Tourism, business leaders visit Temple to discuss impact of World Meeting of Families

Roughly 800,000 people flooded Philadelphia in late September for a visit from Pope Francis and the World Meeting of Families, a global gathering of Catholics.

So… now what? An event jointly sponsored by Temple University’s School of Tourism and Hospitality Management (STHM) and Temple’s Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) considered that very question.

Gathering Philadelphia’s leading minds in tourism, international business, and government at its event, titled, “The World Meeting of Families is Gone: Now What?”, STHM and CIBER aimed to address how Philadelphia could leverage the international exposure and media focus it received from the World Meeting of Families in order to further its status as an elite host for future global events.

“This was our finest hour and it can be again,” said Pat Ciarrocchi, the event’s keynote speaker and a longtime Philadelphia news anchor who covered the World Meeting of Families.

“The World Meeting of Families brought Pope Francis to Philadelphia and, along with him, more than 15,000 reporters representing media outlets from around the world,” said Dr. Elizabeth H. Barber, STHM Associate Dean. “This event generated an unparalleled level of visibility to viewing audiences that wouldn’t have otherwise been exposed to what Philadelphia has to offer. In order to best capitalize on the tourism opportunity created by the World Meeting of Families, we as a city will need to maintain the open dialogue we’re initiating today through this event.”

In examining the future of a post-Pope Francis Philadelphia, the event welcome notable keynote speakers: recently retired Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau CEO and president Jack Ferguson; CEO and president of Visit Philadelphia Meryl Levitz; executive director of the Tourism Division of PHLCVB Brian Said; and executive director for Global Philadelphia Zabeth Teelucksingh.

STHM professor serves as editor of new Chinese outbound tourism book

During a 20-year span, from 1994 to 2013, Chinese outbound tourism increased 16 fold, reaching 98.2 million. A new book that details the latest trends in outbound travel from China has been published, with STHM’s Dr. Xiang (Robert) Li serving as its editor.

The Professor of Tourism and Hospitality Management acted as the primary editor of the 23-chapter book, titled “Chinese Outbound Tourism 2.0.” Published in November by Apple Academic Press, it melds the world’s leading authors and tourism experts to examine their research findings and offer insights on the blossoming Chinese outbound travel market and its tourists.

“Chinese outbound tourism is changing the world’s tourism landscape,” said Li, a Washburn Senior Research Fellow at Temple University. “We are witnessing one of the most spectacular phenomena in the modern tourism history unfold in front of us. It is exciting to study the Chinese outbound tourism.”

“Chinese Outbound Tourism 2.0” appeals to a wide audience of academics, destination marketers, destination policymakers, tourism-industry professionals, and world travelers. The book offers a thorough examination of the fast-growing Chinese outbound tourist market, which as recently as 1994 registered only 6.1 million trips. China is now the world’s largest tourism source market.

—Christopher A. Vito

—Lora Strum