




# Religious Tourism in the Context of Pentecostalism: Developing a Pentecostal Pneumatological Theology of Tourism

Mookgo Solomon Kgatele<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, University of South Africa (UNISA).

## ABSTRACT

Religious tourism is commonly known for the visits by believers to religious sites and pilgrimages for religious purposes. In African Pentecostalism, religious tourism is known for the movement of believers from one country to another in search of greater power and blessings. This also includes powerful politicians who would visit a prophet in another African country in search of prayers. This kind of movement has been perceived negatively, particularly considering the disaster that happened in Nigeria when many South Africans lost their lives when the Synagogue Church of All Nations building in Nigeria collapsed. In addition, there are challenges such as the financial exploitation of religious tourists who pay exorbitant prices to visit men or women of God. Another challenge is the hostility of host countries to religious tourists, particularly pastors. The argument in this article is that religious tourism should not only be studied by its challenges but also various opportunities. Opportunities such as transportation opportunities, food trade opportunities, and hospitality opportunities are explored. These opportunities are important in the development of a Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism. This is a literature review on religious tourism in the context of Pentecostalism. This theology is developed using the theoretical framework of pneumatological imagination which argues that being filled with the Spirit includes opening up to people of different languages, different nationalities, and so forth. Similarly, pneumatological imagination argues that being filled with the Spirit allows the movement of people from one country to another which enhances tourism opportunities. This theory is important for the balance between the challenges and opportunities of religious tourism.

## Correspondence

Mookgo Solomon Kgatele  
Email: [kgatls@unisa.ac.za](mailto:kgatls@unisa.ac.za)

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism refers to the visiting of religious sites such as pilgrimages for religious purposes by believers and at times even non-believers.<sup>1</sup> It is for this reason that within the Christian tradition, countries

<sup>1</sup> Boris Vukonić, “Sacred Places and Tourism in the Roman Catholic Tradition,” in *Tourism, Religion, and Spiritual Journeys*, ed. Dallen J. Timothy and Daniel H. Olsen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 237–53; Daniel H. Olsen, “Management Issues for Religious Heritage Attractions,” in *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*, ed. Dallen J. Timothy and Daniel H. Olsen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 104–18; Bona Kim, Seongseop (Sam) Kim, and Brian King, “Religious Tourism Studies: Evolution, Progress, and Future Prospects,” *Tourism Recreation Research* 45, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 185–203, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2019.1664084>; Silvia Aulet and

such as Israel have been frequented by Christians and non-Christians from around the world. Other well-known pilgrimages exist in other countries such as Turkey, Rome, Greece, , and so on. Similarly, believers and non-believers visit the same countries for religious purposes. However, within the context of African Pentecostalism, religious tourism goes beyond visits to religious sites to the visit of religious personalities in the form of pastors and prophets in Pentecostal and charismatic churches.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon is unpacked here to understand the movement of Pentecostals from one African country to the other to receive prayers and other blessings. Literature review reveals that this phenomenon has been perceived negatively given the various challenges such as disasters, financial exploitations, and hostilities attached. This article argues that religious tourism should not only be studied in light of its challenges but also opportunities such as food trade, hospitality opportunities, and transportation opportunities.

To achieve its aims and objectives, this article explores the concept of religious tourism to develop a Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism in the African context. The article provides a historical background and a few examples of religious tourism in the context of Pentecostalism. The article also highlights the various challenges that exist in the current practice of religious tourism in African Pentecostalism. Similarly, the article explores the various opportunities that exist in religious tourism in the African Pentecostal context. The theoretical framework of pneumatological imagination is discussed as a relevant theory for the balance between the challenges and opportunities that exist in religious tourism. Religious tourism becomes the main conceptual framework for this article but other concepts, such as Pentecostalism, Pentecostal theology, pneumatological imagination, and pneumatology are explored. Data was collected by reviewing literature on religious tourism within the Pentecostal context. Some of the data was collected from online sources, particularly concerning the tragedy that happened in the Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, Nigeria. In the next section, the background to this study is given by exploring the practice of religious tourism in African Pentecostalism.

### **Religious tourism in the context of African Pentecostalism**

In African Pentecostalism, religious tourism is known for the movement of believers from one country to another in search of greater power and blessings. African Pentecostalism is used here generally to refer to Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Africa. These churches have become very influential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with an estimation of more than 200 million Pentecostals in Africa.<sup>3</sup> This makes the Pentecostal tradition one of the influential forms of Christianity in the continent. Pentecostals are found in different countries in sub-Saharan Africa. What is important in this article is the movement of Pentecostals from one African country to another in search of spiritual blessings and other benefits. In other words, one of the interesting factors in the study of Pentecostalism is the movement of Pentecostals from one country to the other, which is defined as religious tourism. This occur when some pastors and prophets from some countries are perceived as carrying particular powers and must be consulted. While African Pentecostalism has been studied over the years, there is still a need to explore the phenomenon of religious tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as little attention has been given to this subject.

The movement from one African country to another is not only done by believers. This also includes powerful politicians who would visit a pastor or a prophet in another African country in search of prayers. The famous Julius Malema visited the Synagogue Church of the Nation before starting his political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Malema is not alone as other politicians have visited the same church in search of prayers, prophecies, and spiritual support. According to eNCA:

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Tomasz Duda, "Tourism Accessibility and Its Impact on the Spiritual Sustainability of Sacred Sites," *Sustainability* 12, no. 22 (2020): 9695.

<sup>2</sup> Tendayi Chibaya, "Chapter Fifteen Pentecostalism as a Drive for Religious Tourism Development in New Millennium Zimbabwe," in *The African Conundrum: Rethinking the Trajectories of Historical, Cultural, Philosophical and Developmental Experiences of Africa*, ed. Tapuwa Mubaya and Munyaradzi Mawere (Bamenda and Buea: Langaa RPCIG, 2017), 343–69; Asonzeh Ukah, "God Unlimited: Economic Transformations of Contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism," in *The Economics of Religion: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Simon Coleman, Lionel Obadia, and Donald C. Wood (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2011), 187–216; Emmanuel O. Okon, "Socio-Economic Assessment of Religious Tourism in Nigeria," *International Journal of Islamic Business & Management* 2, no. 1 (January 19, 2018): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.46281/ijibm.v2i1.49>.

<sup>3</sup> Nimi Wariboko, and L. William Oliverio. "The Society for Pentecostal Studies at 50 Years: Ways Forward for Global Pentecostalism." *Pneuma* 42 no 3-4 (2020): 327-333. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700747-04203021>

The Economic Freedom Fighter commander-in-chief said he was there to visit TB Joshua to receive blessings for the journey ahead. His visit had local media abuzz over a private and spiritual retreat that Malema said was his way of seeking blessings and better counsel. “We all seek divine intervention, blessings of spiritual leaders and it happened that this time, we came to TB Joshua and it should not be seen to be any controversial activities.”<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, politicians are also known to visit prophets and pastors in the continent which adds value and influence to the discussions on religious tourism in the context of Pentecostalism. This is a reality given the influence of the politicians in the political landscape in South Africa and elsewhere in the continent. Equally, the late TB Joshua was one of the influential prophets in Nigeria.

Western African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana have become popular destinations for South Africans in search of powerful men and women of God for prayers and prophecies. Some South African pastors also visit pastors in Western Africa to seek prayers and mentorships. Hence, the same countries particularly, Nigeria have attracted many tourists in the context of religious tourism. Ahizechukwu points out that “Nigeria presently is the home of Pentecostalism in Africa and a destination for religious tourism. Many dignitaries have in recent times found Nigeria the essential balm to numerous of their spiritual problems, with many heads of government visiting Nigeria to seek a solution.”<sup>5</sup> One of the reasons for this attraction to Nigeria is the emphasis on prayer particularly spiritual warfare which has become one of the hallmarks of Nigerian Pentecostalism in recent years. In addition, many influential pastors and prophets are leading big churches in the same country. Another factor highlighted by Ukah is the performance of miracles which has also attracted many believers from different parts of the world who are in search of miracles.<sup>6</sup> This means that we cannot ignore the force of Pentecostalism in the tourism industry in Africa. In the next section, the article shall highlight some of the challenges regarding religious tourism in African Pentecostalism.

### **Some challenges regarding religious tourism in African Pentecostalism**

One of the challenges that affected religious tourism, particularly in the relationship between South Africa and Nigeria was when the building of the Synagogue Church of All Nations in Nigeria collapsed. According to Chioma, Usman, and Latona “On 12 September 2014, a guesthouse located within the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) premises around the Ikotun-Egbe area of Lagos State collapsed completely to the ground”.<sup>7</sup> It was reported in the same year that about 115 people died in the incident. Eighty-four (84) of the people who died at the guesthouse were South Africans.<sup>8</sup> Among these were professionals, businesspeople, and ordinary South Africans who visited Nigeria for prayer, and prophecies for spiritual blessings in their lives. However, due to this death toll, the perceptions of relatives and other South Africans changed. Consequently, this made many South Africans sceptical about visiting Nigeria for religious purposes. This was not the first time that South Africans visited Nigeria for prayers but the first time that this form of religious tourism received serious attention across the globe. Again, it points out the influence of religious tourism not only in the Christian fraternity but in society in general.

Another challenge of religious tourism is the payments of exorbitant prices by religious tourists to the pastors who are supposed to pray for them. In South Africa, prophets such as Shepherd Bushiri used to charge tourists visiting South Africa for prayers and prophecies exorbitant fees. These payments are made under the so-called “international visitors” who often attend the so-called “diplomatic services” to receive special prayers from the prophet. For this to happen, the attendees are requested to book by paying certain amounts to the church such as Enlightened Christian Gathering to receive prayers. In addition to paying the “international visitors” fees, the visitors would still be asked to pay some fee to see the prophet one-on-one. According to Kgatle, “It is in these One-on-One sessions where believers are charged

<sup>4</sup> eNCA, “Malema Visits TB Joshua,” 2013, <https://www.enca.com/africa/malemas-visits-tb-joshua>.

<sup>5</sup> Okeke Ugochukwu Ahizechukwu, “Pentecostalism, Doctrine Of Prosperity And The Culture Of Corruption In Nigeria,” *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development* 5, no. 3 (2022), 189-204.

<sup>6</sup> Asonzeh Ukah, “The Miracle City: Pentecostal Entrepreneurialism and the Remaking of Lagos,” 2017, <http://nsibidiinstitute.org/the-miracle-city-pentecostal-entrepreneurialism-and-the-remaking-of-lagos/>.

<sup>7</sup> Chioma Gabriel, Evelyn Usman, and Yinka Latona, “Tragedy: Scores Die as Synagogue Church Building Collapses,” 2014, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/tragedy-scores-die-synagogue-church-building-collapses/>.

<sup>8</sup> BBC, “TB Joshua Lagos Church Collapse: Many South Africans Dead,” *BBC News*, 2014.

exorbitant amounts to make an appointment with the prophet.”<sup>9</sup> This practice of asking international visitors to pay a certain for them to receive special prayers is very exploitative in the context of religious tourism. Although the prophet makes money, it is an unethical practice and can alienate tourists. Prophet Shepherd Bushiri is not alone in this kind of practice as other prophets also tend to ask their international visitors to pay certain fees to receive special prayers.<sup>10</sup>

The last challenge about religious tourism is the hostility towards the drivers of religious tourism. In this case, it is the hostility towards pastors and prophets by either host pastors or the government. One of the reasons given by Prophet Shepherd Bushiri for escaping from South Africa is that the country was hostile to him.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Bushiri gave the same reason when he refused to be extradited to South Africa to face the mighty hand of the law. Bushiri alluded to the fact that he would not be treated fairly by the South African justice system as he perceived that it was previously biased against him. Similarly, other pastors and prophets have previously complained that they were not treated fairly in the South African context. Furthermore, local pastors such as Paseka Motsoeneng have been hostile to international prophets such as Shepherd Bushiri, making them feel unwelcome to work in South Africa. Therefore, hostility to guests can become an obstacle to religious tourism. When the tourists perceive South Africa as a hostile nation, they will not be able to visit the country again. The reason for this assertion is that prophets such as Shepherd Bushiri have previously contributed to the tourism opportunities in South Africa. These opportunities are highlighted in the next section as they form part of the development of the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism.

### **The Contribution of Religious Tourism to the Local Economy**

Religious tourism adds value to the local tourism industry as visitors can contribute to the Gross Domestic Product. When international visitors visit a particular church, they will immediately require accommodation, thus contributing to the hospitality industry in the country. This is possible in South Africa for example as so many international standard hotels, guest houses, and lodges that can be utilised by religious tourists. Some churches have lodges that can be utilised by believers when visiting a church for religious purposes. The Enlightened Christian Gathering of prophet Shepherd Bushiri is a relevant example as the guest houses and hotels around Pretoria used to be fully booked when the church hosted prayer nights in the city.<sup>12</sup> This was the case because tourists from different countries had come for prayer and spiritual guidance which in a way boosted the city’s economy. It is also important to point out that the more there is a demand for accommodation in a city such as Pretoria, the more there will be a need for infrastructure development. Infrastructure development is more likely to happen through the building of hotels, guest houses, and so forth. This will also place a demand for the building of proper roads and so forth. This is likely to bring more economic growth to the city and the country.

The movements from the church to their hotel will require transport, which contributes to the transport industry in the host country such as South Africa. Henama and Apleni explain that “The emergence of fast-growing economies, and better connectivity through aviation and the widespread availability of transportation have promoted tourism’s growth. This is because the tourism industry is transport-intensive, linking tourists with places they call home, and the tourism destination area.”<sup>13</sup> Different forms of transport businesses such as minibuses, Uber or Bolt cars, and buses can create more income during religious services. However, the issue of transport should be discussed beyond local transportation to include aviation as believers travel from one country to another. In case of long distances locally, for example, believers travelling from Cape Town to Pretoria, in South Africa would normally use a flight rather than travel by road. In the case of international visits to churches such as Enlightened Christian Gathering in Pretoria, these would also include believers from countries such as Botswana,

<sup>9</sup> Mookgo S. Kgatle, “‘Go Deeper Papa, Prophecy, Do Something’: The Popularity and Commercialisation of Prophetic Deliverance in African Pentecostalism,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 43, no. 1 (April 25, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v43i1.2480>.

<sup>10</sup> Mookgo S. Kgatle, *Pentecostalism and Cultism in South Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Mookgo Solomon Kgatle, “Consultations in New Prophetic Churches and African Traditional Religions: A Case Study of Divine Healing in Assessing Syncretistic Practices in the South African Context,” *Religions* 14, no. 3 (March 16, 2023): 400, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14030400>.

<sup>11</sup> Gabela Muziwandile, “An Exploration of the Policing of Religious Extremism in South Africa” (University of South Africa, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> Unathi S. Henama and Lwazi. Apleni, “Religious Tourism in Africa’s Global South: Indigenous African Traditional Spirituality,” in *Global Development of Religious Tourism*, ed. Emilia Alaverdov and Muhammad Waseem Bari (Hershey: IGI Global, 2021), 283–96.

<sup>13</sup> Henama and Apleni, “Religious Tourism in Africa’s Global South: Indigenous African Traditional Spirituality.”

Zimbabwe, Malawi, and so forth who would also use a flight to travel by road.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the aviation industry is more likely to be given a boost through religious tourism as believers move from one place to another.

Lastly, international visitors also make contributions to the food trade in the form of food stores. Similar to hospitality and transportation, the local economy will also grow due to the buying of food at various local food stores in South Africa. The small businesses also have an opportunity to sell food and fruits during the Pentecostal services. This used to happen a lot when Prophet Shepherd Bushiri was still in South Africa, whereby various small businesses could sell food and other beverages at the Enlightened Christian Gathering, Pretoria showground. This kind of small business working in churches requires support from the government instead of becoming negative towards the church and its people. The government of South Africa through its social development department can support believers selling food and other beverages to religious tourists by providing start-up cash and other forms of support. Therefore, religious tourism should not only be perceived in terms of its challenges but the opportunities that exist in the phenomenon should be explored as well.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Pneumatological Imagination**

Pneumatological Imagination is a theoretical framework that has been popularised by the Malaysian-American Pentecostal scholar, Amos Yong in his different works.<sup>15</sup> This is a theory built on the Pentecostal theology of the Spirit also known as pneumatology. Pentecostals are people of the Holy Spirit which also connects them with their God. In essence, Pentecostals believe in a direct relationship with God through the works of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that they emphasise the baptism in the Holy Spirit which is the fundamental teaching of Pentecostal theology. Every Pentecostal believer is expected to be filled with the Holy Spirit to experience a direct relationship with God. However, according to Yong, pneumatological imagination is not only about the direct relationship with God through the Holy Spirit but also the role of the same Spirit in taking care of the planet Earth and fellow human beings. Yong says pneumatological imagination “provides us with a fundamental orientation to God, ourselves and the world, and renders more plausible the idea of God as present and active in the world”.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, pneumatological imagination looks beyond the divine function of the Holy Spirit into the function of the Holy Spirit in broader society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this way, pneumatological imagination as a theory within Pentecostal theology is relevant for the discussions on religious tourism.

Pneumatological imagination is built on the Pentecost narrative particularly Acts 1 and 2. By Pentecost narrative here one refers to the events around the coming of the Holy Spirit as recorded in the book of Acts. In Acts 1, the coming of the Holy Spirit gives the believer the power to be able to witness to others beyond their locality. Acts 1: 8 states, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This again points to the centrality of the Holy Spirit in pneumatological imagination but also to the fact that the Holy Spirit helps the believer to interact with others beyond the local context. In Acts 2 when the day of Pentecost fully came, they received the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. In addition, it should be made clear that the same Holy Spirit enabled them to hear each other even though they spoke different languages. Again, they were able to relate to each other even though they came from different nations. Therefore, a pneumatological imagination is not only important in the relationship with God but also in the relationship with fellow human beings regardless of where they come from and the language they speak. Later in Acts 2, it is recorded that the believers who were filled with the Holy Spirit were able to share possessions as opposed to financial exploitation discussed in the preceding sections.

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<sup>14</sup> Lwazi Apleni, Dinesh Vallabh, and Unathi Sonwabale Henama, “Motivation for Tourists’ Participation in Religious Tourism in Eastern Cape: A Case Study of Buffalo City, South Africa,” *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* 6, no. 2 (2017): 1–14.

<sup>15</sup> Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religion* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014); Amos Yong, “The Pneumatological Imagination: The Logic of Pentecostal Theology,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 152–62.

<sup>16</sup> Yong, “The Pneumatological Imagination: The Logic of Pentecostal Theology,” 152.

Pneumatological imagination is relevant to the development of the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism at least in three ways. First, Pneumatological imagination is important in engaging with people of different nationalities which is an important aspect of religious tourism. Second, the pneumatological imagination is important in engaging the people of different languages. In this way, pneumatological imagination is also a relevant theory in addressing the various challenges of religious tourism in the Pentecostal tradition as highlighted in the preceding sections. A challenge such as hostility of the host country can be addressed by the pneumatological imagination through the common understanding of believers regardless of their ethnicity. Third, pneumatological imagination is relevant to religious tourism in dealing with financial exploitations by pastors because of common sharing by the believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit. This means that through pneumatological imagination the Pentecostal believer will be able to share with others rather than exploit them. In the next section, the article develops the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism using the same theory of pneumatological imagination.

### **Developing a Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism**

This theology is developed using the theoretical framework of pneumatological imagination which argues that being filled with the Spirit includes opening up to people of different languages, different nationalities, and so forth. A theology of tourism is where a believer loves a stranger in the host country as opposed to being hostile to them.<sup>17</sup> In other words, a theology of tourism is when the believer becomes hospitable to others regardless of who they are. It is a theology where Pentecostal believers are encouraged to love and embrace strangers in the same way that they would live with their local people. Leviticus 19: 34, states very well “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” This should be possible for a believer who is filled with the Holy Spirit as they have love in them to be able to embrace people of different languages and nationalities. A Spirit-filled believer within the context of Pentecostalism is expected to be a love-filled believer. Therefore, being Spirit-filled is not only about speaking with other tongues but also about loving other people. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 13, 1 “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal”. Therefore, love through the Holy Spirit is central to the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism.

Similarly, pneumatological imagination argues that being filled with the Spirit allows the movement of people from one country to another which enhances tourism opportunities. As people move into host countries like South Africa, there is a greater chance of the country growing in the tourism industry in areas such as hospitality, food trade, and transportation.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, being anti-tourist decreases the opportunities for the country to grow in terms of religious tourism. A country that wants to increase its Gross Domestic Product should be ready to welcome strangers into its space. This means that a country that wants to grow economically cannot be xenophobic but will be welcoming to strangers. Therefore, as much as it is important to have regulations for tourists, the host country such as South Africa should be careful not to alienate the tourists. If we look closely at Acts 1:8 when the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit not only will they witness to their local context but will also be able to minister to other contexts. Similarly, countries such as South Africa are expected to welcome people coming from different nations. This is important in the development of a Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism because the Spirit-filled believer is not confined to their local context but also to different contexts.

This theory is important for the balance between the challenges and opportunities of religious tourism. In other words, we should not only look at the challenges facing religious tourism but also explore the opportunities that exist in the same. While pneumatological imagination is a relevant theory for addressing challenges, it is also relevant for opening up to various opportunities. Challenges such as financial exploitations of believers can be addressed through the sharing of possessions as the early church in Acts 2. Similarly, challenges of hostility can be addressed by loving and embracing tourists who have come to visit churches in the host country such as South Africa. This should also include loving and

<sup>17</sup> Vukonić, “Sacred Places and Tourism in the Roman Catholic Tradition.”

<sup>18</sup> Scarlet Cornelissen, *The Global Tourism System: Governance, Development, and Lessons from South Africa* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

embracing migrant pastors and prophets who have come to preach the word of God in a host country such as South Africa. South Africa is expected to be a home for strangers from Africa but also to be a home for strangers coming from other parts of the world such as Europe, America, and so forth. The aspect of a welcoming environment in the host country is a pivotal aspect in the development of the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism.

## **DISCUSSION**

This article looked at the concept of religious tourism within the Pentecostal context. While religious tourists are known for visiting pilgrimages and other religious sites, African Pentecostals are known for visiting religious personalities in the form of pastors and prophets. This idea is motivated by the fact that many adherents of Pentecostal churches in Africa perceive pastors and prophets in other countries as powerful and more gifted to address spiritual challenges that have been attached. It is for this reason that Pentecostal believers would move from one country to another to visit the men and women of God for prayers and blessings. Similarly, prominent politicians would also visit the same men and women of God for prayers. This phenomenon has been perceived negatively in light of the collapse of the synagogue church of All Nations building in Nigeria, the financial exploitations, hostilities of host countries, and other challenges. However, these challenges do not mean that religious tourism does not contribute meaningfully to the growth of the local economy. As discussed in the preceding sections, the sector of tourism continues to enjoy support from religious tourists who visit the church for prayers and spiritual support. Even with so many challenges, religious tourism is one of the major contributors to the broader tourism industry in South Africa and elsewhere in the continent. This calls for the Pentecostal theology of tourism that will be developed by not only looking at the challenges but considering the opportunities for the sector as well.

Therefore, it is pivotal when studying the phenomenon of religious tourism to explore both its disadvantages and opportunities in the development of the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism. To look at both the disadvantages and opportunities of religious tourism, this article used pneumatological imagination. The Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism should not only be the theology of the Spirit but be open to other people of different languages, nationalities, and so forth. In other words, ministers from other nations should be allowed to visit other countries in the same way that believers should be allowed to visit other countries. This is the crux of the Pentecostal narrative in Lukan-Acts where believers came from different nations to fellowship together as narrated in Acts. Similarly, the early development of the Pentecostal movement in Azusa Street Revival, Los Angeles, United States of America was comprised of people of different nations. In South Africa, the Pentecostal movement began as a meeting of people of different nations as well. Therefore, the historical developments of the Pentecostal movement demonstrate the gathering of people from different countries which is important for the development of a Pentecostal theology of tourism. Moreover, religious tourism as a sector has the potential to create opportunities in the African continent through the movement of people from one country to another. Therefore, religious tourism in Pentecostalism should not be perceived negatively but also considering opportunities in the development of the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of tourism. This is a unique contribution that this study makes to the phenomenon of religious tourism in the context of Pentecostalism.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article explored the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of religious tourism to argue for the theology that considers the Pentecost narrative in Lukan-Acts where there is fellowship of people of different nations. In addition, the study demonstrated that religious tourism in the Pentecostal movement is done in the pursuit of prayers and prophecies, but in the end, it benefits the country of the host church. Therefore, the development of the Pentecostal pneumatological theology of religious tourism should not only look at the disadvantages of religious tourism but should also consider the advantages through a pneumatological imagination. The latter was discussed as a relevant theory for the balance between the challenges and opportunities that exist in religious tourism. As much as religious tourism reveals some careless handling of the tragedy that happened in the Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, Nigeria,

we cannot ignore the contribution of religious tourism in the host countries as members of the Pentecostal churches have the propensity to move from one church to another in search of revelation, prophecy, healing, and deliverance. Therefore, rather than only looking at disadvantages, we should also explore the advantages through the pneumatological imagination that encourages the meeting of people of different nations and the understanding of different ethnicities and languages.

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#### **ABOUT AUTHOR**

Mookgo Solomon Kgatle is a Professor of Missiology at the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, University of South Africa (UNISA). He has published several peer-reviewed articles in the Pentecostal tradition, particularly New Prophetic Churches in South Africa. He is an NRF rated scholar in the area of African Pentecostalism. He won the Vision Keeper Award at the University of South Africa (2020-2022).