Sustainable eventization of religious heritage: practical considerations and learning from case studies

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My perspective:
Events practitioner, academic researcher, priest

• 25 years as a professional events manager, including 10 years in venue operations management
• 14 years University teacher, UK Centre for Event Management
• Theological studies
• Events and church culture – research
• Purpose of my research: solving the problems of the use of church buildings for events
• Eventization of faith
• Vatican, Jerusalem
Eventization of faith

- Trend towards the eventization of faith (Dowson 2015; 2017; 2018; 2020a; 2020b)
- Influenced by growth of the experience economy
- Consumers moving from amassing possessions to acquiring experiences (Wood, 2009)
- Venuefication of churches and associated buildings
Venuefication

• Everywhere is a venue...which means that it is possible for any building, space or site to become a venue for an event (Dowson & Lamond, 2017)

• For spaces and buildings with a different primary purpose (not events or not the same type of events), the primary purpose impacts on these uses

• Hybrid events venues – used for different event purposes – the primary purpose is dominant

• For sacred spaces (e.g. churches), theological perspectives impact on those uses
Theological perspectives

- TYPES of events
- PURPOSES of events
- SPACES in which events take place
- PEOPLE who produce / participate in events
- MODES of event delivery
- PLACES and MOVEMENT

OBJECTS
Lindisfarne Gospels

- Almost 100,000 visitors to the main exhibition
- Outreach programme: 20,000 children took part in learning sessions and workshops
- Visitors from every area of the UK
- Significant international visitors from across Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South America and Africa.
- Almost 1,000 associated individual events held in churches, museums, attractions, galleries and community venues.
- Events held from the Isle of Canna in Scotland to North West England (Preston).
Virtual pilgrimages – Magdala Experience

2019: ¼ million visitors
2020: only local guests allowed to stay.
2020 October: YouTube: over 5 million views
2021 Lent: YouTube over 10 million views

https://youtube.com/c/ExperienceMagdala
Practical Design and Operations Considerations

**Financial**
- Market Size and Conditions
- Cost
- Return on Investment
- Efficiency

**Location**
- Access to and around venue
- Impact on local area

**Use and Usability**
- Who will use the venue
- Flexibility
- Safety Standards/ Building Codes
- Integrated Design Approach

**Design**
- Visual Impact on Environment
- Sustainability and wider environmental impact
References


