

## **Worship & Sightseeing; Building a Partnership approach to a ministry of welcome**

### **Abstract**

We need to demonstrate the social, economic and political benefits of partnerships to sacred sites, spaces and endangered religious places. We can identify that the exploration of partnerships has apparently been sadly neglected by the public and private sector in the context of religious sites and that through developing partnerships that embrace the objectives of the sacred and the secular we can achieve more substantial outcomes for the guardians of these sites and for the communities and their visitors that have special expectations of the goods and services they use and expect to use in future.

This paper explores diverse opportunities for partnerships between the sacred and secular at religious sites. It identifies ways in which tourism suppliers can work collaboratively with sacred sites to enable sites to meet the demands of contemporary secular and sacred stakeholders. The concept of welcome and ministry has been well researched in the past as are antecedents to proselytisation and meeting the precepts of extended mission. What may be new is the conceptual welcome offered by religious sites to new partners to manage mission and improves access by secular audiences for the delivery of key messages alongside key offers in collaboration and extended community engagement.

In the review of contemporary literature we consider the supply and demand issues, site management, key components of partnership, ecumenical, co-creation resources, cost-benefit and marketing needs. The paper is predicated on provision of information and interpretation services for guidance and development of all of these services.

Methodologically, a participant observation approach is employed to confirm that tourism fits the strategic intent of religious leaders. We consider that partnership at a national, diocesan and parish level are an important part in effective tourism development. Elements of community involvement; capacity building or in community development through engaging stakeholders are discussed (Craig et al 2007, for example). Identifying preferences and choices and designing a scheme or series of projects that will successfully create an identity and product that has been approved of by a series of stakeholders (Dalton et al 2009).

The balance achieved between stakeholders is important. Dredge et al (2006) identify tensions between local government and tourism industry and furthermore between active partners and the passive policy community. In our context this balance reflects the aims of the sacred and the private sector key partners and the wider social capacity building aspects of community development agendas and government.

**Keywords:** collaboration sightseeing partnership religious stakeholders sacred secular community

## **Introduction**

Evidence exists that sacred sites may benefit financially and spiritually from the provision of support services at site (health care and community care services are usually underwritten by local and central government). There is an exception in the partnerships formed as a result of the United Kingdom Church Tourism Association (CTA). In defining partnership we consider both the religious and the business context. We acknowledge that partnerships in both senses include an understanding and appreciation of these words: affiliation, association, collaboration, companionship, alliance and relationships. It also appears to be an imperative that any recommendation is accompanied by consideration of cost-benefit and prioritised accordingly for the sacred site.

Sacred and secular partnership aims to connect stakeholders through context of sustainability, through benefits of long term investment in both social and economic contexts. The links between partnerships in the community and underwritten by the welcome afforded visitors, especially those identified as tourists (see for example Frew & Hay on the role of public sector tourism in Scotland; Capriello (2012) in Piedmont; Vagionis (2010) in Bulgaria) . The partnership is also predicated on freedom of access and perceptions by the visitors of security and safety accorded to visitors to sacred sites and the key may well be interpretation.

Our objectives are resource allocation, defining responsibility for allocation of scarce resources at sites. Consideration of those who should adopt positions of responsibility for congregation and visitors is important (Dubini et al, 2012). The scale of the partnership to add value to both sacred and secular audiences is impacted by agitation and interference or 'noisiness' at sites. We determine that willingness in tacit knowledge sharing is a limiting factor to the community of welcome. Additional factors include the position in life-cycle, relative strength of identity, the role of volunteers and concerns over economic and hard issues such as theft, insurance. Partnership for a community of welcome also needs to examine historical affiliations and preferences for the community engagement at expense of wider audience

## **Literature Review**

This section is broadly divided according to supply side issues, client (both sacred and secular) demands and needs, site management issues, multi-faith and ecumenical issues, co-creation outcomes as a result of nascent and established partnerships, sacred site resources and finally marketing of brand and identity.

Capacity building is occurring in creating a pragmatic approach to partnership. We also register a wider outcome from partnership which is community-based and focused on developmental well-being at many levels of social capital accrual (Kagan, 2010 Taylor, 2001). Partnerships between the key stakeholders that can easily be recognised and approached by investors and third-way organisations should feature a planned approach to sustained development for sacred sites. There are ample opportunities and case studies from contemporary sites that contain elements we can replicate (Dwyer & Wickens, 2011; Simone-Charteris et al, 2010; Ryan & Gu, 2009; Stanciulescu & Tirca, 2010; Lo Presti & Petrillo, 2010; Li et al, 2011; Stoykova et al, 2009; Kara, 2010; Moira et al, 2012).

We note with some dismay the lack of formal engagement with perceived current partners. These partners are the day-to-day organisations and their representatives that the sacred site neglects to encourage or work harder to develop a sense of partnership. For example, the places of education in the immediate neighbourhood are often neglected. A school, college or university represents a source of skills and resources for development that need formally identifying, managing and acknowledging in a strategic approach (for example see Goddard et al, 2008; McCauley 2011). The performing arts, theatre owners and operators, concert organisers, staged shows and amateur dramatics all present some form of opportunity and resource looking for a venue and exchange of money and skills. There is ample evidence that sacred sites may also perform functions as sites of counselling and support for the disenfranchised and distressed.

Food and drink are potential partners for sacred sites. Every special event and attraction has strong actual and potential links to entertainment through provision of food and drink. This has been based upon past and current demand from worshippers, visitors and site stakeholders. Such partnership is predicated upon the welcome and the traditional features of a welcome that includes food and drink as integral components of hospitality and acknowledgment of visitors. Tourism and food and drink are co-dependent and integral to the mutual goals of both hospitality and tourism (Everett, 2012; Van Zyl, 2012; Haven-Tang & Jones, 2010). We present food and drink providers as key partners in the future prosperity of each group and viability of the future health of the sacred site.

Film and television present a further opportunity to interpret sacred sites for both sacred and secular purpose. Morpeth, (2011;97) writes of the impact that such filming has had in Yorkshire but perhaps more importantly he writes that the sacred and secular objectives may not compromise the former to benefit the latter; in fact he makes reference to policy documents that highlight the specific and identifiable need to bolster sacred spaces (see also O'Connor & Bolan, 2008 in Northern Ireland).

In sum, the role of sacred space in the community; parish, diocese is explicitly linked to the identity and cultural focus of that community to the extent that social benefits are mediated by sacred spaces. Community capacity-building

is essentially not a neutral technical process: it is about power and ideology and how these are mediated through structures and processes (Craig, 2007; 354).

### **Supply Side Issues**

We acknowledge the recent expositions on tourism and religion featuring places of worship and devotion to sacred space as representations of opportunity for partnerships in both sacred and secular expression (Josan 2009 in Europe; Lo Presti et al, 2010 in Italy and Aragao et al, 2012 in Brazil as examples). In Ireland, for example, less than 20% of the listed Heritage Sites of Ireland have religious or sacred affiliation (OPW, 2011). The sites that are listed also have dual purpose for interpretation and therefore for visit and therefore can be arguably benefitting secular and sacred purpose. The number of such sites in the Republic of Ireland is woeful in contrast to the total number of sites of special sacred significance that have yet to be formally identified for tourism purposes and therefore mapped for visits (see for example Griffin et al, 2008).

Special events are also important features of many sacred sites. Therefore partnerships between events management organisations and sites will increasingly become important. Firstly, as places determine their purpose in becoming features within the context of a festival or celebration and secondly, as the event organisation strives to marry the aim and objectives of the sacred space to the consumers, visitors with special purposes to underwrite the costs of exploiting the location and recovering conservation and interpretation expenses (see example in Hungary by Panyik et al, 2011; and in Haridwar, India by Karar, 2010). Partnership fatigue is nothing new for site managers neither are the key stakeholders in both the public and private domain immune to shifts in political agendas, especially with fairly restricted and limited autonomy (Shaw & Williams, 2004; 207). Recent reports identify the express and explicit need for new hierarchical and hegemonic structures to manage the complex nature of demand (Stausberg, 2011; 93).

Woodward, (2004), identifies several key partners for developing a visitor audience including the obvious charges and donations for admission and: catering outlets (up to 10 percent of revenue in some sites), retail (between 30 and 40 percent of revenue), and events (potential for nearly 10 percent of revenue) across a range of popular sites in England and Northern Ireland.

Discussions around the concept of sustainability will inevitably invite dialogue confirming the degree of partnership engaging the discussions at the specific site and, in general, towards the discussions of sustainability of action for the faith in question (see for example Stanculescu et al, 2010, in Romania).

These discussions will be located in both conservation and stabilisation of the site concerned; they will however also be concerned for the future benefits of the site guardians and those responsible for the future health of both site and sacred objectives. Accessibility is important to maintain a credible visitor experience. Visitors will express an affinity with the projects to restore fabric

and protect scarce relics if they can experience them personally. Accessible sacred sites are characterised by being open and provision of sufficient information and interpretation to create a warm welcome to visitors (Wiltshier & Clarke, 2012; Simon, 2011; Wiltshier, 2011; Shackley, 2001; Miller, 1989). This welcome includes sacred purpose and meeting worship needs; this welcome additionally offers sympathetic interpretation to visitors who do not express their faith at time of visit but have a more general interest in the site itself from a historical, anthropological, sociological or other interest.

## **Demand Side Issues**

Tourism can be conceived as a poor supporter of sacred purpose. Coupled with that, religious tourism is unfortunately quite often unappreciated as a community development opportunity by key stakeholders (see for example, Poria et al 2009; Ashworth, 2009; Wheeler, 2005). Previous studies have identified that religious sites must adopt a pro-active attitude and approach to managing the expectations, even demand of the visitor (Gouthro et al, 2010; Karar, 2010; Rivera et al, 2009; Mangelaja, 2003; McIntosh et al, 2004). Today's sacred site managers must demonstrate their willingness to engage the visitor in more ways than provide space and place for their worship.

Visitors make choices in consumption and on reflection which will always influence decisions made by religious site managers specifically concerning partners. The demand-driven components of the management of sacred sites need to be adequately considered and accurately measured pre-post and during experiences by site managers to better reflect the drivers of positive and growing consumption but also to incorporate the contribution that partners can make to the visitors' experience (Leask, 2010; Lo Presti et al, 2010; Hayes et al, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Indeed, it is that experience that may drive increased contribution from consumption to the upkeep, maintenance and expansion of interpretation services. Many times a visitor will be polled as to expectations and perceptions. There is ample evidence that the visitor is not expected to reflect on their experience and therefore a substantial lack of evidence is available to present to partners on the substantive quality and exceptional features and benefits that visitors to sacred sites have expressed. It is also worth considering which part or parts of the experience(s) they are asked to reflect on. In short, presenting visitor numbers, audits of cars parked and coaches and buses on site is certainly useful it does not highlight the contribution that partners may bring to the visitor experience nor where opportunities exist to expand services in a meaningful and profitable way to both site and partner (see for example, Wiedenfeld's 2006 study). Visitors express individuality in their reason for site visits (Lo Presti et al, 2010; Rivera et al 2009; Stoykova, 2009). Some experience demands of the host an innovative approach to acknowledging visitors' individual and often personal and idiosyncratic reasons for visiting. We identify a lateral innovative approach to visitors in partnership with worship through demonstrated alternative reasons to visit.

The contemporary approach to managing visitors' expectations and behaviour has been well explored in (Alecú, 2010; di Giovine 2010; Weidenfeld et al, 2008; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Wiltshier, 2007). A focal point is the need for a stronger developmental relationship between the churches and their stakeholders in tourism and other services (Timothy, 2007; Bramwell et al 2004). The contemporary site manager should be vocal and competent at using public relations and modern media for the benefit of the site and key stakeholders. The site manager must make explicit the shortcomings of the physical day-to-day operations by identifying partnership opportunities and using available media to inform the potential stakeholder and identified visitors who may support the projects to provide an income stream. Over the last ten years both the numbers of public/civic events and specially arranged services have considerably increased. In particular, the number of public/civic events has almost doubled (CoE Cathedrals, 2011; 5). These opportunities can bring income to offset expenditure in maintenance as well as interpretation and information provision. The church in the UK context admits somewhat being negligent about building these partnerships with key stakeholders. The church in the context of Hungary is observed to have developed skills and strategies to better manage these relationships (Clarke et al, 2009).

**“The church that turns its back on tourism turns it back on the local economy”**

Keith Orford personal communication May 2012.

In addition we perceive an ecumenical and multi-faith approach to partnership. The multi-faith, ecumenical sacred sites may need to be enthusiastic to build linkages between religions and avoid identifying gaps between the sacred philosophies. Our project builds on what Mangelaja (2003) would term a macro-economic perspective (as opposed to a single country or micro-perspective). We identify a model which can therefore be applied in multiple situations with many stakeholders as possible actors within the model to signify useful practices for emulation elsewhere. By nature of participant observation the model does require a degree of empirical site testing which is the subject of subsequent research engaged in as part of the ATLAS special interest group agenda. As has already been stated there is insufficient peer-reviewed research on visitor expectation and perception to guide this approach to development of sacred sites.

**Site Management Issues**

In the United Kingdom (and in SEE) we witness a reluctance to participate in networks which may be attributable to perceived skills shortages, resources not allocated for visitor experience purpose, difficulties with fabric and security of sacred premises. The CTA identifies the inability to obtain tangible outcomes as important and additionally problems with a poor evidence base in terms of revenue and cost-effectiveness of managing sacred sites for visitors (Sharpley & Jepson, 2011; Morpeth, 2011; ATLAS, 2009; Shackley, 2005). Co-creation between visitors and worshippers is also deemed key to success of partnership approaches to faith and development strategies. Our examples include the presence of alternative retail and educational

programmes run on sacred premises for the benefit of community groups. Selected community stakeholders, working in collaboration towards a community-trust to operate postal services, retail of core food items, lending libraries and pre-school, after-school activity centres are fundamentally operating a co-creation model. This model benefits the community by providing cheap and easily accessed resources. The model benefits worshippers by providing secured access to the church building outside of hours of prayer and worship. It can also benefit visitors by providing alternative services after hours as well as additional interpretation (for non sacred purpose perhaps as local information data).

Our management approach is to grasp these issues with interventions focussing on skills, resources, knowledge base and market orientation. We wish to build on successful partnerships as best-practice case studies for sacred sites. We create a framework to support decisions for partnership approaches to meeting and hopefully exceeding the visitors' expectations. These frameworks necessarily should support participants at parish or local levels, diocesan or regional levels and nationally as well. Our initial research does confirm that sacred sites do not oppose visitors, acknowledge the need for revenue from visitors and welcome the opportunity to translate mission into purposeful information to be shared with visitors. Facilitators and facilitation needs to identify and implement process to continue and maintain existing networks (Warren, 2004; 69). Additionally as a management approach we consider that public and private partners establish and maintain an approach to cooperative planning that links key stakeholders in a strategic context (Olsen, 2006;115). We also identify that among sharing initiatives with each other there are relevant issues to do with supplying both site managers and volunteers with minimum levels of skills as well as more practical financial support (Jackson, 2005; 135). The duality and dyadic partners typically present as emotional and sensitive audiences. We observe that there are career stages in local parishes that are open ended; the clerical stages in parish in the United Kingdom typically present a change of role within three or four years at each site which presents further resources and skills depletion and an uneven approach to deployment of resources for the benefit of each sacred site.

In terms of sacred places and spaces human and cultural components are now being introduced into the commercial sphere of activity (see for example Henderson 2009 on Islam; Sharpley & Jepson, 2011 in the Lake District).

### **Sacred sites are managed by non-managers and volunteers**

Using a non-commercial model for strategic development and management we observe multiple situations where partnership can be based on a model that contains a commercial agenda. The role of entrepreneurs, serial, portfolio contractors should never be underestimated. Again, there are examples of good practice that we can all learn from (Shinde, 2010; Wiltshier, 2007).

In identifying opportunities to pursue partnership and formalise engagement of networks beyond sacred mission we suspect explicit and tacit knowledge sharing is specifically missed in not sharing good practices. A sense of learning from experience in peaks and troughs is therefore paramount as a component of managing future development. The literature does refer to lagging, rural communities as especially prone to low levels of engagement in good practices (Olsen, 2011; Aref et al, 2009; De Araujo et al, 2002; Wiltshier, 2011; Clarke et al, 2009; Macbeth et al 2004: , Shinde, 2004;). The potential for benefits of diversified, regenerated local communities are often unexplored and such social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts that increased partnership and networking may bring explicit and tacit knowledge to sacred as well as secular partners.

Partnership between sacred site and location marketing and branding is important and has been presented in the light of identity and shared values in several example (Frew and White, 2011 on Brand Ireland; 26).

It is not coincidental that various regional and national tourism organisations seek to ally the brand offer with sacred spaces. Purposeful promotion using sacred sites reinforces shared values and creates an environment for marketing although maybe manufactured for specific promotional purpose does not undermine the sacred values and mission if handled sensitively (see examples Moira et al 2012; Maksin, 2010; Simone-Charteris et al, 2010; Rivera et al 2009; Stoykova, 2009 refs not included). The role of public-sector heritage agencies has been explored in various political situations (see for example Edwards, 1998 refs not included in rural Wales; Poria et al, 2009, on the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem; Vorzsak et al, 2009 Romania; Collins-Kreiner, 2010 in selected sites in Israel; Di Giovine, 2011 in Pietrelcina in southern Italy). A supportive heritage and cultural organisation and related culture can support the sacred site and become a vital reference point for identity, branding support and marketing and interpretation support. We propose that these public-sector heritage agencies have a role to play where appropriate to reinforce aim and objectives of the site and to support interpretation for a wider range of invited and casual secular as well as sacred audiences.

Case studies exist to identify and measure contributions to specific sites from specific visitor categories and origins (Goncalves et al, 2012; Moira et al 2012). Finally, we see good practices in sacred site management founded on knowledge and knowledgepreneurs (Alecú, 2010; Collins-Kreiner, 2010).

In the near future the religious partnerships could be constructed along the lines of multi-faith and ecumenical networks as well as the prosaic and less proselytising option through community lobby groups, educational partners in both primary, secondary and further education networks. A further option is partnership with service organisations that remain defiantly independent and without a roof over their heads seeking premises for physical interaction with clients and potential clients (arts, crafts, performance, media, medical and health and welfare sector specialists).

## **Research Methods**



The epistemological perspective is part based on soft-systems thinking, largely derived from the work of Checkland and Scholes (1981). We gratefully utilise the semi-structured approach and epistemological approach espoused by Thompson & Perry (2004) refs not included. A participant observation approach is employed to confirm that tourism fits the strategic intent of religious leaders. In this we consider the role of quasi-religious organisations like the UK Churches Tourism Association (CTA) to identify a partnership strategy. The illustrative model proposed by Dalton et al (2009) is useful to readers in assimilating a systems-thinking approach to process stages for change to engage stakeholders (see Figure 1). We consider that partnership is important at a national, diocesan and parish level. In reducing the key partners' summaries of features, benefits and good practices we minimise bias and partiality through the use of transformative intellectual action research in generalising and reflecting the outcomes of the project.

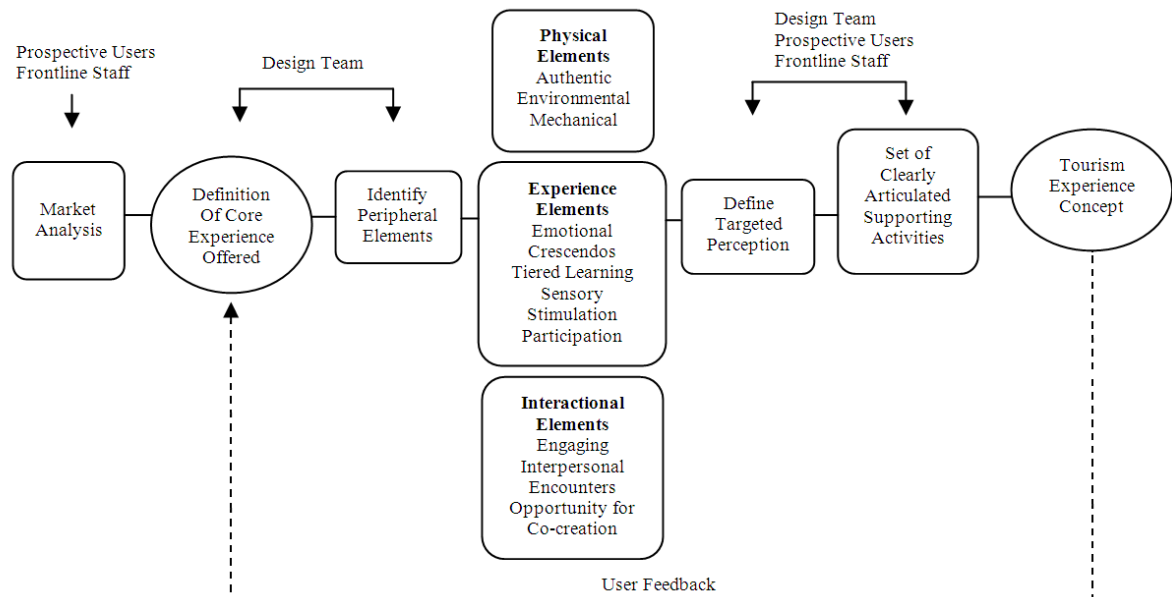
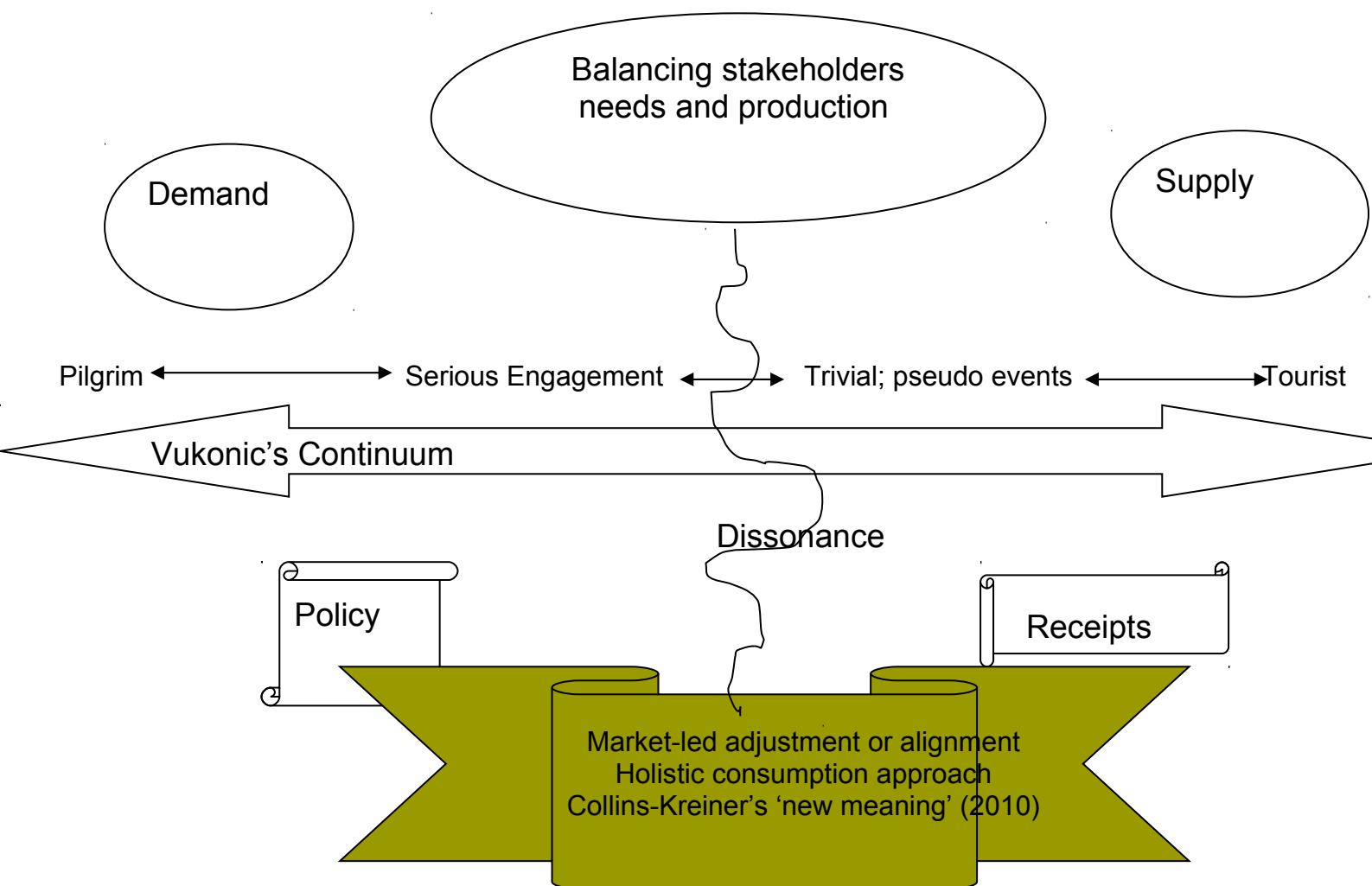


Figure 1: Model of Partnership; Finding Partners for Consensus: the Experience Economy (Source Dalton et al 2009).

Figure 2: Balanced Scorecard for Sacred Sites



## Discussion

Visitors may have a variety of experiences, and may switch between types of experiences. The visitors to India researched by the author confirmed this new stage of research, as these visitors claimed to have undergone various inner experiences that changed according to their length of stay or state of mind (Collins-Kreiner, 2010: 161).

Together with an increasing differentiation of pilgrimage, tourism and secular tourism, and the narrowing difference between the wishes of people to search for a new meaning to their everyday life, all the shifts described show that the study of pilgrimage is being modified in the twenty-first century. This change is found in both the theoretical and the practical base; it includes erasing the distinctions that were accepted in the past as well as a growing inability to distinguish between the different perceptions and research areas that are now becoming integrated.

The “tourism shift” seems to be the uniting element in the current research into pilgrimage (ibid: 162). And we would argue into understanding the emergence of religious tourism partnerships (Wiedenfeld & Ron,2011).

In Figure 2 we have identified three key sector partnerships and enablers and lessons learned from these experiences. As Pine & Gilmore (1999) observed more than a decade ago, the key to the success of partnerships is derived from co-creation. A shared experience understood and articulated by consumers and partners is central to the offering.

We construct a model that emphasises the core of success in any venture developed from public and private partners depends on the quality of the offer by the owner, the shared knowledge of that quality developed by consumers and recognised through collateral association.

The community hosting the sacred site must have values, vision and strategy that coheres with those values and vision espoused by the sacred site in question. Although we also identify the importance of diffusing tensions, dissonance in resource allocation specifically we can also make a good case for ad hoc and contingent approaches to developing partnerships that underpin specific goals determined by sacred and secular stakeholders.

[All Saints' Breadsall in Derbyshire is a pretty Anglican parish church dating back to Saxon times with remarkable sedilia and piscina used by the clergy](#)

dating from those times. The church is constructed of an attractive reddish-hued stone and features an elegant fifteenth century spire. The church is in a sleepy village some five miles from Derby City. All Saints' has a valuable locally-mined Chellaston alabaster Pieta and beneath the re-tiled floor of the nave is the tomb of Erasmus Darwin. Like many country churches, All Saints' hosts weddings at a modest charge of £500. The eighteenth century polymath, Erasmus Darwin, spent the final years of his life in the village at what is now a luxury golf resort, operated by Marriott Hotels, call the Breadsall Priory Hotel. The bicentenary of Darwin's passing was celebrated at All Saints'. The association of intellectuals in and around Derby was concurrent with the early years of the Industrial Revolution. Darwin was part of a group of special thinkers who had important roles in the changes that paralleled the industrial growth. This Lunar Society include Josiah Wedgwood, Mathew Boulton, James Watt and Darwin. Partnership expressed in the eighteenth century certainly can be used as a mirror by site managers with responsibilities for worship and celebratory visits than two hundred years later. Visitors from throughout the world, more especially those whose forbears migrated to the New World, return regularly to All Saints. The modest arrangements that the rector and vicar undertake to host special events support church maintenance and security.

Sacred sites represent best practice for recording and retrieval of key data for local communities and therefore for visitors desiring information from the community in respect of ancestry, historical information and evolving practice in almost all cases.

Closed and open partners can be further developed as the knowledge of benefits of collaboration and network formation are spread more widely in the sacred and secular frameworks around partnership. There appears to be a real need to establish a values exchange model that acknowledges the aforementioned network expansion framework (Dalton et al, 2009). In turn this leads sacred partners to open partnership through possible commercialisation.

There exists a diverse range of opportunities for sacred sites to engage with the wider secular community for the purpose of exploring mission and supporting development and maintenance. In our project we have identified some key examples of successful partnerships that encourage sacred sites' purpose and specific projects that deliver income to sites and expand in a strategic fashion the objectives that the site has focused on.

One of the key issues that researchers encountered over the past two decades is that the maintenance of records and perceptions by visitors are central to visitor and stakeholder satisfaction. Many sacred sites have historical datasets which are eagerly sought by visitors (Shackley, 2001; Vukonic, 1994) and the perceptions and expectations of visitors will be central to the enhancement of a sense of partnership in identity and heritage for visitors as well as sacred congregations. There is little doubt that the methodology for visitor satisfaction and expectation as a common theme for success in partnerships is now required. As has been demonstrated in the literature review several sacred sites are developing links with stakeholders

on the basis of shared values and mutual growth in key objectives; sure signs of emerging partnership. By using volunteers for this purpose the sites have been able to build sincere relationships with both sacred and secular partners. Stakeholders acknowledge the contribution that volunteers can make; the shaping of mission for future growth and development and the potential for future exploration of extended sacred mission through secular activity as we can demonstrate. The provision of records and interpretive materials for potential investors could attract further inward investment as public sector organisations seek to rationalise service delivery and resource allocation for public facing information provision. We observe limited external use being made of current satisfaction evidence and reiterate the importance of volunteers and others within the site's organisational hierarchy working in future to secure vital evidence of success and indicators of under-performance and perhaps further oversight on training, interpretation, and concurrence of partners' strategic aim and objectives with that of the site.

At the celebrated 'Plague' village 350 metres up in the Peak District one can witness a twenty-first century pilgrimage. St Lawrence' Eyam is the parish church that witnessed an early medical intervention that saved the lives of local residents after the plague arrived from London in 1665 with fleas aboard tailors' swatches. Locals quarantined themselves and some successfully managed to survive what was then, and still can be, a deadly illness. In the twenty-first century medical specialists studying immunity surveyed the descendants of these hardy survivors to identify genetic clues. The manager of the visitor centre, which is a very well presented two storey purpose-built building adjacent to St Lawrence', is indeed one of those descendants. Mrs Plant managed the centre, its team of parishioners and volunteers for many years. She encountered huge demand (upwards of 100000 visitors per annum) from school parties as well as medical and other curious visitors. There have always been sufficient funds in the kitty to enable security to be maintained and links to an active visitor network to the neighbouring Mompessons Well on the moorlands (the quarantine boundary) and the adjacent Eyam Hall owned by the Wright Family. This excellent small community, its central parish church and enviable moorland and dales aspect is in huge demand by upwards of thirty million day visitors from the surrounding conurbations.

We should add to this the emerging expectations of visitors in respect of motivation to further religious experience, study or conversion of faith. Thereby targeting appropriate partners and visitors based on the experience economy, co-production and informed expectations of both groups of stakeholders

Potential networks and partnerships can be identified in the following key areas. These are informed by the literature (Thomas, Jackson, Shackley, Warren, Stausberg; 77).

This paper identifies that a sacred site is a place for educational activity and active absorption of new knowledge and skills. This can be ecumenical or inter-denominational. It also identifies that sacred spaces are places of refuge, for the young, disheartened, dispossessed, old and disowned. We also

witness sacred spaces as partners; repositories for artefacts; sacred spaces as museums and places of interpretation as well as secular research and interest. Sacred spaces are becoming special places for all to worship, seek solaces, seek intellectual and spiritual development for individuals; a place for neutrality as well as solidity in spiritual practice.

At a commercial level sacred spaces are often centrally located so provide a space and place to orient to the landscape for a variety of activities. These central locations provide a theme for branding and identity (The Crooked Spire in Chesterfield, England, has been adopted commercially as well as spiritually).

Sacred spaces sharing location for performance and display of cultural output. Many of these important special places can lay claim to partnership and networks owing to their centrality and moreover their perspective, view, situation at the heart of the destination. Therefore partners seek the brand and identity, the shared opportunity to undertake business ventures, performance and cultural dominance at a vantage point unparalleled.

Sacred spaces truly represent the acme of culture, history, art, music and architecture. If nothing else, as special situated spaces they permit the visitor and the local resident a tranquil place to pass time in inclement weather and to rest awhile. Many partners can identify and value intrinsically and extrinsically these locations.

Timothy & Olsen (2006) identify that spaces are contested for use as sacred and secular purpose. There is competition for partnership and networks that can equally lay claim to special place and purpose. In secular ways the expressions of ancestry discovery, disaster site visit, war memorials and cemeteries typify these contested uses. Even more likely in the market-force driven economy is the opportunity for entrepreneurs in new ageism, paganism, magic and the occult to take advantage of these contested spaces. It may become important to segregate yet define spaces for occupation by sacred and secular purpose to ensure validity of consumption experience according to these dyads.

The role of the media cannot be underestimated as a purveyor of conflicting messages regarding fitness for use by sacred and secular purpose. Partners may wish to emphasise key values and messages according to their buying power with the media channel at hand. On reflection one must consider the conflict and purpose in modes of partnership and rationale behind this activity. Partnership should aim to support identity, enliven participation in a community (whether it is sacred or secular) and in a market-driven economy provide further evidence of quality in experience, in service-delivery levels and ultimately in driving an enhanced experience for communities (Morgan, Lugosi et al: 165).

Partnerships must also drive the need for site protection, conservation and enhancement which are all under-funded activities.

Introducing the idea of entrepreneurial orientation at sacred sites. Following on Miles & Snow's typology for the identification of site managers that possess skills and aptitudes predisposing them to working partnerships as pre-conditions for taking advantage of networks. A new era of continuous innovation has emerged, in which knowledge is the key asset whose exploitation determines success for many firms. In this context, it is accepted that effective knowledge management depends heavily on a company's ability to collaborate, both inside (Collective Entrepreneurship) and outside (Collaborative Entrepreneurship) the organization (Ribeiro Soriona et al, 2009; 425).

Although we perceive sacred sites as firms for the purpose of analysis in the context of partnership and network, we do acknowledge that sacred sites do not possess the same motivations, leverages, enablers and barriers that typify the commercial organisation. We do not acknowledge that such a framework of continuous innovation precludes the capacity development in key staff within the sacred site.

Partnership, collaboration and developing resources from networks depend on pre-conditions such as purposeful identification and alliance with cooperating stakeholders for development agendas, consensus building with strategic objectives, which is setting the agenda. The final stage involves implementing, monitoring and managing the outcomes for the benefit of a wide range of stakeholders (Arnaboldi et al, 2011; 643).

A new form of organisation structure and strategy may emerge reflecting the relative strength of partnership and values of both sets of organisations, the sacred site and the secular partner. An example is discussed in an Italian context in De Domenico et al (2009).

Key to the success of partnership is conceived as added-value to all organisations, reduction in barriers to understanding and an achievement of recognition, by organisations. Improved opportunities for new work that can be shared among a wider network of sacred and secular partners that results in intellectual and social capital accumulation within the community setting.

In any case partnerships cannot extend beyond the purpose for which they are formed. In the temporal sense partnerships may be strategic and long term and others may be tactical and result in a short-lived project for which the partnership is the equivalent of outsourcing resources which neither partner can justify on a long-term basis. Example of the former is tourism destination marketing and aligning brand and identity. An example of the latter may be research to test consumer satisfaction and feedback on initiatives proposed through shared resources in marketing.

## **Conclusion**

Confusion regarding the role of partners and how adding value can be operationalised exists (Simone-Charteris et al, 2010). Work has been undertaken that tests the strength of such networks as partnerships become normalised and strategic within the sacred and secular spaces occupied. This research is not specific as to the nature of governance and agreements that perhaps typify an idealised sacred/secular space partnership (Novelli et al, 2006). Shinde, writing on Indian spaces of pilgrimage in 2011, identifies sites that can manage to take advantage of pro-active tourism industry stakeholder that amplify the spiritual experience but the actual strength and conditions and parameters for operating these partnerships remain to be fully identified and recreated.

Over the past decade evidence has accumulated indicating symbiotic relationships between tourism destination managers and marketers that is clearly indicative of untapped potential for sacred site owners who wish to demonstrate some entrepreneurial flair. An example is cited by Silberberg (1995) where museums have adopted a pro-active stance especially in provision of cultural spaces for performance and cultural display. The proviso might be that the sacred site manager should understand the integrative approaches to managing visitor experience undertaken within the horizontal and vertical supply chain. Some prior education and nuanced site team management could provide an income stream for the sacred site and introduce a new partner in the tourism industry. A sensitive issue for careful yet pro-active site management; there will always be some space in the calendar for out of town visitors at the sacred site. As was also discovered in the same decade it is critical to have community interests protected alongside the development of new partnerships and tourism is perceived by some as offering a product or service that might be contrary to local community concerns and needs (See for example, Simmonds, 1994).

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