimuli to trigger pleasurable and enjoyable experiences generated by tourism. Hence, there is a need of formation of the gaze. It requires an anticipatory structure that shapes the gaze. This anticipatory structure is the pre-understanding that the tourist brings to bear on their activities and the sites that they visit.

The anticipatory dimension of the gaze is formed through advertisements, and narratives of the place, culture, people and the facilities available. These anticipatory visualisation techniques generate new ways of seeing. We can discern a gaze manufacturing apparatus put to work by the tourism industry.

Thus, the tourist is not a detached, objective and neutral observer. His observation is already guided by a theory which is largely shaped by the tourism industry. That is why some social scientists like Boorstein construe that the entire practice and experience of tourism as a pseudo-event.[4] There is some truth to this in as much as the gaze of tourism is manufactured often without the participation of the local people who are in fact reduced to become objects of the gaze of the tourists. Such a gaze may be viewed as a closed self-perpetuation of an illusion. Thus, the gaze polices the imagination and restricts the sensuality and aesthetic sense of the tourists.

Tourism as a Performative Action

Social reality is not simply a given fact. It is continuously constructed and created through language, gestures and all forms of social signs. Thus, we construct a system of signs which in its turn construct our social reality. The Speech Act Theory of John Searle calls illocutionary speech acts that actually do something rather than merely represent something. The classic example is 'I pronounce you husband and wife' uttered by the priest in a marriage ceremony. Through this statement the priest being a person of authority builds a new status of the couple within the inter-subjective community by establishing a new marital relationship between them. A speech act can become a performative action because the discursive practice enacts and produces that which it names. But for a speech act to become a performative action, we need a pre-existing legal order. Judith Butler takes this theory further and strives to manifest how we construct our social reality by exploring the way in which linguistic constructions arise by continuously engaging social conventions and ideologies existing in our society.[5]

Within this line of thought, we can notice how tourism is a performative act for both the hosting community and the touring traveller. Thus, various speech acts citing conventions about place, people, culture and leisure construct the experience of tourism. Tourism is produced by a complex network of discursive practices. These discursive practices are based on a body regime and material changes that are affected and are brought about in the lives of the host communities as well as the visitors. In this sense tourism is strictly ideological. It has a history beyond the subject who enacts it. The act one does, the act that one performs is an act that was going on before one arrives on the scene. Hence, the script of tourism is prior to its enactment. It is the hegemony of the power structures that use the hetero-

normative standards (plural conventions) to maintain power and produce the subjectivities of the tourists and the host communities. Since these norms or conventions are only constructs, an alert tourist or host can invent ways of resistance to the production of their subjectivities that only blindly serve a particular industry.

Decoding Theology Embedded in the Praxis of Mass Tourism

There is no theology-free praxis. Any form of praxis whether moral or even immoral is laden with a theology. There is a surplus of meaning in the very text. Action can be viewed as a text and hence one can decipher the surplus meaning that is embedded within it. Hence, we can dig out the theological assumptions that underpin the praxis as a discourse of mass tourism. Certainly these theological assumptions are not Christian but might be regarded as the hidden secular theology of the market. The philosophy of market tourism can be shown to be grounded in theology/theologies. Here we are emphasising that praxis is embedded in what Gadamer calls 'historical-effective consciousness' or what Clifford Geertz Christens as 'thick description' of a form of life. Hence, we can regard a particular praxis is rooted in a rich backdrop of theological assumptions. Our task is to unearth the situated theology in the praxis of mass tourism. This can be done only through discerned listening. In this context, we undertake what can be called a deductive approach to unwind the theology that is intertwined in the praxis of mass tourism.

Tourism as an Avatar of Narcissus

Mass tourism involves profound engagement of the self. It promotes an egoist's self creation. All forms of self-indulgence form the heartbeat of mass tourism. Such an obsession with the self is a natural consequence of the culture of materialism and consumerism. These egoistic tendencies reinforced by mass tourism become idolatrous as the self seems to usurp the place of God. Thus, from this perspective mass tourism as it is practised and promoted today is nothing but an institutionalisation of egoism. Hence, one must say that the culture of narcissism has gone global with mass tourism.

All forms of tourism exhibit narcissistic tendencies in different degrees and shades as it allows the self to run away from everyday life and its challenges. Mass tourism being a culture of excessive preoccupation with the self glamourises self-absorption, and often ends up in the de-sensitisation

of the self from the structures of inequality, hegemony, exploitation, patriarchy and power. In fact, this self absorption is only a way of losing oneself into the pleasures of a world that is construed, commodified, domesticated and rendered into a spectacle for the individual's customised consumption. This has largely led to the individualisation of tourism which leads to the treatment of other human beings as things to be manipulated for the satisfaction of the tourist.

Tourism as a Body Project

Mass tourism is a body regime. It offers limitless opportunities for the individual to indulge in carnal pleasures ranging from the joy of site seeing, to multiple cuisines that stimulate the taste buds, intoxication by drinks and drugs, as well as unbounded erotic sexual expressions. Body and land are surfaces where social hierarchies are inscribed. Tourism exoticises, eroticises and romanticises sights, sounds, monuments and host communities and reinforces the lines of hierarchy inscribed in society. The constructed primitiveness of the host community bestows an unspoiled virgin character to the tourist locations, and manufactures a desire to plunder in the visiting tourists. The seductive images of women often used to promote tourism locations also become stimulants that provoke the wild imagination of tourists. Hence, the kind of theology of the body that underpins mass tourism is profoundly dehumanising and violates the sacredness of the body.

A theology that is disrespectful of our body promotes a hedonistic ethics, although it takes the body seriously as against other theologies that degrade it though various types of dualisms. Yet with this kind of hedonistic approach that one can trace in the way tourism is promoted and practised is nothing but crass hedonism. While one can appreciate

"Mass tourism involves profound engagement of the self. It promotes an egoist's self creation. All forms of self-indulgence form the heartbeat of mass tourism. Such an obsession with the self is a natural consequence of the culture of materialism and consumerism. These egoistic tendencies reinforced by mass tourism become idolatrous as the self seems to usurp the place of God… Hence, one must say that the culture of narcissism has gone global with mass tourism."

the holistic approach to human anthropology, yet it remains reductionist because it seems to largely forget the spirit or the spiritual dimension of humanity. Moreover, the pleasure-centric approach appears to seek mainly quantitative satisfaction rather than qualitative fulfillment of bodily life.

Tourism as a Politics of Space

Social scientists have exposed the politics of production of space. There is a strong relation of the people and their land. Social construction of space is profoundly political. Space becomes a memory reservoir that is exploited as a semiotic resource by the tourism industry, and tourism sights come into being. Thus, the elasticity of space is manipulated and controlled by the tourism industry by symbolically constructing difference and otherness. This means the space becomes a site of representation of power as well as a site that exhibits the power of representation. The promotion discourse of tourism exhibits the trilectic play of 'power-knowledge-space'. Hence, the theology of land that is undergirding the practice of tourism treats land and its produce as an inexhaustible resource at the service of the visiting tourists. Such a theology of land is highly alienating the host and other communities dependent on the 'pie' of tourism.

The theology of land displaces and uproots the host communities and ends up meumseumising them. The land and the host people become primarily objects to the gaze of the tourists under the reigning order of the tourism industry. This oppressive dimension of tourism is normalised and naturalised, and every shade of exploitation of land and its resources is often justified in the name of the economic benefits of tourism. Hence, it is often difficult to interrogate and question the oppressive impacts of the trilectic play of 'power-knowledge-space' in a tourism destination.

Theologising Tourism

Having broadly studied the impacts of mass tourism on the tourist as well as the host community, we can now make an attempt to bring about a theological response to the kind of tourism that is dehumanising both the tourist and the host community only to increase the profit margins of the tourism industry. We do not view tourism as entirely evil but see the way it is constructed and managed by the market forces as requiring an urgent ethical as well Christian response that would empower the tourist as well as the host community. Because of Jesus Christ, Christians are enabled to find the divine footprints in the context of tourism. Theology has been

traditionally defined as faith seeking understanding (*Fides quaerens intellectum*). But this has only produced largely cognitive and reason-centric theologies. Moving in the direction of affectivity and aesthetics Jon Sobrino defines theology as love seeking understanding (*amor quaerens intellectum*).[6] Along with this affective and aesthetic dimensions Felix Wilfred, the famous Asian theologian, states that theology is faith seeking dialogue (*fides quaerens dialogum*).[7] This approach is moving away from an inward, egocentric and often narcissistic layers of theologising to an outward looking, mission-centric horizon of theologising. This dialogue is open-ended and can enable us to reach the profound depths of the mystery of God revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. The path of dialogue is not a journey to a cognitive clarity of our faith, but becomes a process of God realisation that is essentially centred on the other-realisation which leads to an authentic self-realisation. We shall uncover some of the important coordinates of this dialogical approach to theology.

From Mastery to a Mystery Approach

The *fides quaerens intellectum* approach is based on the emphasis on the content of faith. But this approach to theology lacks affective, dialogical and aesthetic dimensions that are central to the tourism experience. Hence, we cannot only rely on this linear, reason-centric and content laden approach in our quest for developing the theology of tourism. Experience when viewed as an encounter can enable us to stand in dialogical relationship with God, the other, nature and ourselves. Hence, we need a paradigm shift from the logo-centric or essence-centric approaches to theology to an 'Ah!' of our experience in the face of the divine mystery. Another way of saying this is that we need to transcend the realm of reason to that of the spirit. The divine mystery that we experience has a profound inner and interior dimension and being intuitive is well beyond the subject and object distinction of epistemology. The need for a theology of tourism has to spring from an encounter of humanity and God in our Lord Jesus Christ. This means the reason-centric, cognitive and content-oriented theology of mastery has to be replaced by the theology of mystery.

The theology of Mystery shares a close affinity with the Christian tradition of apophatic theology. This paradigm shift requires an attitude of listening to the explosion of the divine in the life of the people who are subjected to the oppressive and exploitative regimes of the tourism industry. This might require us to cultivate an attitude of silence. A ratiocinating mind

is certainly not silent. It remains embedded in deep discursive thought. Hence, a deep silence that goes beyond the realm of thought can allow us to become mystics in exotic places constructed by the noise of discursive and material practices of tourism. Indeed, the inner silence is central to our effort to discover how the sense of wonder in the encounter of the other (people and cultures) can become the point of departure for fruitful development of the theology of tourism. The primacy of experience will bring the character of a journey and pilgrimage which is a basic constituent of travel and tourism.

Towards a Theology of Encounter

Theology of encounter is a theology from below. The *locus theologicus* becomes the human condition and the quest for God rendered visible in the human quest for justice, truth and goodness. *Gaudium et Spes*, the pastoral constitution of the Catholic Church given by the Vatican Council II fosters experience as the starting point of theologisation. Theology has already taken in the experience of the people in the context of poverty, inter-religious plurality, gender inequality, ecological destruction, discriminations like racism and casteism. These efforts can help inculturate and contextualise theology. Thus in its effort to become relevant many trends in theology have become rooted in the lived experiences and situations of the people. Hence, the question is how can we make the revelation in Jesus Christ (Christian message) relevant in the context of tourism? Tourism being an encounter of people and cultures, we cannot begin from a received tradition from above but have to begin with the starting point that is the encounter with the conditions of the place and people who are part of the phenomenon of tourism.

This theology is based on the incarnational principle as well as the principle of resurrection of Christian faith. The incarnational principle draws us to seek the traces of the divine emanating in the context of tourism. This can be discerned through a critical impact analysis of the phenomenon of tourism. This exercise will expose the oppressive and exploitative processes in the field of tourism and also assist us to identify processes of human struggles against these oppressive processes. Hence, having discerned the Immanence of God in the struggle of people, we can theologise and articulate a response that will catalyse the already existing resistance movements to reach their optimum potentials. Such a theology of encounter has the potentials to understand tourism from the prism of the process of encounter

leading to the liberation of self, society and nature. The encounter will enable us to step into the *mythos* of phenomenon of tourism, and enable us to illumine it in the light of Christian faith, thus becoming transformative yeast in the context of tourism driven by an optimism derived from the principle of resurrection.

Theology of Tourism as a Political Question

A theological response to tourism cannot be apolitical. The political character of the phenomenon of tourism cannot be ignored. The local communities that are victims of the politics of exclusion of the benefits of tourism pie are already reacting in different parts of the globe. Tourism produces power relations at different levels and their interplay has its bearings on the phenomenon of tourism. Hence, we need a tinge of hermeneutics of suspicion to bring into force the prophetic dimension of Christianity. Paul Ricoeur teaches us that hermeneutics of suspicion assists us to recover the hidden meanings and unearth how oppressive power relations and structures are legitimated by the relevant structures of our society.[8] Therefore, the theology of tourism has to be interwoven with a liberative social practice. This means orthopraxy has to shape orthodoxy. Hence, the socio-political context of tourism is to become the heart and locus of theological reflection which has to be enriched by a retro-reflection on the experience and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The prophetic dimension of the theology of tourism will first overcome the theological omission, a lack of faith response to the phenomenon of tourism. Indeed, Christian faith when alienated from its context becomes like salt that has lost is saltiness. Hence, the theological response to tourism is both urgent and inevitable. It has to be essentially counter-cultural through a dialogical process that will redeem the host communities, travelling tourists as well the entire tourism establishment. Though this goal is utopian, it is necessary to set into motion the energising prophetic values of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, our faith response rooted in the horizon of Christian convictions can spring forth a fusion of horizons with the world of tourism, and bring about a transformation in it like light, salt and yeast, and simultaneously produce a theology that is flowing from such a liberative praxis. Such a theology will deeply affirm the signature of God in his creation and his image in every human person. Hence, theology of tourism cannot but be a political theology of liberation.

Praxis-oriented Theologies of Tourism

Theology of tourism being context sensitive and driven cannot be but praxis-oriented. The plural contexts and dynamic transformation and evolution of the tourism scenario can become locations for pluralistic articulations of these theologies. Yet we can trace some of the common parameters that vary in different degrees in different contexts that help us to understand, and analyse the impact of the phenomenon of tourism on humans and the environment. The challenge arises mainly from the dehumanisation of the economic, social, political and cultural world. This does not mean the religious world remains untouched. In fact like our culture, our religion can only survive in a commodified form under tourism. This means tourism converts our social, cultural and religious life into a raw material for the economic gains of the tourism industry.

Praxis as a point of Departure as well as Arrival

Theologies of tourism begin with a praxis and a critical reflection on it. The goal of the entire process is not to arrive at an explicative content-oriented theology alone but to generate a therapeutic response through a new reality transforming praxis. This means all forms of theologies of tourism have to begin with the life-situation and the lived faith of the people. Thus, the aim of this centrality of praxis approach is to come to terms with the mystery of human existence in the context of tourism in the light of our faith. It is an action through word approach. Hence, we maintain the primacy of action over reflection. Indeed action ceases to have a world of its own but becomes the servant of a humanising dimension of the liberative process. Therefore, any approach to theology of tourism that becomes a mere flight into a mere verbal world stained with ontological considerations cannot be an authentic theology of tourism.

"The theologies of tourism can only be born as a result of deep engagement with the people victimised by the sinful structures of the tourism enterprise. It cannot be a neutral project. It is challenged to take a stance like the God of the Bible (in favour of the widow, stranger and the orphan) on the side of the victims of tourism industry. Hence, the goal of such a theology is to mediate and generate an emancipative praxis."

Practice of a praxis approach is not simply aimed at personal conversion but also involves structural transformation. That is, the praxis approach does not just dream of a social transformation but strives to bring it about. This means theologies of tourism become catalysts that generate action that lead to total and integral human liberation. It is a prophetic criticism of the phenomenon of tourism. It brings about the eruption of God amidst his people. The basic insight of this approach is that theology essentially has a mediatory role. It will follow the eleventh thesis of Karl Marx on Feuerbach: 'the philosophers have interpreted the world in many ways, the point however is to change it'.[9] Hence, theologies of tourism are to become agents that bring into being orthopraxis. Hence, theologies of tourism have a constitutive political dimension and aim to subvert the politics of the status quo that aligns itself on the side of the tourism industry.

Socio-analytic Mediation

The aim of socio-analytic mediation is to come to terms with the socio-economic and political reality that constitutes the phenomenon of tourism. Hence, theology of tourism does not have to be deductive but inductive. That is, it does not have to begin with overtly theological and even metaphysical notions but has to take up the material and the secular to trigger its theological reflection. In this sense all forms of theologies of tourism have to necessarily become theologies from below. This means theological insight is not considered as given but is constructed and based on the experience and the goal that strives to make liberation of the oppressed people (host communities and the tourists) central to the theological enterprise.[10]

This does not means the praxis-oriented approach of the theology of tourism puts aside the Divine revelation. In fact divine revelation becomes central to it as it allows it to become the source of hermeneutical mediation to view the socio-political-economic scenario that embeds tourism, as well as become the guiding light that enables us to develop a faith response to the systems of domination and oppression illumined in the light of analytical processes. Thus, socio-analysis has a mediatory role. It mediates the lived experience with the received deposit of faith (revelation) and aims to bring out a reality transforming orthopraxis. This means we view socio-political-economic reality with the eyes of faith, so that it informs and permeates our social analysis (pathological diagnosis) as well as assists us to discern the accompanying therapeutic process of liberation of our society. This

rootedness into the Christian revelation in Jesus Christ leads to a commitment to a liberative praxis and to an ongoing critical reflection on it.

Practical Mediation

Though the theologies of tourism begin with praxis, the praxis itself is impregnated with theological underpinnings. No praxis is free of theology. It carries within it an implicit theology. This theology guides the praxis as well as leads to explicit articulation of a theology of tourism that can be translated into reality-transforming action. Thus, we can trace a hermeneutical circle between orthodoxy and orthopraxis. In fact, it binds together our profession of faith and its celebration in our sacramental life to the witnessing of our faith in our daily life. In fact, it comes close to the biblical community that experienced God's intervention in their history and who then articulated and saw every dimension of their life in its light.[11]

Thus, we can notice that the praxis-oriented approach frees theology from its rationalistic and esoteric mould and breathes an earthly dimension and unites contemplation with commitment. The theologies of tourism can only be born as a result of deep engagement with the people victimised by the sinful structures of the tourism enterprise. It cannot be a neutral project. It is challenged to take a stance like the God of the Bible (in favour of the widow, stranger and the orphan) on the side of the victims of tourism industry. Hence, the goal of such a theology is to mediate and generate an emancipative praxis. The life giving principle of the Christian revelation can be actualised through the praxis-oriented theologies of tourism. This approach challenges us to discern the epiphany of God in our life situation under tourism. Hence, the theology of tourism is a theology of hope. Led by the *sensus fidei* of the people of God, the theologian articulates the unarticulated theology that guides the struggle of the people for a dignified life in the context of tourism.

Toward a Relevant Christology for a Theology of Tourism

The Christology that is relevant for theological engagement with tourism is in the making. John V. Taylor says that Christ has been presented as the answer to questions that the white men would ask.[12] How can we have Christ as an answer to the questions that the world of tourism would raise? In this context, we need a paradigm shift from the classist-universalist European Christologies to contextual Christologies from the third world. This way of theologising aims to bring about a social transformation and liberation of the oppressed by the world of tourism. Such a theological

approach brackets the static, ontological and metaphysical ruminations and leads us to develop a theology in dialogue with the *Sitz-im-leben* of the world of tourism. Yet we need to remain free from reductionist Christological monism and remain open to approaching theology of tourism from the theo-centric or regno-centric, pneumatological, anthropological as well as inter-religious foundation for the theology of tourism. Though, we strive to take chiefly a Christological approach in this context, we do remain open to plural approaches to the theology of tourism.

From Christological Positivism to Contextual Christologies

The Christology in the making, in the context of our faith response to tourism, is challenged to re-discover the life-giving message and the messenger of the Gospels. This does not mean that Christology that enmeshes the tradition of Christianity is to be shunned away. It is a question of emphasis. We require to shift from the speculative and ontological approach of mainstream Christology to a dialogical and existential tilt in our reflection. Hence Christology is never a finished product but has to be seen as always in process. Even while we admit the normative character of the liturgical, biblical, patristic and conciliar Christologies, the lived experience of the Christian community becomes constitutive of the fusion of horizons that emerges as our faith dialogues with Christian revelation and diversities of space, time and culture. Hence, within our quest for a relevant Christology as a response to the world of tourism, though we are to be faithful to the normative Christologies of the Christian tradition, we are challenged to re-discover their light in the challenging and dynamic context of tourism.

The Christological approach that we have proposed have the task to present Jesus Christ not only as the truth but the way and life to the world of tourism. Thus based on the normative truth of Jesus Christ, we are challenged to discover how he can be a way and life for the people crippled by the world of tourism. This theological approach follows the incarnational principle that is based on the mystery of the *Logos-sarx* from the prologue of the gospel of John. Hence, this incarnational principle will lead us to immerse and plunge ourselves into the context of the people in the world of tourism and develop a responsible and creative Christological response to the context of tourism while remaining faithful to our dual sources of revelation: scripture and tradition. Thus, such a Christological approach brings forth the life-giving, life-shaping and life-saving soteriology of our faith.

Pneumatic Paradigm complementing Logos Christology

Christ can never be separated from the Spirit of God. Jesus is seen as the bearer as well as the giver of the Spirit. It is a Christology of God's living and life giving presence. The New Testament presents Jesus as the anointed one of God in whom the universally operative power of the Holy Spirit has found total fulfillment. In the context of the multi-faceted dialogue with cultures, religions, ideologies and market forces, the Spirit Christology is highly relevant and profoundly vital. But we need to avoid the error of adoptionism and hence the Pneumatic Christology has to be complemented with Logos Christology. Jesus was not simply adopted by God but is the Son of God and is essentially in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Pneumatic Christology[13] remains within the Trinitarian foundation of the Paschal Mystery of our salvation. Besides, the Spirit Christology becomes the channel or the meeting point of God's movement to humanity, and humanity's response to God in the power of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ.

The theology of tourism requires Pneumatic Christology that assures us of the living and life-giving presence of Jesus Christ in and through his body, the Church, especially the people that are suffering due to the ills of tourism. This approach remains open to the Spirit who acts in all humans and in all places and leads us to discern the presence of God among the poor and the oppressed. The Spirit of God is *Spiritus Salvificans* as well as *Spiritus Vivicans*. This saving and life giving mission of the Holy Spirit becomes the source of the transforming praxis generated by the theology of tourism. The *logos spermatikos* is complemented by *pneuma spermatikon*. That is, the Spirit and the Word of God both usher in a praxis-oriented theology which gives us the foretaste of the eschatological future. The discernment of the presence of the seed of the Word and the touches of the Spirit in world of tourism can catalyse a transformative and liberative praxis in the context of tourism.

Towards a contextual Metaphorical Christology

The dependence of the world of tourism on symbols, metaphors and narratives prompts us to propose that a relevant Christology for tourism has to have a necessary metaphorical dimension. Metaphors, symbols and narratives have the power to offer us a profound insight into our life of faith and a deep commitment to it. In fact, the hermeneutical methodology of a metaphorical theology is a juxtaposition of the 'like' and the 'not-like' that

jolts the mind into a new insight into reality that we compare. Thus, we arrive at a new level of meaning. Joseph Lobo drives this home when he says, "the experience of God's saving presence is mediated symbolically to the Israelites through the Exodus Event. This is metaphorically grasped and articulated in the exclamation, 'The Lord is my shield and my fortress.'"[14] God, fortress and the Shield are otherwise unrelated but by juxtaposing

> "Our life situations within our diverse contexts provide the framework and narrative plots for our stories. A theology of tourism can illumine how we live a narrative of being hosts or tourists/ guests. It has the power to bridge the gap between our life and our faith. There is a hermeneutical circle between our life and our faith. Hence, a theology of tourism can bring about a profound consonance of faith with the life situated and affected by the world of tourism."

them together a relationship is drawn and a new meaning is generated. Paul Ricoeur speaks of the tension in the metaphor.[15] The tension is because the 'is' of the 'like' pole is put in contrast with the 'is not' of the 'not-like' pole. The tourism industry also makes use of this contrasting tension to generate meaning. Thus, for instance, 'Goa is a cool, hot place!'

Metaphors have unlimited potential to reveal meaning. Paul Ricoeur views polysemy as the characteristic of a metaphorical utterance and its usage as semantic innovation.[16] Metaphors can evoke new meanings. In our quest to develop a praxis-oriented theology of tourism, a metaphorical Christology can be of great help. Jesus on the seashore can become a great metaphor that can bring about the tension between the tourism activities happening on the sea shore and can bring about a greater commitment towards a liberative and life-giving praxis. Metaphorical Christology can bring the 'deep story of faith' of a community into individual 'stories' of the people affected by tourism. The 'deep story' of the saving Paschal Mystery in Jesus can become the horizon that illumines the context of tourism and produce performative effects on the lives and stories of people who are afflicted by the oppressive and exploitative structures of tourism. Thus, metaphorical Christology has the potential to respond adequately to the tourism world and actualise the Jesus praxis within it.

A Proposal for a Curriculum of Theology of Tourism

Theology of tourism is a contextual project. Here I am presenting the curriculum that was shaped through a consultation process in Goa.[17] The course was experimentally conducted for the theological students of Institute Mater Dei, in Old Goa. This curriculum is just a model. It can be adopted with modifications depending on the tourism context. The proposal attempts to respond to the specific tourism context of Goa,[18] a state of India.

Initial Remarks

- The Church in Goa lives in the midst of tourism that shapes and controls the life of the Goan people.
- How is the church to carry out the mission of Christ in the context of tourism?
- The reality of tourism in the context of Goa is the starting point.
- Theology of tourism is a theology of hope. (Intelligence of hope, *intellectus spei*)

Tourism is not innocent. It is not colourless or odour-less … It forms the domain of aspirations, hopes, struggles, conflicts and threats to life and our faith

We propose a three step mediation:

1) socio-analytic mediation: ' Seeing'
2) hermeneutic mediation : 'Judging'
3) mediation of the pastoral practice : 'Acting'

Socio-analytic mediation: Seeing

- Strives to critically grasp the reality of tourism in Goa (or any other tourism location)
- Understanding the socio-economic, political and religious circumstances of tourism
- Hence we need: 'orthopathos'. We open ourselves to be intimately touched by reality.

a) Introduces the context of the tourism and its challenges to Christian Faith.

b) Provide orientation to develop tourism impact assessment skills.

c) expo-immersion programme (field work)

Hermeneutic mediation: Judging

- Strives to respond to the expo-immersion experience
- Arrives at a theological understanding of the mission of Christ in the context of tourism.
  1. Understand tourism as new areopagus for the Church in Goa (or any other location)
  2. *Topos*, *Chronos*, *Logos*, *Kairos*… towards turning tourism experience into a spiritual experience.
- Theological paradigms:
  1) Community stewardship
  2) Tourism as a Pilgrimage
  3) Theology of ecological care
  4) Unarticulated theology of the people (sensus fidelium)
  5) Theology of the Kingdom of God
  6) Theological reflection on the 'germinative words' (*logoi spermatikoi*)
  7) Spirit theology (*pneuma spermatikon*)
  8) Theology of 'the signs of the times'
- **Special features:**
  1. Trinitarian and spirit centered
  2. Christo-centric and Ecclesial
  3. Prophetic: discerned response to the signs of the times
  4. Oriented towards pastoral action
  5. Anthropological and ecological
- **We understand signs of the times in two ways:**
  A) historical-pastoral approach: signs are the particular characteristics of a period that will necessitate a specific response of the church
  B) historical-theological approach: history is seen as the carrier of God's plan (sacramental character of history).
- *Contextual Realities as resources of theology:*
- The context of tourism has the 'germinative seeds of the word 'sown by the Spirit". (*logoi spermatkoi*).
- Context as the locus theologicus
- 'Struggle for dignity and the dynamics of empowerment ' at the grassroots
- Logoi spermaticos: 'dovornnem' …a pillar for the traveller to unload. In Goan society, during the ancient days, Goans erected pillars as tall

as a human being that would assist travellers to unload the heavy loads that they carried and rest for a while, and then take the load once again without any help from anyone. This structure was called 'dovornnem'.

- Goa has become a 'dovornnem… a re-energising point .
- *Specific Christian resources:*
  1) Long tradition of engagement of the Church of Goa with the reality of tourism (orthopraxis)
  2) Theological institutions (orthodoxy)
  3) Solidarity groups with the people of other faiths
  4) Theological and theoretical foundations

Mediation of Pastoral Practice: Acting

- CONCRETE practical action towards transformation of the tourism scenario motivated by the principle of Resurrection
- Goal: people-centred, accountable, and sustainable, non-exploitative, equitable, transparent, participatory, democratic tourism
- *Pastoral strategies:*
  1. influencing the constructing process of tourism
  2. monitoring the regulatory mechanisms
  3. protecting/empowering the vulnerable sections of people and the victims of tourism
  4. capacity building for effective pastoral care of tourism
  5. Networking with everyone involved in struggles against the evils of tourism
  6. Education and awareness building
  7. Supporting community based tourism.
  8. Work to bring about a people's charter for sustainable tourism (code of ethics)

Bibliography:

The Bible

Keynote address of Archbishop Patriarch Filipe Neri Ferrao given at the consultation for the formation of a curriculum for a course on tourism in Goa

- **Tourism as pilgrimage,** a paper given on the occasion of the consultation on a curriculum on tourism in Goa by Victor Ferrao

- **The Objectified people and the Objectified god of tourism,** article by Dr M P Joseph included in this anthology, *Deconstructing Tourism: Who benefits? A Theological Reading from the Global South* (SCEPTRE, Serampore University, 2014)
- **Documents of the Council of Vatican II**
- **Directory of tourism – *Pregrinans in Terra*,** 1969,
- **Guidelines for the pastoral care for tourists,** given on June 29, 2001, by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants
- Pope John Paul II – *Ecclesia in Asia* no. 7
- **Messages of Pope John Paul II** :
  1. given on 27th Sept., 2000 on the 21st World Tourism Day
  2. given on 27th Sept., 2001 on the 22nd World tourism Day
  3. given on 27th Sept., 2002 on the 23rd World tourism Day
  4. given on 27th Sept., 2003, on the 24th World tourism Day
  5. given on 27th Sept. 2004, on the 25th World Tourism Day
- **VI World Congress on the Pastoral care of Tourism,** Bangkok, Thailand, July 5-8, 2004: "Tourism at the service of Bringing People together".

Impact of Theology of tourism on our Seminaries and Institutes of Theology

The theology of tourism if introduced in seminaries and theological institutes will make a huge difference to the overall culture of theological formation. Being an experience-based reflective course, it will lead to profound assimilation of the theological principles and doctrines that are already part of other systematic courses. Being a praxis-oriented course it will build the motivation to engage in an effective pastoral care of the faithful, especially of people in tourism related areas.

Towards a Consonance with our Faith

Narrative theorists teach that we live our lives as a story. None of us have a choice over our narrative starting point. Life is lived and experienced as an unfolding story. We can trace a narrative plot assigned to us by the narratives that we have inherited and consequently live out on a daily basis.

The narrative dimension is a necessary aspect of our life as temporal beings. We cannot make sense of time outside the framework of a narrative. Within the unfolding story of our life, there is the story of Jesus Christ. This means there is a story within our story. Faith viewed in this way becomes an actualisation of the Jesus story in our daily life.

Our life situations within our diverse contexts provide the framework and narrative plots for our stories. A theology of tourism can illumine how we live a narrative of being hosts or tourists/guests. It has the power to bridge the gap between our life and our faith. There is a hermeneutical circle between our life and our faith. Hence, a theology of tourism can bring about a profound consonance of faith with the life situated in and affected by the world of tourism. This will allow our Christian story that is unfolding in our seminaries and institutes of theology to integrate the story of the people subalternised by the power structures of their contexts, as in the case of people victimised by the tourism industry.

Dismantling the Cratophanies

Power manifests in different ways in our society. Power manifests by a complex process of becoming visible as well as becoming invisible. Power largely becomes invisible by the relationship of power and knowledge, and visible by becoming a regime on human bodies. Hence, there is both covert and overt dimension of power. The work of Michel Foucault has demonstrated firmly the power-knowledge equation and manifested clearly that power becomes a 'biopower' acting on the bodies of humans. Tourism is also a body regime and is based on the knowledge of power knowledge relations.[19] Everything that tourism has to offer is centred on the bodies of the tourists as well as the host communities. The host communities are reduced to objects of the gaze of the tourists. This museumisation of the host communities and their culture and habitat brings about its conversion into raw material through the generation of knowledge that takes the tourism industry as well as the tourist to a new configuration of levels of power.

The resistance to this power regimes based on a knowledge relationship can begin with the awareness of their operations. Both the host communities and the tourists are challenged to move away from a reductionist view of tourism that sees tourism as an economic opportunity for the host and merely pleasure trip for the tourist. This therapeutic awareness can expose the dark side of tourism and enkindle a new way of being hosts and tourists based on direct participation with each other. This configuration of tourism

will certainly allow the hosts to become authentically hosts and travellers to become genuine tourists. While we study the knowledge-power equations and biopower configurations in tourism, it can give an insight into the power relation at work in our seminaries, and institutes of theology, besides illumining the cratophanies at work in the pastoral care of the pastoral scenario in the Church. Also the lines of power in the hierarchy of theological subjects that are pursued will also become visible, and the addition of new dimensions, especially how we view otherness, may become necessary.

Interrogation of Teaching-Learning Models in our Theology

Methods of teaching and learning constitute a highly complex field of research that involves theories of learning, models of education, methods of teaching and evaluation, understanding of the student profile, the syllabus as well as the infrastructure issues. Though, there is a substantial research in this area, very little energy is spent in our theological and philosophical institutions on the questions of methods of teaching and learning. In fact, most of the professors in our seminaries and theological institutes engage in teaching and learning activities without conscious knowledge of the theories of education that are implicitly present in their very activity. But theology of tourism has the potential to interrogate the reigning models of teaching and learning that are employed in most of our seminaries and theological institutes.

It might be safe to say that our classrooms have become spaces of knowledge consumption and students have become a community of passive learners. There is lots of teaching taking place in our classrooms and less of learning. The context-driven course on theology of tourism can convert the classroom into a space of knowledge generation and convert our students into communities of active learners.[20] This process of active involvement of the students in the process of knowledge production can dignify the students who otherwise have become mere passive agents of knowledge reception. Indeed, we have a great challenge to bring about a transformative praxis in the process of the intellectual formation in our seminaries and theological institutes. This transformation will certainly transform the content that is taught and would generate new vistas in theology.

Conclusion

We have tried to understand the potentials of a theology of tourism and explore how it can generate a liberative and transformative praxis that can

empower the people afflicted by the structures and processes of the world of tourism. Besides empowering the victims, it provides a vision and mission for an effective pastoral care of the tourists and the host communities in the areas under the influence of tourism activities. Moreover, it can enable us to generate an alternative and sustainable tourism.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing:

1. Moral challenges and concerns for the church and community in the context of tourism in your region.
2. The impact of the obsession of self reinforced by tourism on the Human Rights of the host communities.
3. Does Christian theology provide a basis for collectively responding to the impact of tourism through dialogue and cooperation in a pluralist and multi-faith society?
4. What should be done to remove the impediments that make the Church disengaged with the issues of tourism despite its significance and social effects in the national/regional society and economy.
5. What would be an appropriate syllabus on tourism for theological students in your region arising from the ground reality as seen through the three step approaches of *See*, *Judge*, and *Act*?

Endnotes

1 Darian Leader and Judy Groves, *Introducing Lacan* (Duxford: Icon Publishers, 2000).

2 http://philosophyforchange.wordpress.com/2013/06/18/lines-of-flight-deleuze-and-nomadic-creativity accessed on 20th Oct 2013.

3 http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/madnessandciv/section1.rhtml accessed on 20th Oct 2013.

4 John Urry, The Tourist Gaze (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2005), p.7.

5 See Paul-Irene Villa, *Judith Butler* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2003).

6 See Felix Wilfred, *On the Banks of Ganges: Doing Contextual Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), p. 9.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] See Paul Ricouer, *The Conflict of Interpretation* : *Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evaston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 148.

[9] http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/index.htm accessed on 20th Oct. 2013.

[10] Joseph Putti, *Theology as Hermenutics*: *Paul Ricoeur's Theory of text Interpretation and Method in Theology* (Bangalore : Kistu Joythi college, 1991), pp. 70-71.

[11] *Ibid*, pp 73-74.

[12] John V. Taylor, *Primal vision*: *Christian Presence Amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 16.

[13] For more Spirit Christologies, See Monan Doss, SVD, *Christ in the Spirit*: *Contemporary Spirit Christologies* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2005).

[14] See Joseph Lobo, *Encountering Jesus Christ in India*: *an Alternative way of doing Christology based on the Writings of George M. Soares-Prabhu* (Asia Trading Corporation: Bangalore , 2005), p. 227.

[15] Ibid, p. 228.

[16] Ibid p. 129.

[17] This consultation was conducted under the guidance of Ranjan Solomon, ex Director of ECOT and current consultant to the Church in Goa on Tourism Issues.

[18] The church of Goa has attempted to respond to the phenomenon of tourism from the very moment of the emergence of tourism in Goa. Most of the time, the horizon of faith guided its active response. I along with my students and some lay people have begun to reflect on our response as well as context of tourism in Goa under the leadership of the 'centre for responsible tourism' of our diocese as well as with an academic response from 'Equations' from Bangalore. See *Claiming the Right to Say No* (Panjim: Caritas Goa, 2009), Ranjan Solomon, (Ed.), *The Challenge and Prospects of Tourism in Goa Today* (Panjim: Caritas Goa, 2009).

[19] See Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault* (New York: Roudlege, 2007), pp33-94.

[20] For details See Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

15

A Theological Curriculum on Tourism for Ministerial Students

Wati Longchar

Mass commercial tourism is an instrument that intensifies globalisation. With its roots in profit making, pleasure and enjoyment, the tourism industry, as a neo-liberal project, denies the right to live in dignity, especially to the poor and the marginalised. The environment, worship places, sacred groves and shrines are being desecrated, and to attract tourists, sacred music, dances and festivals are commodified and reduced to cabaret performances. Women and children are reduced to the flesh market, nature is objectified to a mere scenic object, beaches merely for sunbathing. The development of ecotourism is further causing wide-scale eviction of indigenous people and other marginal communities from their ancestral lands, leading to breakdown of traditional values, wisdom and identity. Today, the continuity of these communities, and their spirituality, cultural and traditional way of life are at risk. This breeds injustice, and thus contradicts the testimonies of the Bible. Thus, it is a ministerial, missiological and theological challenge. It is imperative that churches and the theological community in the Global South make a critical, prophetic stand on this issue, and critique the whole enterprise of tourism industry from the vantage point of people who have been denied human dignity. The author comes from the North East India region which is known as a home for different indigenous communities, and hence much of the presentation in this article reflects a perspective so formed. Nevertheless, the insights and argumentation provide a springboard for developing a curriculum for theological institutions in other parts of the Global South.

Challenges and questions for the curriculum on tourism for theological institutions

Tourism is a major contemporary phenomenon. Those concerned with fashioning a theological curriculum relevant to our times should ask the following:

- How do we challenge and critique the nexus between the present profit-oriented paradigm of the tourism industry, climate-justice and survival of marginalised communities?
- How do we help scholars, church leaders, missionaries identify new forms of violence against marginal communities like indigenous people, women, and children perpetuated by the neo-liberal tourism industry?
- How do we challenge the dominant paradigm of Christian faith and practices that support a one-sided tourism industry, and help rediscover a new paradigm of God-world-human relationship based on the spirituality and experiences of the people at the margin, especially indigenous people?
- How do we engage in tapping religious and cultural resources to promote just tourism?
- How do we challenge prosperity theology?
- How do we conscientise church leaders, theological educators and Christian leaders engaged in diverse ministries on the inter-connection between the issues of environment, marginalised communities and commercial tourism with knowledge, skills, advocacy, and encouragement to action, grounded on justice?
- How do we evolve a curriculum that reflects ministerial, missiological and theological perspectives on just tourism and incorporates the dimensions indicated in the previous questions?

Globalisation and development of the tourism industry

Globalisation has come to be a principal characteristic feature of contemporary times to become an inescapable reality in our society. It operates with a basic ideology. The underlying logic is maximum profit, maximum capital accumulation, maximum exploitation of labour, and absolute domination of the earth's resources, supported by global military hegemony. This ideology harks back to the enlightenment movement with their stress on human reason and independence. The revolution that emphasised the

scientific temper was both an aggressive and dualistic ideology, and purports to have found the answer to all human problems in the domination and exploitation of nature.[1] Development is measured in terms of the amount of goods and services produced, rather than by what is produced and how it is distributed justly. All human creativity and natural resources are objectified and directed to the market for the purpose of commodity production and profit making. It is in this framework that the tourism industry is promoted as an instrument to intensify globalisation, while providing enjoyment and pleasure.

The dominant ideology asserts that *Tourism will boost the economy, the dollars will flow in. It will provide full and varied employment for all the people. Contact with other cultures will surely improve the texture of living.* This is the rationale and creed helping craft marketing slogans and advertising strategies across the Global South.

Tourism cannot be studied in isolation. A neo-liberal economic project, it touches all realms of human life and mother earth. It violates human rights and brings destruction to God's creation. It is an affront to God's purpose of life. It undermines the traditional and natural systems, and widens the gap between the rich and poor. We need to uncover the interconnected problems associated with the development of tourism on the various dimensions of culture, community, politics and economics, and nature, and challenge how this unjust development further intensifies marginalisation of the vulnerable and the exploitation of earth's resources. We cite three examples:

1. *Tourism and climate justice***:** Commercial tourism and climate justice are interconnected. A study on the effects of the tsunami in December 2004 in Asia revealed that the devastation became more serious due to destruction of mangrove and other littoral forests, sand dunes, coastal wetlands and reef systems. Had these natural protections still been in place, it was likely that the damage would have been greatly reduced.[2] The natural protective environment systems were removed for construction of hotels, resorts, golf courses, or to provide access to beaches, sea view or mountain view, for the sake of pleasure-seeking tourists. The pleasure-seeking activities take away the livelihood of earth-centred or ocean-centred communities by forcing them off their traditional lands and ocean resources. The scarcity of water for agriculture and drinking water are also related to tourism.

Moreover, tourism contributes substantially to global warming. It is estimated that 4-7% of the global carbon emissions are through the aviation

industry. It is stated that "tourism related air and sea travel has been a source of pollution. An ocean-going ship can generate emission of more than 12,000 cars."[3] Though the carbon emissions of the North are far higher per person than from the Global South[4], the poor people, especially indigenous communities, are blamed for global warming citing age-old 'slash and burn' (or *Jhum)* cultivation, population and poverty. This is a serious deception. Rather, we have to recognise that climate change is connected with the destructive one-sided developmental activities of the rich countries that promote consumerist lifestyle and culture. Studies have shown that there is no large scale environmental effect by 'slash and burn' (or *Jhum*) cultivation.

How do we challenge and critique the nexus between the present profit-oriented paradigm of the tourism industry, climate-justice and survival of marginalised communities? How do we help scholars, Church leaders, missionaries identify new forms of violence against marginal communities like indigenous people, women, and children, perpetuated by the neo-liberal tourism industry?

Tourism is a land-hungry business.[5] Resorts, hotels, golf courses, wildlife sanctuaries and other infrastructures require large areas of prime land. Without deceiving and misleading the land owners, the land cannot be taken away from them. Even the tsunami devastation in 2004 was taken advantage of to grab land. Some governments have used the cover of 'safety' to force indigenous people to move to 'safer' places and the vacated places are sold for tourism development.[6] Similarly, under the cover of 'climate justice', 'poverty alleviation', and 'earning more foreign currencies', indigenous communities are today denied their traditional self-reliant economic activities in many countries without an alternative source of income. Hence tourism is a significant part of the debate on climate justice.

2. *Tourism and indigenous people:* Tourism and the survival crisis of indigenous people and other marginal communities are interconnected. To promote ecotourism and to manipulate indigenous people's culture, land, mountains, oceans and their resources, a majority of the Asian countries had refused to sign and implement the International Labour Law (ILL) and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (July 2006). It was

a deliberate act to promote ecotourism. Signing the ILL agreement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights requires governments to formulate policies that respect, promote and protect indigenous peoples' land, mountains, rivers, oceans, cultures, languages, sacred places, traditional knowledge, education and so on. Without the permission and consent of the indigenous people (as per the ILL provision), the policy makers cannot exploit and commercialise their heritage and land resources. Some Asian governments did sign the ILL declaration, but did not implement it fully. Refusal to sign the ILL document has given them a free hand to convert indigenous lands into national parks, resorts, and golf courses. The trees can be mercilessly cut down without the consent of the indigenous people to support commercial woodcarving activities, and to cater to foreign and domestic tourists' demands, which again lead to drying up of water and other life sustaining sources. Many indigenous communities are on the verge of extinction as they can be evicted any time for the sake of national development and progress.

One will notice that deliberate attempts are being adopted by the policy makers to make the indigenous people remain illiterate so that they depend completely on the sale of their labour power. Upholding the deceptive policies, the governments in turn promote tourism development advocating that it will alleviate poverty, generate employment and income. Generate employment for whom and what kind of employment? Local people are employed mostly for manual labour – jobs like watchman, waiter, cleaner in hotels and massage parlours! Generate income for whom? The income generated goes mostly for hotels and tour agencies. On the other hand, in the process of tourism development, indigenous people are forcefully evicted from their ancestral places without adequate compensation. Along with denial of fishing, hunting and cultivation rights, their cultural assets are also increasingly marketed as tourism products by privatising their land and natural resources. In the process of being re-packaged for visitors' consumption, indigenous people's historical and religious sites, rituals, festivals, arts and crafts are often unrecognised, distorted and commercialised. This creates poverty, an indecent lifestyle, identity and spiritual crisis.

3. *Tourism and poverty*: A profit-driven industry cannot alleviate poverty. Maximisation of profit is possible only when labour power is commoditised and exploited, and land and ocean resources are privatised and exploited. A study on the policy of tourism, especially ecotourism, has proved that the belief in tourism alleviating poverty of the indigenous people is faulty. This false promise has created more misery and unemployment to many people.

Being poor, illiterate, and denied of their life sustaining resources, it has further aggravated poverty. Many people receive just seasonal and meagre wages. Local communities are given only manual jobs, but their services are not given regularisation.[7] Most of them are seasonal contract workers. Decent jobs are deliberately denied, promotion curtailed or jobs not regularised to keep the local communities illiterate and economically dependent and poor. It paves the way for manipulation and exploitation. To earn their living, women and children can be sold for commercial sex work. Men can be induced into drugs and other illegal businesses. All these indecent lifestyles contribute to diseases like HIV, TB, and so on. Tourism has also not given indigenous people education or any other skills to live a decent life. It makes people dependent, lazy and unproductive. People just sit and wait for the tourist to arrive to generate a meagre income for their living.

Tourism and objectification

While acknowledging that some positive forms of tourism bring good incomes and infra-structural development, we need to challenge unjust tourism structures and practices from a theological and ministerial perspective. We need to raise questions like: What is tourism development for? For whom? At whose cost? Does tourism protect and respect local communities, their cultures, spirituality and land? Does the tourism industry generate employment for marginalised sectors without discrimination? How far are local communities benefited by golf courses, amusement parks, restaurants, resorts and wildlife sanctuaries? What are the ecological implications?

Tourism, as a tool of a neo-liberal economic system, touches various aspects of human life and mother earth. To meet the demand of the tourist, the hosts have to sacrifice many things, including their culture, bodies, water, electricity, land and a variety of infrastructure. One serious negative impact on people and nature is *objectification.* It is an act of treating a person merely as an instrument of sexual pleasure, making them a "sex object". Objectification more broadly means treating a person as a commodity or an object, without respect to their personhood or dignity.

Some of the serious negative impacts of tourism on marginalised people and land are:

a) Objectification of the human body: Commercial tourism is a person's self-seeking satisfaction or pleasure-driven enterprise by objectifying others as a commodity or means of one's satisfaction.[8] A study has shown that a segment of the tourists in a particular destination are military

personnel. Research conducted on Israeli tourist behavior and patterns in Goa, India has revealed that the Government of Israel provides travel packages to all the soldiers after the completion of compulsory military service as an incentive. The intention is to release stress and appease the soldiers after stressful work and training.[9] Similarly, industrial workers in developed countries are given travel package bonuses by the companies to release their accumulated feelings of oppression in alienating and health threatening working conditions. Today, tour packages are consciously organised by the ruling and owning classes to avoid unrest, protest and rebellion. Tourists who travel under these circumstances arrive at the destinations merely for enjoyment, relaxation and pleasure. They objectify everything as a commodity for enjoyment and pleasure. Consequently, women and children are forced into the flesh market. They are seen as mere objects of pleasure without worth and dignity. Often the hosts internalise themselves as inferior due to their poor economic situation, and allow tourists to abuse their bodies. In some cases, owners of five star hotels and tour operators provide some support schemes and project themselves as saviours of the poor. All these tactics are adopted to appease the oppressed and exploited communities to remain silent.

b) *Objectification of culture*: Traditionally indigenous customs, rituals, sacred shrines, places of worship, sacred music, and ceremonial dress are treated and handled with much reverence. Today, they are commercialised to take advantage of tourists. Musicians, dancers and other artists perform, exhibit and sell their creativity and self respect to earn some income. Our sacred music and dances have turned into mere cabaret performances for enjoyment. The development of ecotourism is further causing wide scale eviction of indigenous people from their ancestral lands[10] leading to breakdown of traditional values and land-centred spirituality. In summary, commercial tourism's sole objectives are mere profit, pleasure and enjoyment. It does not respect life, culture and spirituality. It denies the right to live in dignity, especially to the poor and marginalised people.

c) *Objectification of nature:* For indigenous people, land is sacred and the whole creation is an exegesis of God. God dwells in creation, and so is alive. The scientific method of reductionism took the mystery out of the Western view of nature. People began to believe that there is nothing amazing about the cosmos. The physical world is viewed merely as the

sum-total of many materials, components and energies. To understand the world, one has only to know the laws which govern these components. This worldview further contributed to the secularisation of the world. By detaching God from nature, natural resources are seen as something to be manipulated and exploited without any compunction. Nature has only an instrumental value, determined by the extent to which humans can utilise it. Within such a perspective, the ideology of tourism operates. God's creation is seen merely from a utilitarian perspective, denying the integrity and its wholeness. The sanctity of worship places, sacred groves and shrines are mere objects for the tourist gaze. Tourism thus contributes to the violation of sacred space, and loss of bio-diversity on which communities depend. When destroyed for promotion of tourism, the local people and communities suffer the most.

Therefore, the promotion of commercial tourism has to be located within the larger structural injustice. The injustice and destruction perpetrated to nature and people are massive. The church cannot remain a silent spectator. All these challenges demand urgent ministerial intervention because most of the affected people are indigenous people, women and children. God's creation is also groaning due to over-exploitation. We are called to listen to their cries.

A theological challenge

In spite of tourism's negative effects, we also need to recognise its immense potentiality to create global community for peace and justice. Tourism is an important modern activity that can promote interaction among religions, cultures and civilisations, and serve as a catalyst for numerous projects and programmes for human development. It can create and promote new social movements, if the present paradigm is directed to creating just-tourism.

However, unjust tourism is the modern face of human suffering and unequal sharing of power and resources. While a few enjoy disproportionate profits, a majority of the people are denied their land, sea and mountain rights. The Bible affirms that travel is essential, but gives a different view to modern tourism.

There is a difference between travel in the Bible and modern tourism. Modern tourism is mainly directed to the human's self seeking pleasure, objectifying others as a mere commodity. The Bible challenges objectification and commodification of people, their culture, and reducing God's creation for greed and personal gratification. In Biblical language, it is making people

slaves. Indebtedness was one of the main reasons for slavery. Minors would be sold by poor, or indebted parents or adults would sell themselves. (Exod. 22:25-27, cf. Deut. 234:19, 24:6, 17). Elsewhere, in ancient Near East, exorbitant interest rates were the chief cause of slavery.[11] In Israel the lifestyle of the rich, who were competing to build "winter and summer houses", forced the poor to slavery. The competition of tourism development forces many indigenous people to slavery. We can compare today's commercial tourism with the ancient slavery system.

Created in God's image, any practice or system that pictures human beings as objects for enjoyment by commodifying them challenges human dignity. Modern tourism operates with such an ideology. Human beings are not perceived as human beings with their own dignity and autonomy. But they are subjected to slavery. We must speak out and act in the pursuit of

> Therefore, theological education will not be complete without addressing this issue. Tourism has to be critiqued from the vantage points of the subsistence communities, and students have to be provided with methodological tools to deconstruct the myth of capitalists' interest using the hermeneutical key of the lived experiences of the dalits, tribals, adivasis, women and other marginalised communities. Through a carefully structured curriculum, we need to help students to analyse different types of tourism such as `justice tourism,' 'eco-tourism,' 'mass tourism,' `cultural tourism,' 'sustainable tourism,' and so on, and identify their implications on indigenous people, their culture, women, children and environment.

life, justice and peace for all, and respect for the integrity of God's creation.

The Bible also speaks about Sabbath. The rest in Biblical tradition is not the modern day idea of a holiday. The Bible testifies that holiday is a day free from work, just as God rested after His work (Gen 2:2-3). In Ex 20:8-11, God commanded the people of Israel that the Sabbath be kept holy. It is a time of contemplation to rest from our daily work to foster a closer relationship with God, community and creation, not a time to move away from God. The Sabbath is thus rooted in doing justice to the poor and to the entire God's creation. With the concept of holiday promoted in tourism, the increase in tourist arrivals, and the sole objective of profit, the understanding of ethics of leisure is driven toward mere pleasure rather than a time of

opportunities to meet God. The Biblical understanding of holiday has no place in the exploitation and objectification of people and earth's resources.

Therefore, theological education will not be complete without addressing this issue. Tourism has to be critiqued from the vantage points of the subsistence communities, and students have to be provided with methodological tools to deconstruct the myth of capitalists' interest using the hermeneutical key of the lived experiences of the dalits, tribals, adivasis, women and other marginalised communities. Through a carefully structured curriculum, we need to help students to analyse different types of tourism such as "justice tourism," 'eco-tourism,' 'mass tourism,' `cultural tourism,' 'sustainable tourism,' and so on, and identify their implications on indigenous people, their culture, women, children and environment.

Theological education and tourism

The Global South has numerous institutions and agencies that, as settings for learning, could formulate and provide theological education on the crucial justice issues raised by contemporary tourism. In Asia, one can cite two major ecumenical theological networks, for instance, that could perform this function. (a) The Senate of Serampore College (University) with 55 affiliated colleges having more than 6,000 students and about 1,000 faculty members operating in South Asia. (b) The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), now known as ATESEA Theological Union (ATU) has a membership of 105 colleges in 16 countries, with approximately 20,000 students and more than 3,100 faculty members. Besides, there are a number of institutions under the Asian Theological Association (ATA), and other evangelical theological networks. The departments of Christianity or Theology under different Indian and other universities are also making great impact on the life of the church and society. This shows the strength of the theological community that can become a potential force in helping transform the prevailing tourism industry and its practices through educating ministerial students.

The history of formal theological education in Asia is less than 200 years old, and yet, there have been tremendous developments in many areas of its work. It is encouraging to see that the two ecumenical and theological networks are trying to meet the demands of modern ministries effectively by responding to contemporary socio-political challenges by evolving new patterns of theological education and research in Asia. By giving importance to contemporary cutting-edge life issues, employing the hermeneutical

principle gained from the commitment of the struggles of the marginalised people for justice, theological students are motivated to engage in transformative action. However, colleges/seminaries in Asia do not address tourism issues in their curriculum.

Tourism is a global economic activity with tangible impact on climate justice, anti-social activities, economic deprivation, cultural alienation and identity crisis. The issue has to be addressed as an important theological agenda. It is crucial that the tourism issue is located within the framework of theology and ethics, pastoral care, and as an important missiological concern. It is sad to note that without analysing the negative impacts, many people seem to assume that tourism is a positive economic activity that is good for the poor communities, especially for indigenous communities. However, we need to know that believing in money as the indicator of prosperity is Prosperity Theology.[12] It is equal to the worship of mammon.

As stated earlier, tourism, as a new liberal economic project, touches all realms of human life and mother earth. We should make every attempt to help transform tourism to create new social consciousness for peace and justice. Theological institutions can challenge the negative trends through implementing a well designed course outline for the ministerial candidates. Upholding the integrity of God's creation and value of life, the thrust of the course should be to help the students to articulate the new forms of violence against indigenous people, women and children, carried on by neo-liberal globalisation and tourism industries, sensitise and equip church leaders with knowledge and skill of engaging with tourism, and evolve Christian response and action grounded on justice. Theological critique on the present paradigm of tourism should lead the students to articulate alternative tourism.

Some areas that require theological critique

Theological and ethical concerns: What are the ethical and theological tools that challenge and transform mainstream tourism? What is the ethical and theological framework to challenge the commercialisation of people and God's creation? How does theology justify tourism? What is the Christian ethics of leisure and pleasure? How do we challenge various forms of prosperity theologies that promote tourism? How do we evolve tourism's link with Christian values? How do we promote inter-cultural communication and exchanges for justice and peace? How do we challenge people to take the risk of stepping out of their comfort zones and expanding their circles of friends to include all people, all faiths, all ethnicities?

Tourism and development concerns: What is tourism development? For whom? At whose cost? How do we unearth the unjust nexus between globalisation, climate justice and struggles of marginalised communities? How do we develop an alternative tourism that helps economic development of the local community without destroying their land or ocean resources and culture? How do we develop a tourism that respects nature, minimises stress on the environment? How do we challenge the tourism sector and governments to make tourism more sensitive to climate change? How do we generate employment for marginalised sectors without discrimination? How do we empower local communities to resist commercial tourism operations such as golf courses, amusement parks, franchised restaurants, resorts and wildlife sanctuaries at the cost of people? How do we ensure an active role and participation of the indigenous communities and women in the development of transformative tourism? How do we challenge the media to be socially sensitive, especially on the negative impacts of mass tourism promoted by the governments and the market?

Tourism and concerns of marginalised communities: How does tourism affect the life of the marginal communities? How do we empower them to assert their rights, culture, ocean and land links in the course of tourism development? How do we educate tour guides and interpreters with training for understanding of local ethno-cultural history? How do we develop tourism programmes based on indigenous culture and local natural environment? More specifically, how do we incorporate history, art, folklore, music, dance and food to highlight and focus on the preservation of unique traditional elements? How do we resist sex tourism? In other words, how do we promote tourism that is fair, sustainable and community-based, respecting human rights?

Tourism and the role of the Church: Tourism is an integral part of education. It must bring transformation to both the visitor and the host. Then, what is the role of the Church? How do we conscientise our churches to realise critiquing and campaigning on issues like anti-people development and tourism as part of Christian duty, and mission and pastoral concerns? How do the churches develop networking with international organisations to promote just tourism? Does the Church empower the host to shape and create collective articulated voices from faith-based/interfaith perspectives? How do we transform tourism as a tool for advocacy and a tool for peace? How does the Church promote just tourism?

The course needs to be designed in such a way that students are stimulated to engage in transformative tourism to promote mutuality, solidarity,

and the real discovery of human community. To do so, the course must address unjust power relations between those who own the capital and those who are completely dependent on their labour power. In other words, the root causes of unjust structures must be located to know how this power imbalance functions and how it erects walls of division and inequality among the poor. Max Ediger points out that transformative tourism must be directed "to confront the visitor with injustice; the injustice of global economic structures that suck resources from poor countries into rich countries; the injustice of heavy labour that does not receive proper compensation; the injustice of occupation; destroyed homes, and lost futures; the injustice of vast military spending while children go without education, proper diets, health care and happy childhood; and the injustice of voices calling out for a systematic ear but remaining unheard and unheeded."[13] The traveller must be pushed to address the issue of power in a creative and just way. Moreover, just tourism should lead the traveller to seek forgiveness, find deeper meaning in life, and healing through repentance. Just tourism will lead to discovery of each other, understanding each other, and sharing with each other of what they can and what they have. Sufficient space should be created in the course outline for the students to explore new ways of promoting just tourism.

A Proposed curriculum on Tourism for ministerial students

Suggested for a four credit course in the 3rd or 4th year of the Bachelor of Divinity/Master of Divinity programme

Suggested title of the course: *The Tourism industry and marginalised communities: A Search for Justice*

Rationale

Mass commercial tourism does not respect life, culture and environment because it has its roots in profit making, pleasure and enjoyment. The tourism industry, following its neo-liberal character, denies the right to live in dignity, especially to the poor and the marginalised people. Environment, worship places, sacred groves and shrines are being desecrated by profit, pleasure and enjoyment seeking tourism. To attract tourists, sacred music, dances and festivals are commodified and reduced to cabaret performances. Women and children are reduced to a flesh market, nature is objectified to mere scenic objects, beaches to mere sunbathing locations, denying its integrity and wholeness. The development of ecotourism is further causing wide-scale eviction of indigenous people and other marginalised communities from their ancestral lands leading to breakdown of traditional values, wisdom and

identity. Today, the survival of indigenous people and other marginalised communities and their spirituality, cultural and traditional ways of life are at risk. The tourism industry breeds injustice and thus contradicts the testimonies of the Bible. Thus, tourism becomes a ministerial, missiological and theological challenge. It is imperative that the churches and theological community make a critical prophetic stand on this issue and critique the whole enterprise of the tourism industry from the vantage point of experiences of the people who have been denied human dignity.

Objectives

- To challenge and critique the nexus between the present profit-oriented paradigm of tourism industry, climate justice and survival of marginalised communities;
- To help scholars and Church leaders identity new forms of violence against marginal communities, e.g. indigenous people, women and children perpetrated by neo-liberal globalisation and tourism industries;
- To challenge the dominant paradigm of Christian faith and practices that support the mass tourism industry and help rediscover a new paradigm of God-world-human relationship based on the experiences of the people at the margin;
- To explore religious resources to promote just tourism;
- To conscientise Church leaders and theological educators on the nexus of environment, marginalised communities and commercial tourism with knowledge, skills and action grounded on justice; and
- To provide a new ministerial, missiological, spiritual and theological perspectives on alternative just tourism.

Methodology

1) Engage on the issues/concepts
2) Live project/immersion exercise (Research methodology & skills) – theologising and action happens simultaneously
3) Specific report of tourism impact assessment
4) Lectures/Paper presentations on various issues and themes

Course outline

A. Understanding tourism industry from a marginalised perspective

1. Ideology of the tourism industry

2. Mass tourism vs. travel, tour, voyage…
3. Tourism industry – enslaving or liberating?
4. The tourist and host community
5. Tourism vs. religious pilgrimage

B. Understanding theory and ideology of tourism

1. Understanding tourism and development – philosophy, social theory, political theory, models of tourism (luxury tourism, high-end, enclave, community based tourism…)
2. Tourism industry and neo-liberal globalisation
3. The ideology of objectification and commodification of human beings and nature: Role of media and politics
4. Government and the tourism industry
5. Tourism and the myth of poverty alleviation in the Global South

C. Understanding the impacts of commercial tourism on the human community and nature

1. Destruction of the *Oikos*
2. Tourism and distress of land
3. Tourism and climate justice
4. Tourism and gender inequality, sex tourism
5. Tourism and marginalised communities
6. Tourism and displacement of people
7. Tourism and conflict on resources
8. People's rights and freedom
9. Exploitative employment
10. Human rights violations
11. Substance abuse and drugs
12. Tourism, prostitution, and HIV and AIDS

D. Exploration of biblical and theological resources

1. Critiquing tourism industry from subaltern perspective
2. Questioning the dominant theology/ideology of media, leisure and prosperity

3. Theo-ethical Resources
   - Mystery of God's creation
   - Humans as guests in God's world
   - God as the host
   - Rest (Sabbath) and just economic enterprise in the Bible
   - Responsible stewardship of God's world
   - Just hospitality
   - Image of God – respect of human dignity
   - Kingdom of God
4. Jesus' movement against commodification and objectification of humans
5. Re-imaging praxis-orientated theology of just tourism
6. Re-imaging tourism as a mission of incarnation

E. Search for alternative just tourism

1. Tourism as a tool for promotion of peace, justice and truth
2. Pilgrimage as transformative tourism
3. Tourism as inter-cultural dialogue and exchange for world peace
4. Community stewardship model of tourism
5. Women and justice
6. Indigenous communities in transformative tourism
7. Interfaith and local community engagement in alternative tourism
8. Evolving an alternative tourist guide — host community and tourist

F. Church's engagement on alternative tourism

1. A survey of history of the Church's global engagement with tourism
2. Ecumenical initiatives to alternative tourism, example, ECOT, YMCA, YWCA, NCC, SCM, and such organisations.
3. Kairos pilgrimages (Palestine document)
4. Mission of Christ in the context of a growing tourism industry
5. Equipping the local congregation for just tourism
6. Missiological and ministerial practice of justice tourism
7. Tourism and inclusive pastoral praxis
8. Christian witness and faith practices amidst a growing tourism industry

G. Select case studies of tourism policies of the government, tourism practices, impact on community

Institutionalising tourism in theological education: Some practical suggestions

As mentioned above, tourism has emerged as one important modern economic activity touching all dimensions of life. The issue has to be addressed within the framework of theology and ethics, pastoral care, and as a missiological imperative. I suggest a few practical suggestions for institutionalisation of the course:

(a) Colleges/seminaries could offer the curriculum for ministerial candidates as a credited course, or as an interdisciplinary course. This should be done through the accreditation or affiliation mechanism.

(b) Integration of tourism issues in other disciplines. There is scope to integrate tourism issues in other disciplines such as Christian Ethics, Social Analysis, Women's Studies, Tribal/Dalit theologies, Missiology and Christian ministry. This will bring a perspectival change in theological orientation. However, there is a need to create space to review the existing theological curricula, and suggest areas where integration of the issues could be done.

(c) Scholarship programme. Setting aside some scholarship provisions will encourage research scholars to take up tourism issues.

(d) Ministerial exposure under the supervision of alternative tourist operators. Seminaries/colleges need to explore students' internship programme or concurrent field work in appropriate settings, like a tourist destination. This will provide opportunity for students to experience the actual life realities of people, and the destruction on environment brought about by the tourism industry.

(e) We should also note that developing a course alone is not sufficient, and it will not bring much perspectival change in

theological orientation, if the teachers are not trained to handle the course. Creating awareness is the first step for change. We need to accompany theological institutions by facilitating a Teachers' Institute on this issue. To stimulate and evoke students to engage in transformative action, teachers need not only orientation on how to handle the course, but also methodological tools for analysing negative impacts of commercial tourism from a theological perspective.

(f) Finally, the curriculum and the teachers' institute need to be accompanied by publication of theological resource books. Without adequate theological resource materials, we will be limited in our goal of addressing and challenging tourism from the perspective of the marginalised. It is crucial that ecumenical networks like ECOT, CCA, WCC, YWCA and YMCA, and others collaborate with churches and theological institutions in organising more regional and sub-regional consultations, writers' workshops on the subject, with the purpose of producing theological resource materials.

Areas and topics arising from this article to explore and develop in theses, papers, and academic writing

1. Critical analysis of inter-connection between booming economic progress and pleasure seeking tourism that objectify women, indigenous people and their culture. What is our theological response to commoditisation and objectification of marginalised people and their culture?
2. Climate justice should be seen as a justice issue. Social justice and profit-oriented tourism linked to climate justice. How do we evolve a spirituality that affirms life in its fullness?
3. As a Pastor or Church worker, what steps would we suggest to our congregation members in response to today's profit-oriented tourism.

Endnotes

[1] V.J. John, *The Ecological Vision of Jesus* (Thiruvalla: CSS-BTTBPSA, 2002), pp. 34-35.

[2] Caesar D'Mello, "Foreword" in *Disaster Prevention in Tourism: Perspectives on Climate Justice – an Abridged Version, eds.* Philip Mathew and Jonathan McKeown, (Chiangmai, 2010), pp. 7-10.

[3] *Ibid*. p. 22.

[4] For example, the USA with only 4% of the world population emits 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions.

[5] Philip Mathew and Jonathan McKeown, *op. cit*., p. 11.

[6] Philip Mathew and Jonathan McKeown, *op. cit*., p. 13.

[7] It is the case in most of the Five-Star Hotels and other sectors.

[8] 'Travel' for human needs and 'pilgrimage' for spiritual renewal should not be confused with tourism which is connected solely for enjoyment and pleasure.

[9] For details, refer to *Claiming the Rights to Say NO,* (Goa: CSJP & Equations, 2009).

[10] For the indigenous people, land is sacred and life. It is the land that holds family, clan, village and tribe as one community. The identity of the people is deeply rooted in the soil. It is the life sustaining power.

[11] A. Philip, "The Law of Slavery, Exodus 21:2-11," *Journal for the Study of Old Testament,* 30, '1984, p. 54.

[12] The Shillong Declaration issued by the participants of a consultation on "The North East India Churches' response to development and tourism" organised by the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), Presbyterians Church of India (PCI) and the Martin Luther Christian University (MLCU) on 29-31 March 2011 at the PCI Centre, Shillong, Meghalaya, India., p. 2.

[13] Max Ediger, "Combating Dispossession", in *Combating Dispossession: Towards a Code of Ethics for Tourism in Palestine,* ed. Ranjan Solomon (2008), pp. 50-60.

APPENDIX I

The Kolkata Statement

from the International 'Theology of Tourism' Consultation in Kolkata from 22-27 November 2013 organised by Senate Centre for Extension and Pastoral Theological Research (SCEPTRE), Serampore (University)

Deconstructing Tourism: Who Benefits?

Tourism is a global phenomenon. Given its size and impact, especially in the Global South (the third world), it is legitimate and necessary to ask: *who benefits*?

Global tourism is one of the four largest industries in the world, with oil and fuels, arms, and pharmaceuticals. Its outlays are estimated at around 10 per cent of the global GDP, while employing around 300 million, or about 10 per cent of the world's workforce. With rising incomes, the number of leisure travellers is increasing, with a billion tourism arrivals in a year globally now, and heading towards 1.6 billion by 2020, according to UN estimates. It is not surprising then that tourism is a significant feature of most economies, especially in countries of the Global South.

Tourism involves both the relatively small number of those affluent enough to travel, and the vast majority of human beings on whom that activity has a huge negative impact. An average person is generally unaware of this on account of the slick tourism advertising, the facile assumptions regarding the benefits of tourism, and the innate human desire to travel for fun and

relaxation. This ensures that tourism is not critiqued, and is perceived to be a positive force for communities. *Is it?*

While acknowledging some positive forms of tourism, such as Community Based Tourism, that bring about beneficial incomes, overall a superficial and unquestioned construct regarding mainstream tourism persists that does not correspond with the reality of community, social, environmental and economic damage flowing from the endeavor. Tourism, unlike other issues, escapes attention as a crucial justice and peace concern in churches and theological education. This may be because the majority of people in church and society are possibly conditioned into believing the widely propagated notion that tourism is a boon and a tool of liberation for the poor. The rationale for this, either stated or assumed, comes from tourism being painted as 'smokeless', costless, clean, green and non-polluting. Other benefits claimed include the influx of income, foreign exchange, employment and fostering of so-called understanding between peoples. But, they gloss over the question of who benefits from tourism?

A structural analysis of mass commercial tourism in light of Christian social teachings makes it a pertinent theological focus for churches in the world called to prayerfully witness and serve. As a major economic activity affecting human beings, and causing various forms of human suffering for so many in the Global South, tourism needs to be investigated, questioned, and challenged on the basis of Biblical teachings. For Christians, no other response is adequate on the serious issues, some of which are suggested below, posed by an universal reality that is a 'sign of our times'. The *preferential option for the poor'* is a distillation of the gospel we preach and practise.

Mass tourism is marked by the massive diversion of essential resources, including land, water, electricity, a variety of other infrastructure, taxation revenue, from the local community that sorely needs them to tourism interests. Alongside the displacement resulting from tourism development, most of the employment it supposedly creates in the local community is low status, low paying, and insecure.

Mass tourism treats women as a service or commodity, that is in stark contrast to the countercultural attitudes and teachings of Jesus. Women and children are trafficked and they have little control over their situation in the face of ruthless forces promoting sex tourism motivated by the lure of money.

Local and indigenous customs, rituals, sacred shrines, places of worship,

sacred music, ceremonial dress, traditions, and handiwork are commercialised to attract tourists. Musicians, dancers and other artistes perform, exhibit and sell their creativity to earn some income, at the cost of their self-respect.

Profit-driven tourism exploits and markets nature – the sun, sea, mountains, rivers and landscapes – that it does not own. Devastating overcrowding at resort areas, beaches, increased pollution of rivers, lakes and seas, and growing deforestation exacerbate an already worsening loss of bio-diversity. People depend on land, air, trees, water, plants for their livelihood but tourism capitalises on them. When nature and its bio-diversity – a hallmark of creation – are ruined, the local people pay the price.

Modern tourism uses enormous amounts of fossil fuels based energy for lavish hotels, air-conditioning, maintaining and constructing airports, and for other facilities. All of these are a prime source of carbon emissions and global warming, which will have serious effects on the people of the Global South.

All human beings are created in the image of God and are the subjects, and not objects of creation. They have God-given human rights. Any concept that pictures human beings as objects for enjoyment by commodifying them is a travesty of human values, and an insult to human beings. Modern tourism is centred on such an approach.

Tourism, an industry that encompasses extensive financial resources with economic power exercised by a few, and operates on the basis of a 'formula' that places profit and tourists ahead of the local people, needs to be prophetically challenged to understand that the earth and all its gifts are created by God, and belong to all. These are not just properties at the disposal of the rich and the affluent, or those who advocate tourism or development through economic models that do not benefit the poor but just a few.

We, the participants from Zambia, Switzerland, Philippines, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Australia, and different parts of India, and in solidarity with those unable to attend from South Africa, Palestine, and the Caribbean, urge churches, theological institutions and those concerned about tourism to:

Analyse and critique the unjust tourism structures and practices prevailing in the world,

Critique tourism from the point of view of the subaltern and subsistence communities, indigenous people, women and children, the displaced and others on the margin, applying the Kingdom values of equality and equity,

Study the potential of tourism as 'pilgrimage' to stimulate an ethical engagement for mutuality, solidarity and a real discovery of human community,

Analyse and challenge the media messages and tourism advertising,

Study the link between tourism and climate justice,

Develop ways of empowering and sensitising the church to advocate and promote just tourism,

Look and respond to tourism issues in an inter-faith context.

God's gifts have to be enjoyed with care and responsibility. We acknowledge that God's creation has been violated due to the root cause of human greed and the belief that the market ideology is paramount in society. As Christians, we must speak out and act in the pursuit of life, justice and peace for the stewardship and integrity of creation.

APPENDIX II

Last call to Durban

"Beyond Numbers: A call for social, economic and climate justice in tourism"

A more just and sustainable development of tourism is needed to reduce impacts on the global climate and to contribute effectively to poverty alleviation and creating opportunities for communities and relevant stakeholders in tourism destinations. NGOs and individuals from the global South and North are concerned that tourism is used as an excuse to avoid any global binding emission regulation for aviation. Tourism industry interest groups argue that a regulative framework for capping emissions from international air traffic could have negative impacts on tourism revenues that are assumed to contribute to poverty alleviation in developing countries. Their message in brief is: 'A binding climate regime for tourism might undermine development and its targets.'

The organisations that have endorsed this paper question this argument and call for a serious and differentiated debate on tourism and poverty alleviation in the negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The travel and tourism industry has to date protected its business interests in the name of poverty alleviation. It is urgent to highlight the complex social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of tourism in destinations, particularly as these affect workers and communities, and draw attention to the irresponsible stance of the tourism industry in the UNFCCC process. The debate on the role of tourism in achieving a 'green economy' must go beyond the statements repeated ad nauseam presenting only the positive economic spin-offs of tourism growth. It is time to seriously debate the rapid growth of the tourism sector and its

impacts on climate, biodiversity and natural resources and human well-being and development. A people-centred and human rights-based approach is needed to break the deadlock for binding regulations of emissions from international transport and pave the way for sustainable tourism practices.

The tourism sector accounts for an estimated 5% of anthropogenic CO2 emissions but its overall contribution to climate change, if measured as radiative forcing of all greenhouse gases, is in the order of 5.2-12.5% (Scott et al., 2010). Aviation accounts for 40% of tourism's CO2 emissions, car transport for 32% and accommodation for 21%. The remaining 7% arises from activities by tourists (4%) and other forms of transport (3%), including in particular cruise ships. It is forecast that carbon emissions from tourism will grow by 162% during the period 2005-2035 (UNWTO, 2008). Legislative regulations to reduce emissions from tourism do not exist up to now; in fact, tourism in its entirety has not been debated at any of the international climate political negotiations to date (Respect, 2009).

In the UNFCCC process only emissions from aviation are negotiated, together with emissions from shipping (the so called 'bunker fuels' or 'bunkers'). In a recent study, IPCC authors conclude that considering the best available estimates for non-CO2 effects, global aviation contributed 4.9 %, in the worst scenario even up to 14% to man-made climate change in 2005 (Lee et al., 2009). These climate impacts from air travel are caused by a relatively small fraction of around 2% of the world population that actively takes part in air travel. So far the negotiations on 'bunker fuels' have been conducted in a half-hearted way – after many years they are not incorporated in any obligatory emission reduction targets. Bunker fuels are not bound by the Kyoto-Protocol. In 1997, the responsibility to reduce aviation emissions was handed over to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). The organization was commissioned to develop a suitable climate protection mechanism for its sector. It has failed miserably in this task: after 14 years the ICAO has yet to come up with any significant and internationally binding measure or target.

In the climate negotiations the tourism industry has to date successfully protected its business interests in the name of development and poverty eradication. Through international bodies like the ICAO or the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) tourism industry interest groups argue that any binding emission reduction mechanism for aviation – for instance a global fuel tax or emission trading scheme – would result in increased costs for passenger transportation, which in turn would impact negatively on the

economies of developing countries. It is claimed that people in developing countries that are heavily dependent on tourism revenues would be doubly affected – on the one hand through direct impacts from climate change, and on the other hand from reduced income and livelihoods associated with decreased tourism arrivals. Even the UNWTO – a UN specialised agency that acts as an intergovernmental forum on global tourism policy – takes the stance that climate regulations must not put a disproportionate burden on the tourism private sector and must not impair its ability to grow. However, neither UNWTO nor ICAO have ever gone beyond this 'defensive' stance, nor have they made any concrete proposals regarding the design of regulative climate solutions for the aviation sector, the securing of funds for financing adaptation measures in developing countries, and ways forward on how to deal with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" of the Convention.

The often-painted picture that tourism growth equals revenues, which equals poverty alleviation, is highly simplistic, as is the notion that this calculus will be undermined by any kind of binding climate commitment. In order to meet both climate and development targets, it is necessary to discuss frankly the extent to which uncontrolled or unplanned tourism growth really contributes to poverty alleviation in the Global South. Does tourism actually contribute to poverty, and if so how? Will climate regulations really limit the travel and tourism industry's potential to address poverty?

To tackle such questions requires new thinking on tourism's role in the global climate challenge:

> The World Development Movement (WDM) has released a report with the New Economics Foundation (NEF), which investigates the impact that halting growth in UK aviation would have on tourism in developing countries: The vast majority of air travelers from the UK go to Europe, and then to richer parts of the world such as North America and Japan. This illustrates the fact that the lion's share of global tourism takes place between developed countries. About 60% of all international tourist arrivals can be attributed to the group of Highly Developed Countries, whereas only 10% of tourists travel to developing countries. Initially halting growth in aviation can be achieved by focusing on short haul flights, which needs the carrot of better rail services and the stick of higher taxes on aviation as well as an end to massive airport expansion. Such measures would not impact developing countries.

The group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) receives only 1.2% of global tourism arrivals. If growth in UK outbound tourism to developing countries were to be curbed, this would have only a small impact on the economic growth of countries that receive a proportionally large number of UK tourists. If outbound long haul travel from the UK were limited, the economies of Kenya, Thailand and the Dominican Republic would lose between 0.1 and 0.4% of GDP growth by 2020 (WDM and NEF, 2008). Therefore measures will be needed to compensate such countries or exclude them from measures to reduce growth in long haul travel.

The report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing foresees measures might impact air travel by increased costs of around 2-3% (AGF report, 2009). Research indicates that any such negotiated taxation will negligibly reduce demand, especially for long-haul travel, which is less elastic than short-haul travel due to a lack of good substitutes for long journeys compared to short journeys that can be undertaken by car, train or boat (IIED, 2011).

It must also be questioned how much of the income generated from tourism eventually reaches the 'poor.' Various studies show that as much as 85% of tourism revenues 'leak' out of developing countries (cited in Bolwell and Weinz, 2008), due to various factors most notably the power of international tour operators (Broham, 1996), foreign ownership and the high import propensity of tourism (Jules, 2005).

Moreover, the share of tourism revenue that stays in the national economy does not automatically benefit poor people. As many examples show, tourism investments in developing countries often narrowly benefit the small elites leaving the local population without access to the tourism market or to decent jobs. Extensive literature conducted under the auspices of the British 'pro-poor' tourism programme (www.propoortourism.org.uk) repeatedly illustrates that poor people require support in the form of capacity building and market linkages, to keep pace with tourism growth and to benefit meaningfully from it. Lack of such support inevitably results in 'missed opportunities' for development and even resistance by the local population, for example in Egypt where the dictatorship and its clientele profited from tourism at the expense of the Egyptian majority (Tourism Watch Nr. 64, 2011). In the Dominican Republic, a 20-year tourism boom has failed to boost human development which is clearly stated over the years by the Human

> Development Index. And in the fragile coral archipelago of the Maldives, fishing communities are in crisis while the tourist industry booms and half of the population are living without electricity (AKTE, 2009).
>
> There are examples where tourism development creates or reinforces poverty by depriving local communities of their economic base. Poor households and communities tend to be less resilient against the negative socioeconomic, cultural and/or environmental impacts of tourism compared to those that directly benefit from the sector through employment or the supply of goods and services to it. There are cases where in the name of tourism growth and development, indigenous populations and other destination stakeholders are discriminated against, their freedom of expression curtailed and their participation in decision-making processes obstructed.
>
> Market forces of supply and demand inflate the prices of land and other vital resources, often rendering access to these beyond the means of local people. Natural resources are often diverted for the sake of tourists to the detriment of local populations struggling to access water or land for their everyday needs.
>
> There are countless examples of the ways in which unplanned or forced tourism development results in environmental degradation, social exploitation and human rights violations. The impacts of climate change will exacerbate these impacts and amplify conflicts over water, energy and other resources.

'Successful' tourism development cannot be expressed and defined in purely economic terms like market share and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as presented in the UNFCCC process by tourism industry interest groups. In tourism, as in many other sectors, it is necessary to develop new yardsticks that take into account the full socioeconomic, cultural and environmental sustainability of the prescribed strategies and solutions within this sector.

A starting point for resolving the climate & poverty challenge for the tourism sector could be the AGF's recommendation to ensure 'no net incidence' for developing countries resulting from any measures to generate climate finance from international transport. Within this concept of 'no net incidence' it would be possible to provide an annual rebate for developing countries to neutralize any economic burden deriving from a decline in tourism arrivals. The remaining revenue, mainly from developed countries, would be earmarked for climate change action in developing countries. Further, to

minimize the potential negative consequences on the most vulnerable developing countries, the approach of the "de minimis thresholds" should be applied. The effect of these thresholds should be to exempt traffic to and/or from Small Island Development States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDC). States with less than 1% of global aviation activity would also be exempt from market-based measures. This would mean that while regulative measures would apply only to an estimated 22 states, these would capture about 80% of emissions from international aviation.

Groups endorsing this paper:

Acknowledge that climate regulations must not conflict with development goals and disadvantage people in the South economically. They stress that the interdependencies between climate change, tourism and development are very complex and go beyond pure tourism growth numbers and emission reduction targets;

Express their deep concern about the undifferentiated and irresponsible manner in which these complexities are brought forward by tourism industry interest groups within the UNFCCC process, and the general lack of political will to find real solutions that will benefit the Global South. The assumed important function of tourism as a 'development motor' is being constantly used as an instrument against any progress on the inclusion of aviation into global climate policy;

Call upon the Conference of the Parties (COP) 17 in Durban to develop strong guidelines for ICAO including an ambitious emission reduction target linked to clear timeframes to create a framework for quickly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation. At the same time COP 17 must ensure a fair contribution of the aviation sector to the funding of mitigation and adaptation measures in developing countries while ensuring no net incidence of impacts from climate protection measures on poor people.

Call upon the UNWTO to play a constructive role in the UNFCCC process characterised by serious in-depth debate with its members on minimizing any economic burdens that may accrue to developing countries. The proposed concept of "no net incidence" may help to find solutions that will actually benefit the poor.

Call for a fundamental transformation of global tourism to create fair, just, sustainable and participatory models for business and development that will respect human rights. Communities in tourism destinations should

be empowered to share in the benefits of tourism growth and to take part in decision-making processes that affect them.

This paper has been developed by the following NGOs:

Tourism Watch/ Church Development Service (EED)

Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT)

arbeitskreis tourismus & entwicklung (AKTE)

Naturefriends International (NFI)

Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA)

These groups endorse the paper:

CETRI - Centre tricontinental, Belgium

World Council of Churches

Tourism Concern, UK

Acción por un Turismo Responsable

Coastal Development Partnership, Bangladesh

National Council of Churches, India

Institute for TourismResearch + Planning

Community Tourism Council of Prainha do Canto Verde, Ceará, Brazil

ALBA SUD, Spain

Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN)/ Asian Resource Foundation (ARF)

Peace for Life, Philippines

Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

The United Church of Canada

FASTENOPFER, Switzerland

Asia Pacific Ecumenical News

Foro de Turismo Responsable – FTR, Spain

ATE Swiss Association for transport and environment

forum anders reisen e.V.

atmosfair gGmbH

Andaman Discoveries and the North Andaman Community Tourism

Network
Alternative Tourism Group, Palestine
KABANI - the other direction, India
The Blue Yonder, India
Traverdo GmbH
Alliance Sud
ECPAT Switzerland
SWISSAID, Swiss Foundation for Development Cooperation
Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research, South Africa
VCD - Verkehrsclub Deutschland (Transportation Club Germany)
Germanwatch
Bread for the World
Transport & Environment
Pacific Conference of Churches

Bibliography

Chapter 1

Deconstructing Tourism: A Challenge of Justice for the Church A Theological Perspective

D'Mello, Caesar, ed. *Transforming Re-Forming Tourism.* Chiang Mai, Thailand: ECOT, 2007.

D'Mello, Caesar, Jonathan McKeown, Sabine Minninger, eds. *Disaster Prevention in Tourism: Perspectives on Climate Justice. Chiang Mai*, Thailand: ECOT, 2009.

Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT)/Ecumenical Coalition On Third World Tourism (ECTWT). *Contours Magazine*. Vol 1 - 21.

Kiong, Tan Chi, ed., *Mission Perspective in Tourism.* Hong Kong: ECOT/ ECTWT, 2001.

O'Grady, Ron. *The Threat of Tourism: Challenge to the Church*. Geneva: Risk Book, WCC Publications, 2006.

----------. *Third World Stopover*. Geneva: Risk Book Series, WCC Publications, 1981.

----------. ed. *Third World Tourism*. Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia/ECTWT, 1980.

Perkins, Harvey. *Theological Reflection on Tourism: Biblical Reflection on New Consciousness and a New Structure for Third World Tourism*. Chaing Mai: ECTWT (ECOT), 1985.

Ranjan, Solomon, ed. Combating Dispossession: Towards a Code of Ethics for Tourism in Palestine. Palestine: Alternative Tourism Group, 2008.

Tourism 2020 Vision. Madrid: UNWTO, 2001.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze, Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990.

Chapter 2

Tourist Gaze and the Subaltern Oppositional Gaze: Theological Re-imaginations

Abraham, Samuel. "A Helping Hand," in Frontline, August 24, 2012.

Campbell, C. *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

Come and See: A Journey for Peace with Justice: Guidelines for Christians

Contemplating a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Alternative Tourism Group, www.atg.ps.

hooks, bell. "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in Black Looks: Race and Representation. New York: South End Press, 1992.

Higgins-Desbiolles, Freya. "Living Stones and Dead Children: Palestine and the Politics of Tourism," in *Contours*, Vol. 20, No. 2 June-July 2010.

Isasi-Diaz, Ada Maria. "Lo Cotidiano: A Key Element of Mujerista Theology," *Journal of Hispanic/Latina Theology*, 10:1, 2002.

Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Picador, 2007.

Mathew, Philip. "Holy Land Pilgrims Urged to Show Concern for Palestinians," in *Contours*, Vol. 20, No. 2 June-July 2010.

Rajendra, Cecil. *Bones and Feathers.* Singapore: Heinemann, 1978.

Singh, Ivy. V*oices from Narmada: Doing Ecofeminst Theology*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2009.

Sartre, Jean Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956.

Urry, John and Jonas Larsen. *The Tourist Gaze.* London: Sage Publication, 2011.

Zachariah, George. *Alternatives Unincorporated: Earth Ethics from the Grassroots*. London: Equinox Press, 2011.

Chapter 3

Tourism Development: Indigenous Communities and Commodification

Conradie, Annemi. "Remaking culture for sale: The strategic commodification, construction and performance of 'traditional' cultural

identity in South African cultural villages", http://www.interdisciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/conradieipaper.pdf.

Human Development Report of North East States. Government of India, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, New Delhi: December 2011.

Kalam, A.P.J. Abdul and Y.S. Rajan. *India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium, 1998*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2002.

Protecting Indigenous Culture and Land through Eco-tourism: http://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csq/article/the-history-indigenous-peoples-and-tourism.

Ramer, McLaren Deborah, "The History of Indigenous Peoples and Tourism", Cultural Survival. Quarterly Issue 23.2, Summer 1999.

Sachan, Nikhil K., et.al. eds. "Livelihood Empowerment through Ecological Rationalization and Commodification in Natural Area Destinations", *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities*, Vol.2, November 2012.

Chapter 4

Sun, Sand, Rum, Reggae! The Challenge of Tourism for Church and Society in the Caribbean

Hewitt, Roderick. Church and Culture. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2012.

Niles, Preman. *Resisting the Threats to Life*. Geneva: WCC Publications, n.y.

O'Grady, Ron. *Third World Stopover*. Geneva: The Risk Book Series, WCC Publications, 1981.

Potter, P. et.al. *The Contemporary Caribbean.* London: Prentice Hall, 1989.

Remodelling the Social Market Economy from an ethical standpoint, Background Study Material, Regional Church Office of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia. 2011. http://www.onecaribbean.org/content/files/DavosReportOverviewDanScott.pdf.

Sealey, E N. *Tourism in the Caribbean.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981.

Chapter 5

Tourism, Climate Change, and Theological Questions

Abraham, K. C, et.al., eds. Global Warming: Implications for South Asia and the Role of Churches: Papers from a Consultation held at Bombay. Bangalore: SATHRI, 1993.

Bloomquist, Karen L, ed. *God, Creation and Climate Change: Spiritual and Ethical Perspectives.* Geneva: LWF, 2009.

Climate Change and the Pacific Islands, www.unescap.org.

Eapen, Viji Varghese, George Zachariah, P. Mohan Larbeer, eds. *The WORD and the WORLD: Biblical Reflections on Climate Chang*e, Bangalore & Chennai: BTESSC&CSI, 2013.

Mathew, Philip and Jonathan McKeown, eds., *Disaster Prevention in Tourism: Perspectives on Climate Justice an Abridged Version*. Chiangmai, Thailand: ECOT, 2010.

McFague, Sallie. A New Climate for Theology, God, the World, and Global Warming. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.

Paul II, Pope John, "The Ecological Crisis: The Common Responsibility," http://www.catholicculture.org. www.Propoortourism.org.uk.

Valentine, S Peter. *Ecotourism and Nature Conservation: A Definition with Some Recent Developments in Micronesia.* St Lucia: University of Queensland, 1992.

Wesley, Vinod J. "Climate Justice as Dalit Justice", *Gurukul Journal of Theological Studies*. Vol. XXIV, Nos.172, January & June 2013.

White, Lynn. "The historical roots of our ecologic crisis [with discussion of St Francis, reprint, 1967]," *Ecology and Religion in History*. New York: Harper and Row, 1974. http://www.siena.edu/ellard/historical_roots_of_our_ecologic.htm

Chapter 6

Threats to Women's Rights and Dignity: Tourism and Gender in Africa

Chowdhry, Geeta and Sheila Nair, eds. *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations/Reading Race, Gender and Class*, n.p: np., 2004.

Exploring the Reality and Theological Challenges of Ecology, Economy, and

Empire from Feminist Perspectives, Statement from the Feminist Discourse on Economy, Ecology and Empire, Bangalore, India: 1217 August 2008.

Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010, United Nations World Tourism Organisation and UN Women.

Ortega, Ofelia, ed. *Theology from the Perspective of African Women in Women's Visions Theological Reflection, Celebration, Action*. Geneva: WCC Publications, n.y

World Alliance of Reformed Churches 24th General Council, Letter from Accra, n.y

Chapter 7

God's Welcome is for All: Theologising Tourism from a Feminist Perspective

Brock, Rita Nakashima and Rebecca Ann Parker. *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of this World for Crucifixion and Empire*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008.

Carvalhaes, Claudio, "Borders, Globalization and Eucharistic Hospitality," *Dialog*. Vol. 49, No 1, Spring 2010.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a practice of Freedom*, New York: Routledge, 1994.

Kang, Nam Soon. "The Centrality of Gender Justice in Prophetic Christianity and the Mission of the Church Reconsidered", *International Review of Mission*. No. 373, April 2005.

Kanyoro, Musimbi. *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2002.

Keller, Catherine. Michael Nausner and Mayra Rivera, eds. *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire. S*t Louis: Chalice Press, 2004.

Keshgegian, Flora, "Power to Wound, Power to Mend: Toward a Non-Abusing Theology", *Journal of Religion and Abuse*. No 1, 1999.

McFague, Sallie M. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

National Council of Churches in the Philippines' 17th General Convention Statement on Violence Against Women, "NCCP Deplores Violence Against Women," NCCP newsmagazine, October-December 1995.

Orevillo-Montenegro, Muriel, ed. *Weaving the Patchwork of Justice and Peace in a Broken World.* Quezon City: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 2007.

Russell, Letty Mandeville. *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference.* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Russell, Letty M. *Just Hospitality*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Chapter 8

The Objectified People and the Objectified god of Tourism

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. USA: Fortress Press, 1978.

Buber, Martin. *I and Thou.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951.

Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

Kappen, Sebastian. *Tradition, Modernity, Counter Culture: An Asian Perspective.* Bangalore: Vistar, 1994.

Menzies, Gavin. *The Year China Discovered the World*. London: Bantam Books, 2002.

Mander, Jerry and Edward Goldsmith, eds. *The Case against the Global Economy.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996.

Prashad, Vijay. *The Darker Nations*. New York: The New Press, 2007.

So, Alvin Y. *Social Change and Development: Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990.

The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.

Chapter 9

Tourism and Justice: New Testament Insights

Brubaker, Pamela and Roger Mshana, eds. *Justice not Greed*. Geneva: WCC Publication, 2010.

Duchrow, Ulrich. *Alternative to Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action.* Utrect, Holland: International Books, 1995.

Herzog, William R. *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed.* KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994.

Kinsler, Ross and Gloria Kinsler. *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life*. New York: Maryknoll, 1999.

Reid, D.G. Tourism, *Globalization and Development: Responsible Tourism Planning*. London: Pluto Press, n.y

Chapter 10

Tourism and Conflict: A Perspective from the Kairos Palestine Experience and Holy Land Tourism

Come and See: A Journey for Peace with Justice: Guidelines for Christians

Contemplating a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Alternative Tourism Group, www.atg.ps. Kairos Palestine document, http://www.kairospalestine.ps/ 2009.

Kassis, Rifat Odes. *A Moment of Truth.* Kairos Document, Kairos Palestine, 2009.

Palestine and Palestinians, (various language editions), Alternative Tourism Group, Palestine: www.atg.ps.

Chapter 11

Pilgrimage Tourism: A Case Study – Sabarimala and its Impact on People and Nature

Eck, Diana. *India a Sacred Geography.* New York: Random House Group, 2012.

Gupta, V, "Sustainable Tourism: Learning from Indian Religious Tradition", *IJCHM*. Vol. 11, 1999.

Keener and Kliot, "Tourism in the Holy Land: The Behavioural Characterstics of Christian Pilgrims", *Geo Journal*, Vol. 50, 2000.

Prasad, Archana, "Political Ecology of Pilgrimage and Its Hazards", *People's Democracy.* New Delhi, June 30, 2013.

Poria, Butler and D Airey, "Tourism, Religion and Religiosity: A Holy Mess", *Current Issues in Tourism.* Vol.6, No. 4, 2003.

Singh, Rana. *Green Pilgrimage Initiatives, Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage: Sacred Space and System.* New Delhi: Dev Publishers & Distributors, 2013.

The National Council for Applied Economic Research Report of the year 2004.

Vijayananad, S. "Socio-Economic Impacts in Pilgrimage Tourism", *Zenith International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research,* Vol.2 Issue 1, January 2012.

Woodward, S C., "Faith and Tourism: Planning Tourism in Relation to Places of Worship", T*ourism and Hospitality, Planning Development.* Vol. 1. No.2, August 2004.

Chapter 12

Tourism – An Ecumenical Concern: An Historical Survey of Ecumenical Responses to the Tourism Phenomenon

Ivanyi, Anna. *Linkages between Bio-Diversity and Tourism: An Introduction.* Published by Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity, n.y.

O' Grady, Ron, "Thirty Years on", *Contours*, Vol.19 No.3, August-September 2009.

Longchar, Wati, "Commercial Tourism: An agenda for Theological Curriculum Development".http://ptcaweb.blogspot.in/2012/12/commercial-tourism-agenda for.html.

Chapter 13

Questions for Theology from the Household of God

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., & Bruce Waltke, eds. T*heological*

Wordbook of the Old Testament (Two Volumes). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.

Nissen, J. *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives.* Frankfurt: Peter Lang GMBH, 2007.

Richards, Lawrence O. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. Grand Rapids Ml: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985.

Robert, D L. *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice.* Mercer: Mercer University Press, 2005.

Tourism and Religion, Encyclopedia of Religion, http://

www.encyclopedia.com/article- 1G2-3424503147 tourism-and-religion.html.

Chapter 14

Engaging Students of Theology on Tourism: A Proposal for a Curriculum

Doss, Monan SVD. *Christ in the Spirit: Contemporary Spirit Christologies.* Delhi: ISPCK, 2005.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom.* New York: Routledge, 1994.

Leader, Darian and Judy Groves. *Introducing Lacan*. Duxford: Icon Publishers, 2000.

Ricouer, Paul. T*he Conflict of Interpretation: Essays in Hermeneutics.* Evaston: Northwestern University Press, 1974.

Ranjan, Solomon, ed. T*he Challenge and Prospects of Tourism in Goa Today*. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2005.

----------, ed. *Claiming the Right to Say No*. Panjim: Caritas Goa, 2009.

Taylor, John V. *Primal vision: Christian Presence Amid African Religion.* London: SCM Press, 1963.

The Challenge and Prospects of Tourism in Goa Today. Panjim: Caritas Goa, 2009.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze*. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2005.

Villa, Paul-Irene. Judith Butler. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2003.

Wilfred, Felix. *On the Banks of Ganges: Doing Contextual Theology*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2002.

Chapter 15

A Theological Curriculum on Tourism for Ministerial Students

Archer, B, C. Cooper and L. Ruhanen, T*he Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism in W.F.*, 2005.

D'Mello, Caesar., et al., eds. *Deconstructing Tourism: Who benefits? A Theological Reading from the Global South*, Kolkata: PTCA, 2014.

D'Mello, Caesar, Jonathan McKeown, and Sabine Minninger, eds., *Disaster Prevention in Tourism: Perspectives on Climate Justice*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: ECOT, 2009.

Higgins-Desbiolles, Freya, "International Relations, justice tourism, corporate undermining of alternative tourism, impacts of tourism, globalisation, alternative tourism", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2008.

Kalisch, A. *Corporate Futures: Social Responsibility in the Tourism Industry, Consultation on Good Practice*. London: Tourism Concern, 2002.

Kinsler, Ross and Gloria Kinsler, *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life*. New York: Maryknoll 1999.

Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

Mathew, Philip and Jonathan McKeown, eds. *Disaster Prevention in Tourism: Perspectives on Climate Justice an Abridged Version*. Chiangmai, Thailand: ECOT, 2010.

O'Grady, Ron. *The Threat of Tourism, Challenge to the Church*. Geneva: Risk Book, WCC, 2006.

O'Grady, Ron. *Third World Stopover*. Geneva: Risk Book Series, WCC, 1981.

Russell., M Letty. *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Ranjan, Solomon, ed. *Combating Dispossession: Towards a Code of Ethics for Tourism in Palestine*. Palestine: Alternative Tourism Group, 2008.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze*. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2005.

Who Really Benefits from Tourism? Documentation Updates: January to September 2004, Bangalore: Equations, 2004.

CONTRIBUTORS

BEHERA Marina Ngursangzeli
Dr. Marina belongs to the Mizoram Synod of the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI). She is currently teaching Ecumenical Missiology at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, that is linked with the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the University of Geneva, Switzerland. Formerly, she was lecturer at the United Theological College (UTC), Bangalore, India. Email: nmarina@rediffmail.com

BULA Omega
Ms. Bula, a Zambian/Canadian social worker and sociologist, has over forty years been involved in ecumenical global contexts seeking justice and resisting oppression. She was Program Executive at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in Kitwe Zambia, on the staff at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), and at the Justice and Global Ecumenical Relations unit, United Church of Canada. She now lives and works on a rural farm in Central Zambia, receiving Global North groups and engaging in global education as a form of alternative tourism. Email: omega.bula@gmail.com

CHERIAN M T
Dr. Cherian is Associate Dean of the Senate Centre for Extension and Pastoral and Theological Research (SCEPTRE), Kolkata, India. His special area of research is Philosophy and Religions. Before joining the Senate of Serampore College, he taught at New Theological College, Dehra Dun, India. Email: cherianmt@rediffmail.com

D'MELLO, Caesar
Mr. D'Mello is a Consultant on development, peace and conflict issues, and just tourism. He was Director of the Ecumenical Coalition On Tourism (ECOT) from 2007 – 2012, and prior to this the National Director of Christian World Service (CWS), Australia, at the National Council of Churches in

Australia. A member of the Roman Catholic Church, his background includes some Jesuit academic studies.Email: caesarmdm@gmail.com

FERRAO Victor
Father Ferrao, a priest of the Archdiocese of Goa, India has been a Professor of Philosophy at Rachol Catholic Seminary, Goa, for the past thirteen years. He is also the Dean of the Department of Philosophy. He is the first Indian to do an inter-disciplinary doctorate in the field of Science and Religion Dialogue. Email: victorferrao@yahoo.co.uk

GAIKWAD Roger
Rev. Dr. Gaikwad is the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI). He has been pastor of a Methodist parish, and involved in Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, India, in many capacities, including as its Principal. He is a former director of SCEPTRE, Kolkata, India. Email: ncciroger@gmail.com

HEWITT Roderick
Prof. Dr. Hewitt, from Jamaica, is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa, and also Academic Leader for Theology and Ethics and Programme Director for Systematic Theology. His wide ecumenical experience includes roles such as Moderator of Commission on World Mission (CWM), Advisor to the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), and Moderator of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Email: hewittrod@yahoo.com

JOSEPH M P
Dr. Joseph is Professor of Theology at Chang Jung Christian University School of Theology, Taiwan, and edits its journal, *Theologies and Cultures*. He was formerly Lecturer of Theology at the United Theological College (UTC), Bangalore, and at New College, Edinburgh. He is a member of the Church of South India. Email: josephlila@gmail.com

KASSIS Rifat Odeh
Mr. Rifat was the driving force, and one of the co-authors of the Kairos Palestine document, and is the General Coordinator of the Kairos Palestine Movement. He has also been the International Coordinator and Project Manager of the WCC's Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine

and Israel (EAPPI), whose work includes monitoring and reporting human rights violations of international law and decrees in Palestine and Israel.
Email: rifat.kassis@dcips.org

LAMIS Liza B
Dr. Lamis was formerly Women's Program Coordinator of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), and Communications Consultant of Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). She has recently served as Acting Coordinator of the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and continues her involvement with specific church programmes. Email: lizablamis@hotmail.com

LONGCHAR Wati
Rev. Dr. Longchar is Professor and Dean of SCEPTRE, Kolkata, India. His field of research is Contextual Theology. He was Joint Consultant of Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), WCC, and Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) from 2001-2007. He is currently editor of PTCA Study Series. Email: wlongchar@gmail.com

PO HO Huang
Rev. Dr. Po Ho is Professor of Theology and Vice President of Chang Jung Christian University in Taiwan. He is founding chairperson of the Formosa Christianity and Culture Research Center. Previously, he was President of Tainan Theological College and Seminary, Associate General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, and Moderator of Council for World Mission (CWM). Email: pekho@cjcu.edu.tw

PERERA Rienzie
Rev. Dr. Perera is Archdeacon of the Colombo diocese of the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka. Previously, his appointments included Associate General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), and General Secretary of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL). He also has a role as the Director of the Asian Theological Academy.
Email: rienzie.s@gmail.com

THOMAS R C
Rev. Dr. Thomas is a priest of the Mar Thoma Church, Kerala, India. He is a former Facilitator at the Department of Systematic Theology at the Mar

Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam, and Director of the Thomas Mar Athanasius Memorial Orientation & Research Centre in Kerala.
Email: rcthomas52@gmail.com

ZACHARIAH George
Dr. Zachariah teaches theology and ethics at the United Theological College (UTC), Bangalore, having taught previously at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Chennai, India. His theological reflections are formed and informed by his association with subaltern social movements. He is the author of *Gospel in a Groaning World: Climate Injustice and Public Witness* (2012). He is a member of the Mar Thoma Church.
Email: gzachariahk@gmail.com